HANDBOOK OF PRAGMATICS

24th ANNUAL INSTALLMENT

EDITED BY
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24th Annual Installment

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Editors' note

This year's Annual Installment of the *Handbook of Pragmatics*, the 24th edition, brings you a useful addition to Roeland van Hout's methods article on statistics, specifically focusing on regression analysis (Ilmari Ivaska). Two traditions articles are featured, one on postcolonial pragmatics (Rukmini Bhaya Nair), the other on sociology of language (Amado Alarcón). The former introduces the slowly developing trend to critically assess perspectives that have disproportionately dominated and colored approaches to language use until today. The latter adds a strictly sociological angle to the many sociolinguistics-oriented articles already to be found in the Handbook. In addition, a variety of pragmatic topics is dealt with: one adds to the conversation-analytical and ethnomethodological topics as well as those on narrative by focusing on conversational storytelling (Yo-An Lee); two others highlight opposite sides of non-neutrality in language use, namely euphemism (Zhuo Jing-Schmidt) and obscenity, slurs, and taboo (Keith Allan); there are two identity-related articles, a brief and general one on identity as a notion (Florian Coulmas), and one addressing research on feminism in relation to language (Karin Milles); in an ongoing effort to bring in non-western approaches and contexts, we now have a contribution on discourse in the very specific institutional setting of Nigerian hospitals (Akin Odebunmi). Finally, the oeuvre of Susan Ervin-Tripp, one of IPrA's former presidents, receives the attention it deserves (in a contribution by Amy Kyratzis).

For readers less familiar with the Handbook, a few words about its history and development may be useful.

When we launched the idea of a ***Handbook of Pragmatics*** under the auspices of the **International Pragmatics Association** (IPrA; https://pragmatics.international) in the early 1990s, we wanted to create a format that would be indefinitely moldable for and by the readership. The very essence of scientific research is that scientific insights are dynamic, guided by uncertainty. In a field like pragmatics, with the functioning and use of constantly changing styles and registers of language as its focus of research, we did not want to produce a single book as the ultimate 'handbook of pragmatics.' Since we saw this venture as a task that would take decades, if we wanted to do it properly, we also did not want to start with categories and traditions beginning with "A" and after a couple of decades finally reaching "Z".

At that time, we settled for a loose-leaf publication format, relatively unorthodox in the humanities and social sciences. The idea was that this would enable us to gradually build up a changeable and expandable knowledge base for the users of the Handbook.

Moreover, each individual reader would be able to group and re-group the entries according to his or her own preferences and particular interests, which no doubt would themselves be changing over time. So, with every three or four annual installments of the Handbook, the subscriber received a new ring binder in which to collect and order the new entries. The series of loose-leaf installments was preceded in 1995 by a hardback bound **Manual** which provided background information on a wide range of traditions and research methods underlying much of the pragmatic research described in the more topical entries of the annual installments. Needless to say, also this background information has evolved and has necessitated numerous new entries on traditions and methods in the loose-leaf installments. So far, we have published 23 installments of some 300 pages each, in addition to the 658-page Manual. Subscribers to the printed version of the *Handbook of Pragmatics* should have a bookshelf filled with the Manual plus 7 ring binders.

Meanwhile, the world has gradually become more and more digital. In the early 1990s hardly anyone could have foreseen the radical changes that have come to take place on the publishing scene. The *Handbook of Pragmatics* quickly followed suite, went online, and is available for readers as, precisely, the *Handbook of Pragmatics Online* (https://benjamins.com/online/hop/). The online version has been continuously updated with new materials whenever and as soon as a new installment of the Handbook was published; and in cases where an entry has been totally rewritten, the older version has been retained in the Archive – all in the interest of giving readers a feeling of how the discipline itself has changed and evolved over the decades.

It is also the case that the online version has become the most often used version of the Handbook, both by individual scholars (especially by members of the International Pragmatics Association), and by many of their institutions and universities. The loose-leaf version on paper was seldom subscribed to by individuals, but we are happy to say that it did attract libraries and research groups. It is, however, challenging for libraries to make loose-leaf versions of books available for the general readership in a shape where all leaves/pages are physically "a-loose".

Faced with this situation, we decided in close discussions with John Benjamins Publishing Company to produce further installments of the ***Handbook of Pragmatics***, from the 21st installment onwards, in the form of bound publications, of which the one you are now holding in your hands is the fourth volume. We are convinced that this makes the Handbook easier to handle and more attractive not only for libraries, but also for scholars who still cherish the feel and satisfaction of reading a concrete book. Meanwhile, the online version continues to integrate all additions and changes.

The gist of the User's Guide for the *Handbook of Pragmatics* and its online version largely remain the same as before – see below. As in the loose-leaf version, we have a cumulative index (at the end of each volume), covering not only the present installment, but linking it to the entire *Handbook of Pragmatics*.

Acknowledgments

A project of this type cannot be successfully started, let alone completed, without the help of dozens, or even hundreds, of scholars. First of all, there are the authors themselves, who sometimes have had to work under extreme conditions of time pressure. Further, most members of the IPrA Consultation Board have occasionally, and some repeatedly, been called upon to review contributions. Countless other colleagues, too many to enumerate, have provided essential input by reviewing manuscripts.

The present editors want to make sure that the contribution made by the co-editors of the Manual and the first eight annual installments, is not forgotten: Jan Blommaert and Chris Bulcaen were central to the realization of the project. Similarly, Eline Versluys acted as editorial assistant for a five-year period ending in 2009. Our sincerest thanks to all of them.

Last but not least, we want to express our deepest appreciation for the team of editors willing to continue this ongoing Handbook project after we have decided it is time, after 30 years, to pass on responsibilities to a new generation: Frank Brisard, Pedro Gras, Mieke Vandenbroucke (all three at the University of Antwerp), and Sigurd D'hondt (at the University of Jyväskylä). You will be in their able hands for the foreseeable future.

Meanwhile, we hope the 24th installment of the Handbook will continue to serve your needs and inspire your future work.

Uppsala & Antwerp, September 2021.
Jan-Ola Östman & Jef Verschueren, editors

User's guide

Introduction

For the purpose of this publication, ***pragmatics*** can be briefly defined as *the cognitive, social, and cultural study of language and communication*. What this means exactly, and what it entails for the scientific status of linguistic pragmatics, was explained in detail in the introductory chapter, 'The pragmatic perspective' by Jef Verschueren, of the **Manual** (*Handbook of Pragmatics: Manual*, edited by Jef Verschueren, Jan-Ola Östman & Jan Blommaert, 1995).

The overall purpose of the **Handbook of Pragmatics** is that it should function as a tool in the search for *coherence*, in the sense of cross-disciplinary intelligibility, in this necessarily interdisciplinary field of scholarship. The background of the Handbook and its historical link with the International Pragmatics Association (IPrA), as well as its basic options, were described in the preface to the Manual. The Handbook format, although described in the same preface, will here be presented anew in this **User's Guide** for the sake of clarity.

The **Handbook of Pragmatics** will continue to be available ***online*** (see https://benjamins.com/online/hop). The printed version will continue to be expanded with *new articles* and will also incorporate *revised versions* of older entries. *Updates* that require minimal changes will be published only in the annual online releases. In addition, ***Highlights*** from the Handbook have been published in ten thematically organized paperbacks (in 2009, 2010, and 2011; cf. https://benjamins.com/catalog/hoph), making the contents accessible in an affordable way for use as practical teaching tools and reading materials for a wide range of pragmatics-related linguistics courses focusing specifically on general pragmatic, philosophical, cognitive, grammatical, social, cultural, variational, interactive, applied, or discursive aspects, respectively.

The Handbook format

In addition to the main body of the Handbook (including the topics listed under ***Handbook A–Z*** in this volume), the **Handbook of Pragmatics** contains three distinct types of articles:

i. ***Traditions***: Major traditions or approaches in, relevant to, or underlying pragmatics, either as a specific linguistic enterprise or as a scientific endeavor in general. Collectively, the articles in this section give an overview of the traditions and approaches in question, with historical background information and a description of present and potential interactions with other traditions or approaches and the field of pragmatics as a whole.
ii. ***Methods***: Major methods of research used or usable in pragmatics or pragmatics-related traditions.
iii. ***Notational systems***: Different kinds of notational systems, including the most widespread transcription systems.

The main body of the ***Handbook*** (represented in this volume by the section ***Handbook A–Z***) consists of articles of various sizes, organized around entry-like keywords, alphabetically organized. They range in generality: some provide a general overview of a particular field (which cannot be captured under the label of a 'tradition'; see above), others discuss a specific topic in quite some detail. They present a state-of-the-art overview of what has been done on the topic. Where necessary, they also mention what has not been dealt with extensively (e.g. acquisitional and diachronic aspects), thus suggesting topics for further research. Important research in progress is mentioned where appropriate. In addition, some references to major works are given.

A different type of article in the body of the Handbook (listed separately as 'Linguistic scholars' in the online version) is devoted to the contributions made by an individual influential scholar and may contain interesting biographical information as well.

The Handbook attempts to document pragmatics dynamically. Consequently, a *loose-leaf* publication format was initially chosen for maximum flexibility and expandability (see the Editors' Note above) – properties that are even more characteristic of the **Handbook of Pragmatics *Online***, which has therefore taken over that specific functionality to the point of rendering the loose-leaf printed format superfluous and replaceable by bound annual installments. By definition, there is no point in time when it is possible to say that the Handbook will be complete, though a reasonably comprehensive overview could be said to have been obtained after the eighth annual installment published in 2002, so that from then onwards, in addition to further *expansion*, there have been regular *revisions* and (in the online version) *updates* of older contributions. In the case of articles that are being replaced completely, the older versions are kept in the Archive section of the online version.

Even though we have given up paper publication in loose-leaf format, the very idea of continuous flexibility and expandability is retained. Being a vibrant field, pragmatics sees new openings and coherent subfields emerging constantly. Thus, most annual installment of the *Handbook of Pragmatics* will naturally also contain entries on such new directions of research.

About the cumulative index

At the end of each printed annual installment of the *Handbook of Pragmatics*, you will find a complete index, with all necessary cross-references to ensure easy access to the available information (which continuously accumulates over the years). The index thus does not only contain references to concepts and matters to be found in the annual installment at hand, but cross-references to all Handbook entries that have appeared in the *Handbook of Pragmatics*. Needless to say, this cumulative index is also continuously updated in the online version of the Handbook, under the heading 'Subjects,' where it also contains direct links to relevant articles.

In addition to references to specific Handbook entries, the index also contains lists of terms which are not used as entry headings but which do occur as alternative labels in the literature, with an indication of where exactly the topics in question are treated in the Handbook.

Methods

Regression analysis

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1. Introduction

For a long time, a family of statistical methods that fall under the umbrella term of regression analysis has been used routinely as a means to make quantitatively motivated inferences on research data. While systematic comparison between regression analysis and other kinds of statistical techniques goes beyond the scope of this chapter, there are a number of inter-related benefits that support the applicability of regression analysis in the study of pragmatics. First, given that certain general criteria have been considered, it provides reliable and robust results in a reproducible fashion. Second, once familiar with the basic logic underlying regression analysis, the results are relatively easy and straightforward to interpret. Third, regression analysis is very flexible in the sense that a similar research design with similar logic of reasoning can be applied to a range of research questions and to different types of variables. Fourth, and tying up the aforementioned, regression analyses have become widely used, and so the information provided by studies that make use of such techniques are easily accessible to a wide audience and make the results of different studies easier to compare, ultimately contributing positively to the transparency and the very cumulative nature of the scientific method. (For linguistically oriented discussions on the benefits of various forms of regression analyses, see e.g. Jaeger 2008; Johnson 2009; Tagliamonte and Baayen 2012; Gries 2015; Klavan and Divjak 2016; Plonsky and Oswald 2017.)

The conceptual rationale underlying regression analysis is relatively straightforward: the aim is to see whether, or to what degree, a given phenomenon can be explained by means of other information available – or, more formally, to model the relationship between the phenomenon of interest and other information using predictor functions estimated from the data. In the context of pragmatics, relevant examples could include the relationship between the use of a given linguistic phenomenon (e.g. a politeness marker) and its different contexts of use (e.g. age and education level of the speaker), or the disambiguation of a polysemous utterance based on contextual intra- and extralinguistic information available. The aim of this chapter is twofold: on the one hand, I give an overview of two standard types of regression analyses – linear regression and logistic regression – with an emphasis on the practical matters related to conducting such an

https://doi.org/10.1075/hop.24.reg2

analysis and to understanding the results. On the other hand, I also address the conceptual dimensions related to regression analysis and stress the importance of a thorough planning of the research design. Both aims are tackled using actual linguistic data, which organically calls for shedding light on some of the typical limitations and concerns faced when applying regression analysis to linguistic data. All the statistical analyses are conducted in the freely available programming environment R (R Core Team 2018), which has become widely used among quantitative linguists. In the interest of space, some of the technical details have been left out of the exemplary analyses, but I invite the readers to explore the associated R code.[1] I also encourage those new to R and/or to statistical analysis of linguistic data to dig deeper: nowadays there are numerous excellent resources available (e.g. Winter 2020; Gries 2021a): they provide more in-depth treatments on how different kinds of (regression) analyses are conducted and interpreted in practice, as well as more detailed descriptions of the mathematical properties of such analyses.

I begin this chapter by defining some of the key concepts related to regression analysis as well as introducing the data used in the exemplary analyses. I then introduce linear regression, the regression analysis suited for analysing numerically measured phenomena, addressing it by means of an exemplary analysis on the use of Finnish past tense in relation to the register variation and the L1/L2 status of the language user. I then move on to logistic regression as another form of regression analysis that is suited for analysing binary phenomena, exemplifying it again with an analysis on Finnish tense marking and the register and L1/L2 effects associated to it. Next, I discuss the independence assumption, whereby individual data points should not be inter-related so that their values are dependent on one another, and introduce the so-called random effects as a means to account for it in regression analysis. Finally, I conclude by discussing the role of statistical tests and model optimization.

2. Building blocks

The general goal in a regression analysis is to explain a given observed behavior by means of other information available. Observing the nature and the degree of the effect of this other information then helps us understand how the observed behavior is related to this other information. If we are able to capture the variance of the observed behavior well by means of the other information, the analysis can be considered reliable in explaining the phenomenon in question. In other words, the validity and reliability of the results are contingent on successfully defining the phenomenon of interest and on identifying the other information.

1. https://osf.io/fsva8/

In this chapter, I illustrate the key concepts of regression analysis using the example of the use of simple past tense in Finnish across native (L1) and advanced non-native (L2) speakers of Finnish. I begin by briefly introducing the phenomenon of interest and motivate the overall research design. Finnish is a strongly agglutinative language, and the simple past, too, has an overt morphological marker *-i-* that is attached to the verb stem before the morphemes indicating personal conjugation or other inflection. The use of the simple past is interesting for three inter-related reasons: First, it adds to the construction's morphosyntactic complexity via the interplay of frequency and salience when contrasted with the non-marked present tense constructions, making it prone to learner-sensitive patterning (Ellis 2016). Second, as with many languages (Biber 2014), different registers in Finnish vary drastically in terms of the distribution of tense (see Pallaskallio 2003; Hakulinen et al. 2004: §1531; Ivaska 2015), making tense a clear stylistic indicator. Third, thorough exposure to different registers is often seen as a prerequisite of advanced L2 proficiency, which, in turn, is often described to be characterized by mastery of such register differences (Council of Europe 2001).

Examples (1), (2), and (3) exemplify the construction in the first person singular, plural, and passive, respectively.

(1) *Minä puhu-**i**-n suome-a.*
I speak- **PST**-1SG Finnish-PRT
'I spoke Finnish.'

(2) *Me puhu-**i**-mme suome-a.*
we speak-**PST**-1PL Finnish-PRT
'We spoke Finnish.'

(3) Suome-a puhu-tt-**i**-in.
Finnish-PRT speak-PASS-**PST**-PASS
'Finnish was spoken.'

The first step of regression analysis is the same as in all other research designs of a descriptive nature: we need to operationalize the phenomenon of interest to understand what constitutes an *observation*. This operationalization defines the properties of the *response variable* (also called *dependent variable*), the phenomenon we want to explain. It will also have an impact on the definition of the *predicting variables* (also called *independent variables*), the information we use to describe the response variable. The operationalization has a central impact on what kind of regression analysis is appropriate for explaining the phenomenon – and it sometimes affects even a more general standpoint concerning the research design at hand (Biber 2012).

Here, I will showcase two different kinds of regression analyses on the Finnish simple past tense that make use of different kinds of operationalizations of the response variable. One option is to look at its frequency of use across L1 and L2 varieties and across

registers. Then, the prototypical unit of observation would be a (spoken or written) text, and the value of the response variable is the frequency of simple past tense constructions in a text – typically normalized (e.g. over 1,000 words) so as to make different texts comparable. The predicting variables, then, must characterize each unit of observation, and so in this case they must describe characteristics of a text. Let us call this the text-based approach. The other option is to focus on the variance on the constructional level, in which case single constructions constitute a unit of observation. For the simple past tense in Finnish, one meaningful operationalization is to contrast the simple past tense construction with the present tense construction, and so the response variable is the binary choice between the two. In this case, the predicting variables used to explain the typical difference between the use of the two tenses must describe characteristics of a construction, so let us call it the construction-based approach. While some predicting variables may be applicable and relevant to both approaches, some certainly are not.

Next, I first briefly introduce the data used in the exemplary analyses and move on to describe and discuss the different variables and how their varying properties should be acknowledged in a regression analysis. While everything presented is based on data stemming from existing corpora (for details, see below), I have, in the interest of space and in order to clarify the methodological main argument, simplified some of the analyses.

The data come from the following existing corpora: InterCorp (Čermák & Rosen 2012), the Corpus of Translated Finnish (Mauranen 2000), the Corpus of Academic Finnish (Ivaska, Nikulin & Reunanen 2021), the Corpus of Advanced Learner Finnish (Ivaska 2014), and the International Corpus of Learner Finnish (Jantunen 2011). In the interest of space, I will not describe and motivate all the data preprocessing details, but the final data comprise 318 texts sampled randomly from all the applicable data. The sample size is balanced in terms of the L1/L2 status and the registers included. Furthermore, the L2 section is balanced in terms of the different first languages (Czech, German, Russian). Table 1 summarizes the data composition.

As noted, many predicting variables may be applicable to both the text-based and the construction-based approaches. For the purposes of our example, both entire texts and single constructions can be described in terms of the L1/L2 status of the language user and the register each text/construction represents. However, many other predicting variables differ drastically depending on the approach adopted. For instance, texts can be described in terms of the frequencies of present tense constructions or the mean length of sentences of the text – both of which are likely to affect the relative frequency of the simple past tense forms within a text. Individual simple past tense constructions can, in turn, be characterized in terms of the grammatical number, person and voice they portray, as well as the length of the sentence in which the constructions occur. These may all reflect phenomena related to the construction's morphosyntactic complexity and can thus be considered relevant for this analysis. Irrespective of the approach, it is of paramount importance to understand the nature of these variables and the values all the vari-

ables can take, as this affects both the technical solutions of the regression analysis as well as the interpretation of the obtained results. For instance, the response variable of the text-based approach is numeric and continuous, as it tells us the normalized frequency of simple past tense constructions in a text. The response variable of the construction-based approach is, in turn, a binary variable as it has two possible levels: present tense or simple past tense. As for the predicting variables mentioned above, there are numeric variables (normalized frequency of the present tense in a text, mean length of sentences in a text, length of the sentence in which a construction occurs), binary variables (the L1/L2 status of the language user that produced a text/construction), as well as categorical variables with more than two levels (the register of a text, the grammatical categories of a construction). Tables 1 and 2 summarize the data and their nature for the text-based and construction-based approaches. As we go on, I will comment on how their role and type affect the regression analysis in different situations.

Table 1. Data and variables used in the text-based approach (318 observations)

Variable	Role	Type	Possible values
PAST: Simple past tense frequency (per 1,000 words)	response	numeric	mean (sd): 38.32 (37.98) min < med < max: 0.0 < 24.22 < 166.67
PRESENT: Present tense frequency (per 1,000 words)	predicting	numeric	mean (sd): 62.01 (46.05) min < med < max: 0.0 < 59.68 < 175.26
VARIETY: the L1/L2 status of the language user	predicting	categorical, fixed	L1 (159, 50%) L2 (159, 50%)
REGISTER	predicting	categorical, fixed	academic (99, 31.1%) argumentative (101, 32.4%) narrative (399, 33.6%)
INFORMANTID	predicting	categorical, random	244 individual values

As the goal of a regression analysis is to explain a given phenomenon using other information, the analysis is often called *modeling*: the aim is to model the behavior of the response variable by means of the predicting variable(s). For didactic purposes, we could simply model the frequency of the simple past tense (the item before the symbol ~ in the formal definition) as a function of the frequency of the present tense. This is simple linear regression, and the formal notation is as follows:

```
PAST ~ PRESENT
```

Table 2. Data and variables used in the construction-based approach (19,963 observations)

Variable	Role	Type	Possible values
TENSE	response	categorical	past (6,632, 33.2%) present (13,331, 66.8%)
VARIETY: the L1/L2 status of the language user	predicting	categorical, fixed	L1 (9,942, 49.8%) L2 (10,021, 50.2%)
REGISTER	predicting	categorical, fixed	academic (6,220, 31.2%) argumentative (6,392, 32.0%) narrative (7,351, 36.8%)
PERSON: Grammatical person and voice	predicting	categorical, fixed	sg1 (1,631, 8.2%) sg2 (179, 0.9%) sg3 (12,739, 63.8%) pl1 (410, 2.1%) pl2 (41, 0.2%) pl3 (3,112, 15.6%) pass (1,851, 9.3%)
INFORMANTID	predicting	categorical, random	512 individual values
TEXTID	predicting	categorical, random	1,483 individual values

Alternatively, and pertaining to our example, we might want to model the behavior of the response variable (the frequency of the past tense) by means of a categorical predicting variable: the variety (L1 vs L2) of the text, formally defined as follows:

```
PAST ~ VARIETY
```

Often there are more than only one predicting variable, in which case the analysis is called multiple regression.

Turning back to our example, instead of the present tense frequency, it is theoretically more relevant to model the frequency of the simple past tense as a function of the variety and the register the texts represent, with the following formal definition (where the symbol + separates the different predicting variables):

```
PAST ~ VARIETY + REGISTER
```

Finally, many predicting variables do not act in isolation, but they rather also affect each others' values. Again, in our example analysis we can, based on earlier research, hypothesize that L2 users of Finnish diverge from L1 users in terms of the register-specific linguistic typicalities. That is, there is an interaction between these variables, whereby the L1/L2 status has a different kind of effect on the simple past tense frequencies in different registers. This, too, can be implemented in the regression analysis, with the following

formal definition (where the symbol * indicates that both variables and their interaction are included in the model):

```
PAST ~ VARIETY * REGISTER
```

The model definitions above show the practical flexibility of regression analysis as a methodological tool: while the simple regressions (like the simple linear regression) behave essentially exactly like univariate statistical tests (van Hout 1994), they can be easily extended to simultaneously account for multiple variables. Note, however, that regression analysis does not tell us anything about the actual causal relation between the variables. While the reasoning resulting from the analysis often implies that changes in the predicting variables' values cause changes in the value of the response variable, such interpretations must stem from theoretical assumptions and earlier results concerning the phenomenon in question. Regression analysis is a tool to describe the relationship between the variables, not the causal direction of that relationship (for alternative solutions, see Larsson, Plonsky and Hancock 2020).

So far, I have covered some of the key constructs of regression analysis. Next, I begin with simple linear regression: a model with a numeric response variable (the frequency of simple past tense) and a single numeric predicting variable (the frequency of present tense). I build on that by looking at what the results actually mean. Then, I move on to altering the model by adding other relevant variables and discussing how this influences the regression analysis.[2]

3. Model 0: Modeling the numeric response variable as a function of one numeric predicting variable

Before diving deeper into these models and the exemplary analyses, let us briefly discuss what is actually being done in the regression analysis. The goal is to define the relationship between the response variable and the predicting variable(s) by estimating the parameters that can in turn be used to draw a *regression line*. Using the first model (theoretically uninteresting and hence named Model 0) definition above, the frequency of the simple past tense can be neatly summarized by giving its mean: in our data it occurs on average 35.5 times in every 1,000 words. Modelling it as a function of the frequency of the present tense means that we want to figure out how the frequency of the present tense generally affects that of the simple past, that is, we want to calculate its conditional means. Figure 1 summarizes the two variables for our data. Each circle in the plot

2. Note that altering the model and exploring multiple models here serves didactic purposes, and is not a good practice in actual analysis.

represents one text, with the frequency of the past tense on the vertical axis and the frequency of the present tense on the horisontal axis.

While the mathematical properties of regression analysis are beyond the scope of this chapter, it is good to understand the underlying basic logic. The regression line is defined using the *residuals*. Residuals tell us, for each observation, how far and in which direction they lie from the regression line. The optimal regression line is defined by finding the intercept and the slope (the starting point of the line and its angle) where the observations are the least off from the regression line, that is, when the sum of these residuals (or technically, their squared sum) is the smallest. In other words, the regression line is drawn so that the observations are as close to it as possible.

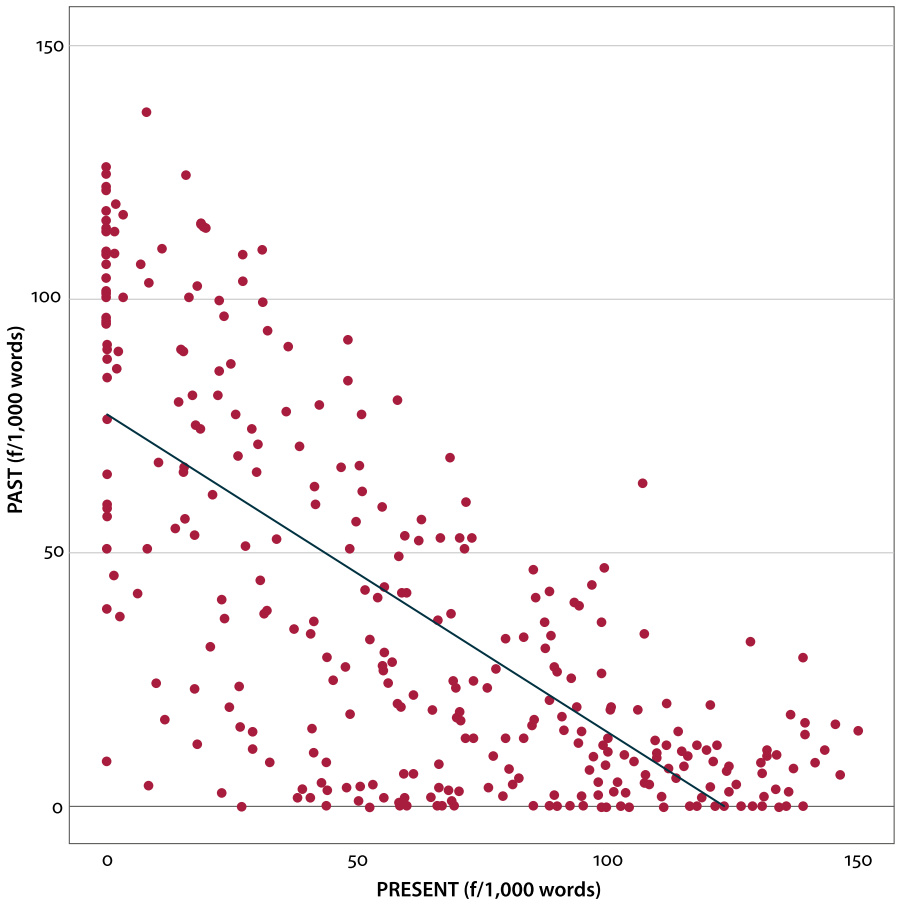

Figure 1. Simple past tense frequency by present tense frequency

As could be expected, the two variables are related, so that texts with higher frequencies of the simple past have lower frequency of the present tense. The regression line is a line that can be drawn across the figure, so that it captures this relationship in the best possible way – and this is essentially what the modeling function commands of statistics software calculate. This line is drawn in black in Figure 1. The software defines the intercept and the slope of the line by using the values of the variables in the data, and these values are then used to describe the model. Understanding the coefficients lies at the core when making sense of the relationship between the response variable and the predicting variable(s). Coefficients describe what the regression line looks like by telling us how changes in the predicting variable affect the value of the response variable. As shown in Table 3, for this model, the intercept (the hypothetical frequency of the simple past when the frequency of the present tense is zero) is 82.67, and the slope (how the simple past tense frequency changes if the frequency of the present tense goes up by one) is –0.68.[3] So, if we know that a text has a present tense frequency of 65, this model would suggest that the frequency of the simple past tense should be $76.88 - 0.61 * 65 \approx 37.23$ per 1,000 words.

Table 3. Model 0 coefficients

	Estimate	**Std. error**
(Intercept)	76.88	2.64
PRESENT	–0.61	0.03

Regression models are often evaluated in terms of their effect size, which essentially describes how well the model is able to describe the observed variance in the data. This is measured with the R^2 ('R squared'). R^2 values range from 0 to 1, where 1 refers to the hypothetical situation where the predicting variable(s) describe perfectly all the variance of the response variable. Simplistically, the R^2 value measures the strength of the relationship between the response variable and the predicting variable(s). (For a detailed but accessible description on the concept, see Winter 2020: 74–77.) In the model of the exemplary analysis, the (multiple) R^2 value is 0.55, meaning that the model describes 55% of the observed variance.[4]

3. These values are found in the model summary's `Coefficients` section under the column `Estimate` (see R script).

4. There are two R^2 values in the model summary. The adjusted value is always lower, as it counterbalances the effect of multiple predicting variables by penalizing the value for each added variable.

4. Model 1: Modeling the numeric response variable as a function of one categorical predicting variable

The model above exemplified the basic logic of simple linear regression where both the response variable and the predicting variable are numeric. However, explaining the frequency of the simple past tense as a function of the frequency of the present tense is somewhat circular and theoretically not very interesting. Let us move to a theoretically more motivated model by comparing L1 users and advanced L2 users of Finnish. As discussed before, regression analysis can also be implemented when analysing categorical variables. If I want to look at whether L1 and L2 users differ in terms of their use of the simple past tense, I can model the frequency of the simple past tense as a function of the speaker variety (L1/L2 status).

Table 4. Model 1 coefficients

	Estimate	**Std. error**
(Intercept)	41.79	3.00
VARIETYL2	−6.95	4.25

The coefficients (Table 4) look very similar to what we saw before, and the general logic is indeed the same: the focus is still on the conditional means of the response variable for different values of the predicting variable. Now that the predicting variable has just two values (L1 and L2), the model can be used to compare these two. R by default assigns whatever comes first in the alphabet to what is called the 'reference level', which in this case corresponds to the intercept, so it is L1. The coefficient of 41.79 thus simply gives the mean frequency of the simple past tense in the L1 data per 1,000 words, and for the L2 data it is $41.79 - 6.95 \approx 34.84$ per 1,000 words. Figure 2 visualizes the result.

Looking at coefficient estimates and the respective visualization suggests there is a difference between the two groups. Note, however, that the difference is relatively moderate and that the R^2 value is only 0.01, meaning that the model can describe around 1% of the observed variance. This suggests that there are other factors that affect the simple past tense frequency.

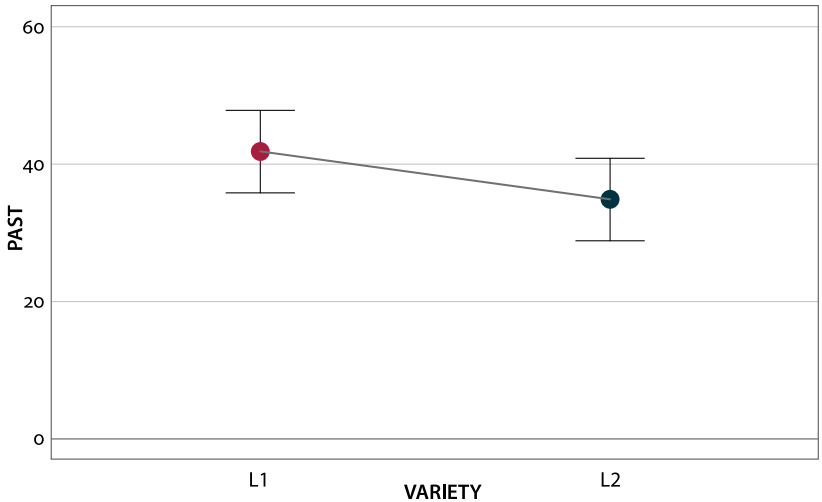

Figure 2. Plotting PAST as a function of VARIETY[5]

5. Model 2: Modeling the numeric response variable as a function of two categorical predicting variables

The flexibility of the regression analysis becomes even more concrete when moving from simple regressions to multiple regressions, which simply means that several predicting variables are accounted for in one model. The basic logic stays exactly the same and including the different variables into a single model makes it possible to evaluate the effect of one predicting variable while keeping the other variables constant. Turning back to the exemplary analysis, I hypothesized earlier that both the L1/L2 status of the language user and the register of the text might be related to the use of the simple past tense. Let me model the frequency of the simple past tense as a function of speaker variety (L1/L2 status) and register.

As Table 5 shows, there are now two more estimates. In the case of multiple regression analysis, the first thing to do to understand the results is to figure out what are the reference levels of the intercept: with two predicting categorical variables it is the combination of the alphabetically first values of them both. In other words, the intercept estimate of 30.15 is what the model estimates the simple past tense frequency to be when the variety is L1 and the register is academic. This is also the catch that might be confusing: in this model the two variables are treated independently from each other, and

5. In categorical variables like here, the regression line is drawn from one group to another, and it does not indicate any gradual change.

Table 5. Model 2 coefficients

	Estimate	Std. error
(Intercept)	30.15	3.51
VARIETYL2	−10.29	3.49
REGISTERargumentative	−6.67	4.39
REGISTERnarrative	41.58	4.24

so the VARIETY variable describes the effect of variety in general and the REGISTER variable the effect of register in general. Hence, the estimates do not match the means that could be calculated directly from the data but the model's overall estimate of the effect of these variables. While it makes interpreting the results a little tricky, the good thing is that this allows for teasing apart the effect of different variables.

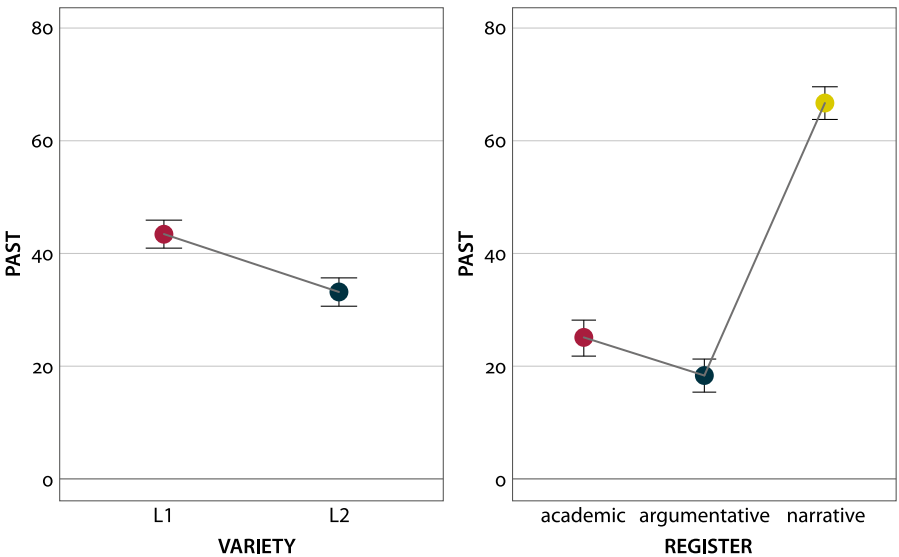

Figure 3. Plotting PAST as a function of VARIETY and REGISTER

As before, visualization helps in understanding the results. Figure 3 confirms the overall tendencies: the left panel is the same as before, showing that simple past tense is less frequent in the L2 data than it is in the L1 data. The right panel visualizes the other variables' behavior: simple past tense is least frequent in the argumentative texts, while its frequency in the narrative texts is over two times as high as in the other two registers. What is more, there is also a drastic change in the effect size: the R^2 value of 0.34 indicates that these two variables describe the variance much better than the variety alone.

6. Model 3: Modeling the numeric response variable as a function of two categorical predicting variables that interact

It is good to keep in mind that regression analysis can do many things, but it only does what it is asked to do. If the response variable is modelled as a function of one predicting variable (as in model 0 and model 1 above), only the information provided is considered in the model. Likewise, if modeling is done as a function of multiple predicting variables, the regression analysis treats them by default as independent and not related to each other. This is often not the case, and some of the core constructs of pragmatics such as context often interact with other variables involved. Here, interaction essentially means that the effect of one predicting variable varies depending on the values of another predicting variable. Luckily, regression analysis can also account for this and the interaction between the predicting variables as long as it is asked to do so.

For instance, I now know that L2 users of Finnish use less simple past tense forms than L1 users, and that there are less simple past tense constructions in academic texts than in narrative texts. However, my hypothesis was in fact that the two are inter-related: the difference between the L1 and L2 users might indeed be related to how the different registers differ from each other. Hence, let me model the frequency of the simple past tense as a function of the speaker variety and the register – and an interaction between the two.

Table 6. Model 3 coefficients

	Estimate	Std. error
(Intercept)	26.26	4.22
VARIETYL2	−1.91	6.19
REGISTERargumentative	−5.82	5.97
REGISTERnarrative	52.41	5.97
VARIETYL2:REGISTERargumentative	−1.99	8.71
VARIETYL2:REGISTERnarrative	−20.97	8.41

A quick look at the effect size suggests that the interaction is indeed relevant to take into account: the R^2 value now jumped up to 0.36. With interactions included in the model, a careful inspection of the coefficients (Table 6) becomes even more crucial for a meaningful interpretation of the results (for a detailed discussion on interactions, see Winter 2020: 133–156). As above, the estimates are relative to the intercept (where the reference level is an academic text written by an L1 user of Finnish): `VARIETYL2` describes the change in the estimate when the variety is L2 but the register is still academic. Similarly, `REGISTERargumentative` describes the change when the register changes to argumen-

tative but the variety is still L1, and `REGISTERnarrative` describes the change when the register changes to narrative but the variety is still L1. Including the interaction has, however, changed the estimates, and now the model summary includes two more lines that describe the interaction effects. Essentially, the two last lines describe the additional change in the estimate if both values take place simultaneously. So, the `VARIETYL2:REGISTERargumentative` estimate describes the additional effect of the combination of the two variable levels. Thus, the estimate for the simple past frequency in an argumentative text written by L2 user of Finnish is calculated as follows: 26.26 (the intercept) – 1.91 (because the variety is L2) – 5.82 (because the register is argumentative) – 1.99 (because the two previous conditions happen at the same time) ≈ 16.54.

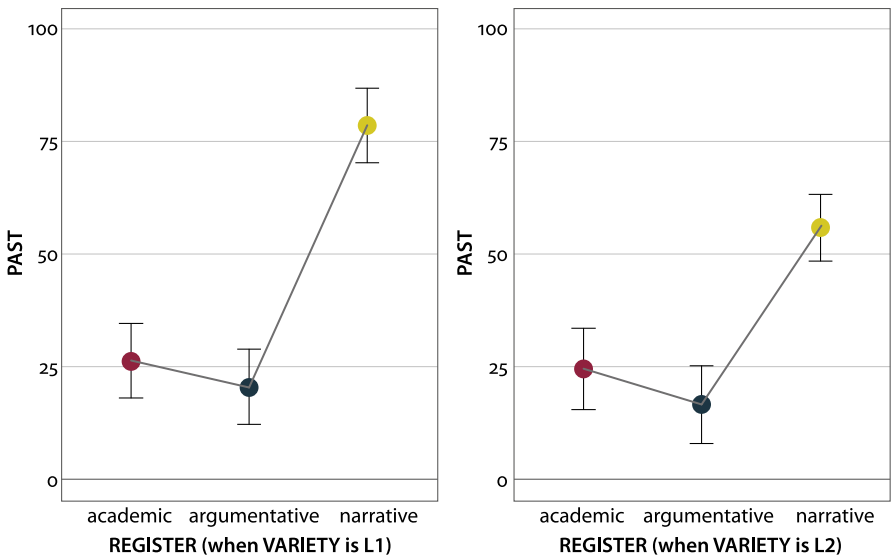

Figure 4. Plotting PAST as a function of REGISTER interacting with VARIETY

It is important to note that when an interaction term is included, the effect of the individual variables should not be interpreted in isolation but only in relation to each other. Here, too, visualizing the effects helps a lot. The panels in Figure 4 represent the two varieties separately. It becomes clear that while narrative has the highest frequency of simple past tense constructions in both varieties, the difference from the other registers is much more remarkable in the L1 data (left panel) than in the L2 data (right panel). What is more, the earlier hypothesis that advanced L2 users would systematically use less simple past tense constructions than L1 users is rejected: the difference is rather related to register typicalities.

The examples above showed how to conduct a regression analysis on data with a continuous response variable and either continuous or categorical predicting variables.

Next, I will move on to analyses where the response variable is a binary categorical variable. The general research question of the analysis stays the same: To what extent and how does the use of the Finnish simple past tense differ across L1 and L2 speakers of Finnish? I will now move from a text-based approach to a construction-based approach and focus on the properties of individual verb constructions instead of properties of entire texts.

7. Logistic regression

In pragmatics, as well as in linguistics in general, the research designs are often structured around binary situations. These include, but are not limited to, situations where two speaker groups, two contexts of language use, or two competing constructions are contrasted. Alternatively, the presence or absence of a certain condition (e.g., a sociolinguistic variable) is at the core of the inquiry. Regression analysis extends well to such purposes, too, and much of the discussion above on linear regression models is directly applicable.

The central issue is that regression works on a numeric linear space, whereas binary variables have two values – and bridging this gap is called generalized linear regression. Here, again, the mathematical details go beyond the scope of the present chapter, and the focus is on the conceptual understanding of the operations that underlie this bridging.

First, in order to convert the response variable into a numerically interpretable form, its values should be thought of as zeros and ones. The ultimate goal of the modeling does not change: we are still attempting to model the response variable as a function of the predicting variables – so as to understand how the predicting variables relate to the response variable. As the value of the response variable is either zero or one (with the intercept set to zero), the values that the model predicts obviously should fall between them, and the relationship, thus, cannot be linear. The solution underlying the generalized linear model is called the *logistic function* that links the continuous-valued output of the predicting variables to the predicative equation by compressing it to the interval of 0–1 by means of logarithmic transformation. As the resulting parameter values must be between zero and one, the model essentially calculates the odds – in other words: probabilities – between the two by looking at the values of the predicting variables: the predicted values below 0.5 are closer to the intercept (and, hence, the reference level of the response variable) and the values above 0.5 are closer to the other values. While all this is done "under the hood" by the statistical software, a basic conceptual understanding of the procedures facilitates a more thorough understanding of the results gained (see chapter 5.3 in Gries 2021a for a more detailed, but practical overview). Second, as mentioned above, the modeling is done via the logistic function, which means that the coefficients are not directly interpretable as probabilities between zero and one. They are *logarithmic*

odds (log odds), values between negative infinity to positive infinity with 0 corresponding to the probability of 0.5, which makes it possible to use the mechanisms of the linear regression. Hence, in order to thoroughly understand their values, the estimates of a logistic model must in R be converted back to normal probabilities – to values between zero and one.

Turning back to our previous example of the use of the Finnish simple past tense across native and non-native language users makes it easier to get a hold of the logistic regression. The data are still the same 318 texts, but each observation is now a single construction rather than a text. This means that the (binary) response variable here is the tense choice between the present tense and the simple past – with the underlying reasoning being that we can better understand the tense use by modeling the intra- and extra-linguistic contexts where the simple past tense is favored as against those where the present tense is favored. For the analysis, I have extracted all the 19,963 occurrences of the two tenses and annotated them by the predicting variables (see Table 2 above).

8. Model 4: Modeling the binary response variable as a function of one categorical predicting variable

To get a hold of the overall idea, let me revisit the numeric model 1, but now use the binary choice between the present and the past tense as the response variable (`TENSE`) and the L1/L2 status of the language user (`VARIETY`) as the only predicting variable.

Table 7. Model 4 coefficients

	(Logit) estimate	Std. error
(Intercept)	0.41	0.02
VARIETYL2	0.60	0.03

Interpreting the results of a logistic regression is generally very similar to interpreting those of linear regression: the main focus is on making sense of how the variables studied are related – and this is done by understanding the coefficients shown in Table 7. As before, it is necessary to understand what the intercept means. In the case of the predicting variable `VARIETY`, the reference level is L1. However, now that the response variable is binary (with values converted to zeros and ones), we also have to make sure we know what value corresponds to zero. In R, the default is again that the alphabetically first value is set to zero, so that the possible values of the `TENSE` variable are `past` and `present`, and zero corresponds to `past`. In other words, the estimate of the intercept tells us the odds for the present tense use, but as a log odds value. So, instead of trying to interpret the value 0.41 in any meaningful way, we first have to convert it back to the zero-to-one scale. After the conversion the estimate stands at 0.60, which indicates that, on the

reference level, present tense constructions (corresponding to the value of one) are more likely than the past tense ones (corresponding to the value of zero). As before, the second line of the coefficients indicates the difference from the intercept. Even without the conversion, the change in the estimates indicates the direction of the difference: VARIETYL2 has a positive value, which indicates that for the L2 data, the tense is more likely to be present than in the L1 data. After summing up the intercept and the change in the estimate together and converting this to the zero-to-one scale, we get the estimate of 0.73 for the L2 data, effectively indicating that L2 users are more likely to use the present tense than L1 users.

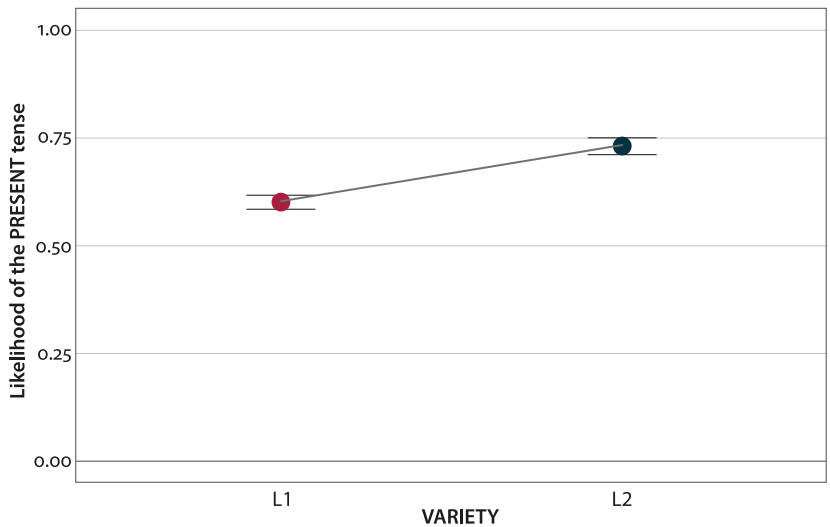

Figure 5. Plotting TENSE as a function of VARIETY

Just as before, plotting the results helps a lot in understanding the pattern. As visualized in Figure 5, the TENSE variable on the y-axis is closer to zero when the VARIETY variable is L1, confirming the interpretation above. Note, however, that the R^2 value of the model is only 0.02, indicating that, much like with Model 1, the variety alone does not capture the tense use very well.

9. Model 5: Modeling the binary response variable as a function of two categorical predicting variables that interact

Next, let me model the tense choice with the same predicting variables as in Model 3: VARIETY and REGISTER. As expected, the results are very similar – and like above, the R^2 value of the model also gets up to 0.15, indicating that the model now describes the tense

variation much better. Crucially, the model still indicates clear differences in the tense distribution across the registers studied: the argumentative register favors the present tense more than the other registers, and this tendency is stronger in the L2 data. Furthermore, the narrative register favors the past tense more than the other registers, and this tendency is much stronger in the L1 data. Table 8 provides the coefficients as log odds. For the purposes of this chapter, Table 9 also includes the estimates converted into a zero-to-one scale and calculated for each combination or predicting variables, while Figure 6 visualizes the same information.

Table 8. Model 5 coefficients

	(Logit) estimate	Std. error
(Intercept)	0.52	0.04
VARIETYL2	0.45	0.05
REGISTERargumentative	0.93	0.06
REGISTERnarrative	−1.04	0.05
VARIETYL2:REGISTERargumentative	0.08	0.09
VARIETYL2:REGISTERnarrative	0.59	0.07

Table 9. Model 5 converted coefficients calculated for each level combination

Variable level combination	Estimate
VARIETY: L1 & REGISTER: academic	0.63
VARIETY: L2 & REGISTER: academic	0.73
VARIETY: L1 & REGISTER: argumentative	0.81
VARIETY: L1 & REGISTER: narrative	0.37
VARIETY: L1 & REGISTER: argumentative	0.88
VARIETY: L2 & REGISTER: narrative	0.63

10. Model 6: Modeling the binary response variable as a function of two categorical predicting variables that interact with a third categorical variable

As mentioned earlier, the unit of observation defines the nature of the response variable and, hence, also the predicting variables. So far, I have used the same variables, but the construction-based approach applied in the logistic regression allows for including also other potentially important predicting variables that describe the properties of the lin-

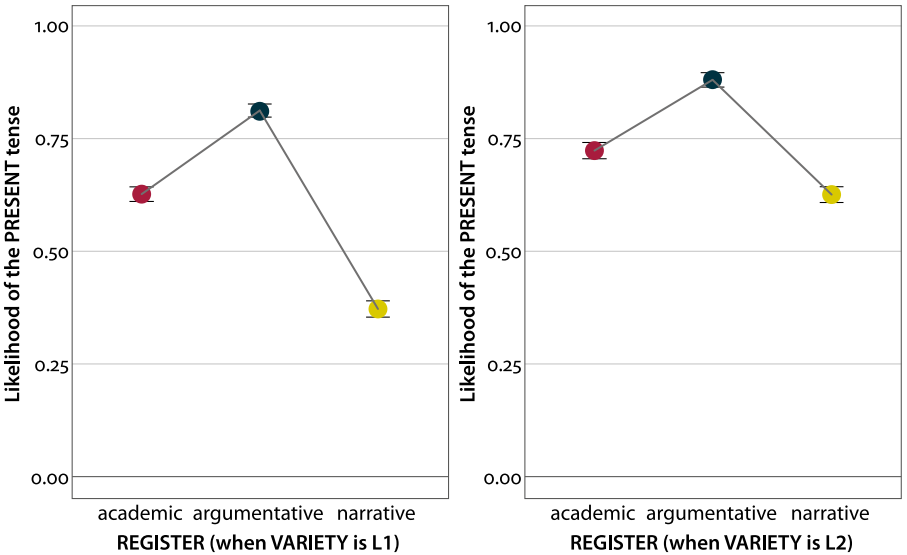

Figure 6. Plotting TENSE as a function of REGISTER interacting with VARIETY

guistic contexts where the tense construction occurs. For the purposes of this chapter, I have included a linguistic variable, the grammatical person and number of the past tense construction as one variable. Furthermore, I have included an interaction term between this variable and the variety, so as to see whether L1 and L2 users generally differ in this respect. As in the examples above, Table 10 provides the coefficients as log odds, while Figure 7 visualizes the converted coefficient estimates.

The R^2 value of 0.23 indicates that the model now describes the variance even better. While the results regarding register effects across the varieties have not changed, the predicting variable of grammatical number and person indicates clear differences: singular second person is more common in the present tense than the other conjugational forms, while singular and plural first person are more common in the past tense.

There is also one clear difference between L1 and L2 users in how these forms pattern with respect to each other: in the L1 data, the third person singular form is more strongly associated with the past tense than in the L2 data. Finally, as becomes clear from Figure 7 (and the standard error column in Table 10), there are too few observations of second person plural forms for the model to be able to give a reliable estimate for it.

11. Independence assumption and mixed effects models

Any statistical technique is based on assumptions, and violations of these assumptions can render results unreliable in some circumstances. From the point of view of the over-

Table 10. Model 6 coefficients

	(Logit) estimate	Std. error
(Intercept)	0.83	0.10
VARIETYL2	−0.17	0.13
REGISTERargumentative	0.93	0.06
REGISTERnarrative	−1.19	0.06
NUMBERPERSONsg2	2.24	0.31
NUMBERPERSONsg3	−0.31	0.09
NUMBERPERSONpl1	0.07	0.19
NUMBERPERSONpl2	13.83	103.16
NUMBERPERSONpl3	−0.24	0.11
NUMBERPERSONpass	−0.46	0.11
VARIETYL2:REGISTERargumentative	0.12	0.09
VARIETYL2:REGISTERnarrative	0.76	0.08
VARIETYL2:NUMBERPERSONsg2	0.90	0.79
VARIETYL2:NUMBERPERSONsg3	0.56	0.12
VARIETYL2:NUMBERPERSONpl1	−0.56	0.25
VARIETYL2:NUMBERPERSONpl2	−0.85	167.96
VARIETYL2:NUMBERPERSONpl3	0.87	0.14
VARIETYL2:NUMBERPERSONpass	0.95	0.16

all research design, the most central assumption is the independence of the observations included in the data: it is assumed that values of any observation included in the data do not give information on the values of other observations (Kenny & Judd 1986). Typical nonindependencies are described as being due to groups, to sequence, or to space. In the context of pragmatics, such dependencies include, but are not limited to, observations from the same register (Szmrecsanyi 2019) or the same speaker group (Wieling, Nerbonne and Baayen 2011), but also observations from the same text (Röthlisberger, Grafmiller and Szmrecsanyi 2017) or speech event (Cangemi, Krüger and Grice 2015) or from the same language user (Tagliamonte and Baayen 2012). Furthermore, various kinds of priming effects can also be seen as potential sources of nonindependence, as can the nature of the speech event. For a thorough discussion on the forms of and issues related to the independence assumption in different subfields of linguistics, see Winter & Grice (2021).

Crucially, nonindependence should not be avoided altogether; in many ways it is part and parcel of linguistic inquiry. Rather, we should be aware of it, identify its likely sources, and address them in the study design, as has been done in the example analyses by including multiple variables and their interactions in the same model. Yet, for many sources of nonindepdence, the traditional way of defining categorical variables as a closed group of possible values is not suitable. For instance, idiosyncrasies or text-specific phenomena cannot be controlled for by pre-defining all their possible values.

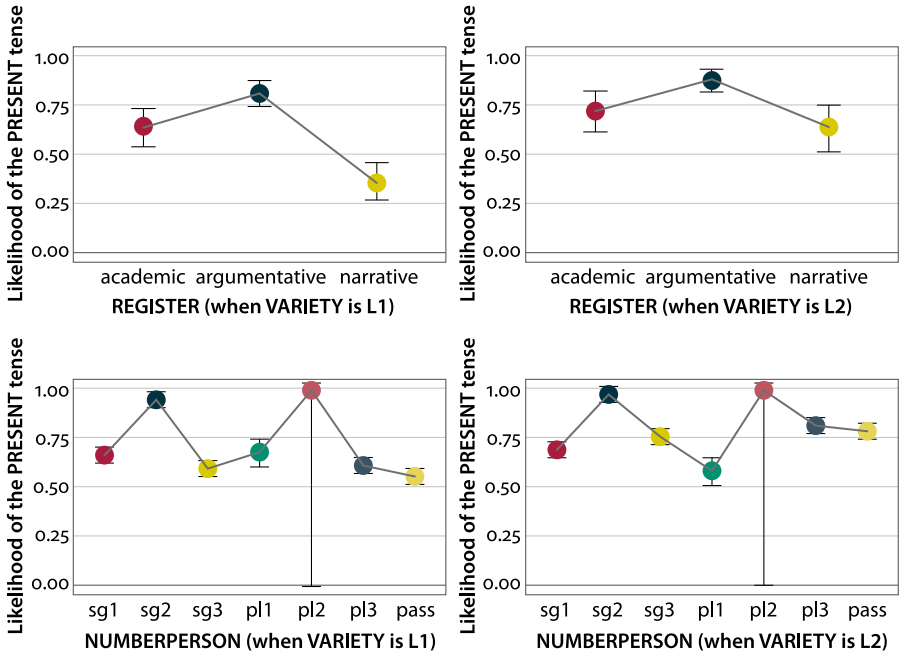

Figure 7. Plotting TENSE as a function of REGISTER and NUMBERPERSON interacting with VARIETY

In recent years, the research community within quantitative linguistics has adopted the inclusion of random effects in the regression analyses to account for variance related to potential sources of nonindependence (e.g. Baayen, Davidson and Bates 2008; Jaeger et al. 2011; Tagliamonte and Baayen 2012; Gries 2015). Without going into details of the mathematical properties, the use of mixed models – introducing both fixed and random variables to the regression model – makes it possible to accommodate the sources of nonindependence, when modelling the behavior of the response variable at hand. Despite the name, random variables are not random in the sense that their value is not known – instead, the randomness refers to the fact that they constitute an open group whose all possible values are not pre-defined. There are two types of random effects: first, including random intercepts means that each level of the given random variable (e.g. each speaker found in the data) will get an individual estimate for the intercept value. Second, including random slopes means that the effect of a given fixed variable (e.g. part of speech) will vary across each level of the given random variable.

Turning back to our example analyses, we have so far used the variables VARIETY, REGISTER, and NUMBERPERSON as fixed predicting variables when modelling either the frequency of the past tense or the distribution between the past and the present tense. Consider Model 3, where we modelled the frequency of the Finnish past as a function of

variety and register. The modelling revealed, among other things, that the estimate for an academic text written by an L1 speaker is 26.26 per 1,000 words and that, for a narrative text by an L1 speaker it is 52.41 higher. These tendencies were also summarized in Figure 4. As it turns out, some of the texts included in the data were written by the same informants, which is a clear violation of the independence assumption. This issue can be addressed in the regression analysis by adding into the model a random intercept for each INFORMANTID. Technically, this means that the past tense frequency is still modelled as a function of the same two variables but that each informant now has an individual intercept value, and the model definition is as follows (where the last element defines the random effect):

```
PAST ~ VARIETY * REGISTER + (1|INFORMANTID)
```

Table 11 shows the estimates of the model's fixed effects together with those of model 3 (the same model without the random effect). As can be seen, they have not changed drastically, and there is no need to substantially re-iterate the general interpretations: narrative register diverges substantially from the other two registers, and this effect is clearly more pronounced among L1 speakers than among L2 speakers. This is also corroborated by looking at the R^2 values: $R^2_{marginal}$, which includes only fixed effects, is at 0.35 while $R^2_{conditional}$ which includes both fixed and random effects, is at 0.39.

Table 11. Model 3 and Model 7 coefficient estimates calculated for each level combination of (fixed variables)

Variable level combination	Estimate (Model 7)	Estimate (Model 3)
VARIETY: L1 & REGISTER: academic	25.7	26.3
VARIETY: L2 & REGISTER: academic	24.4	24.4
VARIETY: L1 & REGISTER: argumentative	20.5	20.5
VARIETY: L1 & REGISTER: narrative	78.6	78.7
VARIETY: L2 & REGISTER: argumentative	16.0	16.6
VARIETY: L2 & REGISTER: narrative	55.2	55.8

12. Model 8: Modeling the binary response variable as a function of two categorical predicting variables that interact with a third categorical variable and two nested random predicting variables

Accounting for the independence assumption also calls for revisiting model 6, where I modelled the choice between the present and the simple past tense as a function of register and grammatical number/person, both in interaction with variety. As above, there

are multiple observations from the same informant, which should be accounted for in the model. What is more, each use of either of the two tenses constitutes an observation and, hence, there may be multiple observations from the same text. These two variables together constitute a so-called nested random effect structure (for the term, see Gries 2021b): they are hierarchically related as each observation from the same text also comes from the same informant. Hence, the revisited model definition is as follows (where the symbol / indicates the nested structure of the random effect):

```
TENSE ~ VARIETY * REGISTER + VARIETY * NUMBERPERSON + (1|INFORMANTID/TEXTID)
```

Table 12 shows the coefficient estimates for Model 6 and Model 8. As above, the estimates do not change the general pattern dramatically: as visualized already in Figure 7 above, register effects follow the same trend with a clear preference for the past tense in the L1 narrative texts. As before, second person forms are used almost exclusively in the present tense in both varieties, whereas the singular third person is more prone to the past tense in L1 than in L2 and the plural first person is more prone to the past tense in L2 than in L1. Comparing the estimates between the models does, however, reveal also some clear differences especially related to academic texts in both varieties: the estimates of Model 8 show an even stronger preference for the present tense. This indicates that the data include few academic texts that make relatively more use of the past tense, and that we were able to control for their effect in the mixed model. A similar trend is seen to a lesser degree also elsewhere: few exceptional texts and/or informants are likely to have affected the results of Model 6. This interpretation is corroborated by looking at the R^2 values: $R^2_{marginal}$ with only fixed effects is at 0.22, whereas $R^2_{conditional}$ with both fixed and random effects goes up to 0.56.

13. Statistical significance, model planning, and effect size

So far, this chapter has discussed interpretations of regression analyses and the kinds of inferences for which they can be used. I have deliberately omitted any discussion on statistical significance. When tests of statistical significance are computed for regression analyses, one should be clear as to what is actually being tested. By default, model summaries typically provide tests for the statistical significance for the so-called simple effects and for the entire model. For numeric predicting variables there is no problem, but for categorical variables, simple effects measure the effect between the reference level and the variable value at hand when all the other variables in the model remain unchanged, and so the test result does not cover the overall effect of the said variable. While there are different strategies for converting the variable values to make interpreting more meaningful and straight-forward (e.g. Serlin and Levin 1985), a reasonable approach in a confirmatory research design with clearly articulated hypotheses for each

Table 12. Model 6 and Model 8 coefficient estimates calculated for each level combination (of fixed variables)

Variable level combination	Estimate (Model 8)	Estimate (Model 6)
VARIETY: L1 & REGISTER: academic	0.76	0.65
VARIETY: L2 & REGISTER: academic	0.81	0.73
VARIETY: L1 & REGISTER: argumentative	0.89	0.82
VARIETY: L1 & REGISTER: narrative	0.35	0.36
VARIETY: L1 & NUMBERPERSON: sg1	0.74	0.67
VARIETY: L1 & NUMBERPERSON: sg2	0.97	0.95
VARIETY: L1 & NUMBERPERSON: sg3	0.67	0.59
VARIETY: L1 & NUMBERPERSON: pl1	0.77	0.68
VARIETY: L1 & NUMBERPERSON: pl2	1.0	1.0
VARIETY: L1 & NUMBERPERSON: pl3	0.69	0.61
VARIETY: L1 & NUMBERPERSON: pass	0.63	0.56
VARIETY: L2 & REGISTER: argumentative	0.94	0.89
VARIETY: L2 & REGISTER: narrative	0.72	0.64
VARIETY: L2 & NUMBERPERSON: sg1	0.74	0.70
VARIETY: L2 & NUMBERPERSON: sg2	0.99	0.98
VARIETY: L2 & NUMBERPERSON: sg3	0.84	0.75
VARIETY: L2 & NUMBERPERSON: pl1	0.59	0.59
VARIETY: L2 & NUMBERPERSON: pl2	1.0	1.0
VARIETY: L2 & NUMBERPERSON: pl3	0.87	0.81
VARIETY: L2 & NUMBERPERSON: pass	0.85	0.79

categorical variable and interaction is to test and report their statistical significance by comparing the model in question with one where that variable (or interaction) has been left out. This can be done easily by means of anova tests. As an example, Table 13 reports the results of such tests for model 3.

Table 13. Anova tests for each variable and interaction in Model 3

Variable	Degrees of freedom	F	P value
Interaction between VARIETY and REGISTER	2	3.9101	0.0210
REGISTER	4	41.995	< 0.0001
VARIETY	3	5.5606	0.0010

What these results can be interpreted to indicate is that the effect of REGISTER, VARIETY as well as their interaction on the frequency of the simple past tense, are each statistically reliable. Importantly, we had an original separate hypothesis for each of these variables, and so the conceptual goal was not to test whether any of these had an effect, but to test each of them separately. Although this issue may seem trivial, conducting multiple comparisons in the context of regression analyses is an issue that has been discussed extensively (for an overview of the discussion, see Gries 2021a: 361–370). When using regression analyses, a relatively standard practice has been to include some sort of model optimization procedure as part of the research design. That is, when choosing the predicting variables to be included in the final model, a pool of potentially relevant variables is considered, and the variables for an optimal model are then selected based on an optimization criterion. A typical approach within linguistics has been stepwise regression: potentially relevant variables are added to and/or removed from the model one by one, and different combinations are contrasted according to a given metric to choose the model that fares best. Such an optimization may lead to problems related to reporting "too good" results that cannot be repeated with any other data, or to testing multiple hypotheses in order to find anything of statistical significance (e.g. Whittingham et al. 2006; Mundry and Nunn 2009; Forstmeier and Schielzeth 2011). Simplistically, when testing many enough variables, one is likely to find something that has a statistically significant effect – and including only those variables in the final model makes the results look too good.

Testing and reporting statistical significances of relationships between variables has for a long time been an important part of statistical inference among linguists (van Hout 1994), and regression analysis is no exception. While such tests may in some contexts work as a reasonable way to measure the reliability of interpretations – e.g. of how likely two compared samples of the response variable (differing by a given predicting variable) stem from the same population – they should never precede a thorough understanding of the nature of the relationship between the said variables (for a linguistically accessible account of problems with statistical significance testing, see Norris 2015). In the context of regression analysis, this means that the primary focus should be placed on coefficients rather than on p-values. What is more, a clear distinction should be made between confirmatory and exploratory approaches: the former essentially focuses on testing preexisting hypotheses that are motivated by theory and earlier results, whereas the latter instead generates new hypotheses by identifying new structures and relationships (e.g. Winter 2020: 275). While both can be done using regression analysis, traditional statistical significance testing and the inherently related reporting of p-values should only be used in confirmatory research designs (for details about the underlying logic of statistical testing, see van Hout 1994).

The issues dealt with above are related to a more general discussion of the so-called "researcher's degrees of freedom": the decisions that a researcher is faced with and that

may potentially affect the seemingly objective result of the study one way or another (e.g. Simmons, Nelson and Simonsohn 2011; for a linguistically oriented discussion, see Roettger 2019). This is central also in pragmatics, where the situated nature and multifacetedness of the object of study is a defining feature of the entire field. Possible solutions (Roettger 2019) include adjusting the threshold levels of statistical significance, explicitly framing studies as either confirmatory or exploratory (see also above), preregistering publicly the study designs (e.g. the data sources and the predicting variables to-be-included) before conducting the actual analysis, conducting replication studies, as well as generally maximizing the overall transparency of all parts of the study procedures.

14. Conclusion

This chapter has introduced the use of regression analysis as a flexible methodological tool for inferential statistics. I have discussed two types of regression analyses, linear regression for numeric response variables and logistic regression for binary response variables. The example analysis of the use of the Finnish past tense made it possible to take either a text-based approach or a construction-based approach. Oftentimes there is no such choice – the right method depends on the data and the research question at hand. The chapter has also covered different types of predicting variables, with a particular focus on what the results of such analyses actually mean and how they can be interpreted. I also briefly discussed the assumption of independent observations and the concept of mixed models as a common way to address this in regression analyses. Unlike many other accounts on regression analysis, I have decided to leave out the discussion of other assumptions that underlie regression analysis: while issues like distributional characteristics of residuals as well as variable collinearity might have an effect on the results (for extensive discussions on this topic, see Winter 2020: Chapters 4, 6, and 12; Gries 2021a: Chapter 5.6), their importance is, quoting Winter (2020: 232) "*far* outweighed by the 'independence assumption'". What is more, the so-called Bayesian approach to regression, where these assumptions are not relevant, is constantly gaining ground among linguists. The conceptual difference between the frequentist approach discussed here and the Bayesian approach is beyond the scope of this chapter (for an informative review, see Norouzian, de Miranda and Plonsky 2018), but the logic of reasoning presented here generally also holds for the Bayesian approach.

All in all, my attempt has been to address the role of thoughtful planning of the overall research design and the actual meaning of statistical testing in the context of regression analysis. Other types of response variables (e.g. ordinal or other multinomial categorical variables as well as poisson-distributed numeric variables) call for a slightly different kind of treatment, but the general logic of interpreting the results is largely the

same. I hope that the chapter highlights the potential that regression analysis has for research in pragmatics.

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Traditions

Postcolonial pragmatics

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1. Introduction: Confronting the contemporary

As I write this essay, the Taliban have taken over the government in Afghanistan after a precipitous US withdrawal from the country. It goes without saying that this marks a major turn in a complex regional history that led President Biden to describe Afghanistan, in a familiar trope, as the 'Graveyard of Empires'. The allusion is not without Gricean irony since it strongly implies that the US is in fact a modern empire-builder, a *de facto* colonizer in postcolonial times. Meanwhile, the new Afghan Minister for Education has, in his turn, unequivocally declared: "No PhD degree, Master's degree is valuable today. You see that the Mullahs and Taliban that are in power have no PhD, MA or even a high school degree, but are the greatest of all."[1] How, if at all, are these two statements by the President of the 'most powerful country in the world' and the Minister of a 21st century nation committed to imposing Sharia Law in its most conservative form about being 'in power' connected? In this essay, I suggest that the rubric of 'Postcolonial Pragmatics' offers an interdisciplinary framework within which to analyze the longstanding, always fraught, relationship between sociopolitical power and academic scholarship.[2]

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1. The statement was widely reported in the press early in September 2021. See, for example: https://www.ndtv.com/world-news/new-taliban-cabinet-in-afganistan-minister-of-education-sheikh-molvi-noorullah-munir-says-masters-degree-not-valuable-2533660#pfrom=home-ndtv_topstories. Retrieved September 29, 2021.

2. This conflicted relationship between academic and social power has been a central concern in 'early modern' theories of knowledge in the west at least since Francis Bacon coined his famous slogan 'knowledge is power'. Bacon, in search of an approach (or approaches) to truth that did not involve what he called 'idolatry' – that is, the social worship of the 'idols' of the tribe, the cave, the marketplace and theatre – was particularly concerned about how language could mislead and misrepresent the world in the last two cases. In this sense, his *Novum Organum* (1620) and René Descartes' *Discours de la Méthode* (1637) both aimed to pioneer methodologies of rational enquiry (deductive or inductive) among scholars that might have salutary effects on how people ultimately solved problems in the 'real' world. See in this connection Cortez Ramirez (2014).

https://doi.org/10.1075/hop.24.pos2

For the human sciences in general, contemporary events of local as well as global significance such as the present crises in Afghanistan or Hong Kong flag a basic question: how might the theoretical frameworks and methodologies developed within academic 'ivory towers' help the ordinary citizens of the world make sense of news that now routinely involves the use of key intersectional concepts such as 'gender', 'nationality', 'media', 'dialogue', 'narrative' and so on to describe the socio-cultural contexts in which historical events occur? While these ideas have been analyzed with some sophistication within academia it appears that, overall, the 'two cultures' – not in C.P. Snow's famous sense of 'science' versus 'the arts' (1961) but, rather, of individual socio-political engagement versus rigorous disciplinary cooperation – continue to remain, by and large, in separate silos. The question of whether intellectual labour should be sealed off from the din of the political in order to do its conceptual work remains uneasily unanswered.

Thinkers on language from Socrates in 5th century BC Athens to Chomsky in the 21st have long taken public stances on these difficult issues of whether beliefs about 'democracy', 'the rule of law' and the like should in fact exist in a different space from specialist intellectual battles around, let's say, what 'universal grammar' is or what the scope of 'linguistics' might be. But at a time when many taken-for-granted assumptions about the ways in which we conduct our everyday, humdrum lives have been knocked off kilter in a post-Covid19, 'post-truth', postcolonial world, where do researchers in the arena of *pragmatics* stand on these issues?

While not wishing to homogenize the richly variegated field of pragmatics and suggest that every researcher must take a stand on the relationship between sociopolitical power and analyses of language use in academia, I will argue in Section 3 below that some antecedent clues to the current formations in 'Postcolonial Pragmatics' are to be found in the pioneering work of Bill Hanks and Sachiko Ide on emancipatory pragmatics (2009); Jef Vershueren on the methodology of doing empirical work in pragmatics using historical archives (2012); and Eric Anchimbe (2012, 2018) on the scope of 'postcolonial pragmatics' and, more particularly, on the role of speech acts such as offers and offer refusals in the postcolonial contexts of the Cameroons and Ghana. For the moment, however, let us begin by simply recalling the themes of the three most recent IPrA conferences: in Belfast 2017 the focus was on 'the pragmatics of the real world'; in Hong Kong 2019 it was on 'the pragmatics of the margins'; and then in Winterthur 2021 on 'inclusion and exclusion'. The writing on the wall in all these instances appears to indicate a growing engagement of researchers in pragmatics with a 'real', not necessarily 'western', world in which issues of inequality, injustice and political power are paramount. The introductory note to the Hong Kong conference forcefully presents some of the arguments in favor of this localized perspective.

> The… theme for IPC16 (sic), *Pragmatics of the Margins*, aims to reflect the position of Hong Kong. HK is a place in which postcoloniality, marginalization and entanglement

> are salient and omnipresent tropes in public discourse. In Hong Kong, democratization is a much discussed theme and a source of pressure and disagreement, with questions of who have historically been marginalized… How might those at the margins speak back to 'the middle' and be heard? How might they effect change? […] There has long been a sense that academia should be 'decentred' from its Eurocentric theoretical biases. Yet equally enduring has been a sense that, in spite of intention, theoretical decentering does not ultimately take place… epistemological hegemonies within societies also show stubborn resistance to decentering, with gendered, linguistic, political, religious, sexual, socio-cultural, and socio-economic margins requiring closer examination. The aim of this conference theme is to place all pragmatics scholarship in the margins and ask how Pragmatics can gain from engagement with 'dirty theory' (Connell 2007), or theorization of the ground on which the researcher's boots are planted. Most importantly how can this conference contribute to democratization of the research imagination in pragmatics? What would a 'dirty pragmatics' look like?

This present essay proposes that a dynamic subfield be added to the discipline of pragmatics that seeks to engage with precisely these questions of the boundaries of academic engagement emphasized in the Hong Kong statement. It suggests that the interdisciplinary area of 'Postcolonial Pragmatics' can profitably bring together two important areas of current research in the social sciences. Methodologies developed within pragmatics can integrate and perhaps even reorder in part significations within the 'dirty' field of postcolonial studies; simultaneously, postcolonial studies could bring to the clean complacencies of classical pragmatics an extensive archive of historical data and theoretical insights on structures of inequality that remain invisible within an un-interrogated 'universalist' framework.

2. Pragmatics and postcolonialism: Background

It is striking that even a cursory tracking of the recent rise of postcolonial studies departments and of pragmatics as a branch of academic research reveal an almost coeval birthing. The postwar decades of the late 1940s to the early 1960s were momentous decades in which several countries across the globe (India, Indonesia, Ghana, Nigeria, Mozambique and many others) gained independence from over a century of colonial rule. These political changes were paralleled by a spate of foundational works on decolonization. To mention just half a dozen, these included Aimé Césaire's *Discourse on Colonialism* (1955; see Césaire 2001); Albert Memmi's *The Colonizer and the Colonized* (1957; see Memmi 1961); Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* (1958); Frantz Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961; see Fanon 1993); Paolo Freire's *The Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1968; see Freire 1972); and Kwame Nkrumah *Neocolonialism: The Last Stage of Imperialism* (1966), this last book apparently causing such a furor in the US State

Department that $ 25 million in aid to Ghana was summarily cut off.[3] Interestingly, much the same period saw J.L. Austin deliver the William James Lectures at Harvard in 1955, which became the seminal book *How to do Things with Words* in 1962; Dell Hymes published the 'Ethnography of Speaking' in 1964, Erving Goffman *The Presentation of Self in Everyday life* in 1963, and John Searle *Speech Acts* in 1969. Finally, Paul Herbert Grice, like Austin before him, delivered the William James Lectures at Harvard in 1967, which were the basis of his crucial paper "Logic and Conversation" (see Grice 1975). In short, the 1950s and 60s, perhaps coincidentally but still remarkably, witnessed the efflorescence both of influential works in postcolonial studies as well as in pragmatics.

Then, in the 1970s when 'ordinary language philosophy' was already an established school of thought in Anglo-American academia, and John Gumperz had published *Language in Social Groups* (1971, 1982) considering speech communities in countries outside the standard western territories, another crucial methodological contribution was made to studies of ordinary language by Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson in their influential paper of 1974 on 'A Simplest Systematics for the Organization of Turn-taking in Conversation'(see also Bauman and Sherzer on 'The Ethnography of Speaking', 1975). Indeed, ordinariness became a central theme in ethnomethodological research in the 1970s, relying as it did on the new and widespread availability of tape-recorders as a primary means for the collection of data in everyday settings from barbershops to gasoline stations. At the same time, we may recall that 'tapes' emerged as a key political term from 1972 onwards, when the Watergate scandal broke in the United States in what were certainly not ordinary settings. In other words, tape recordings as a prime investigative tool of that era seemed to greatly influence both the socio-political sphere and academic research. In the concluding Sections 4 and 5 of this essay, I return briefly to the fact that, as in the 1970s, we now have in the 2020s another powerful tool that can literally be held in the palms of our hands. Mobile technologies, that is, have put the ability to record speech scenarios, gestures and other accompaniments of 'talk' directly into the hands of ordinary people, thus reducing the distance between public and private power and directly influencing, not to say democratizing, styles of political negotiation as well as observational strategies in regions across the world from Afghanistan to Zimbabwe. It was also at the very end of this decade in 1979 that Edward Said published his pathbreaking *Orientalism*, a truly comprehensive and detailed critique of colonial practice.

It is the 1980s, though, that are the most interesting in terms of the parallel developments in postcolonial studies and pragmatics research. During this period, Salman Rushdie published the linguistically and politically subversive *Midnight's Children* in 1981 and Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o *Decolonizing the Mind: the Politics of Language in African Lit-*

3. See https://www.goodreads.com/en/book/show/1472039.Neo_Colonialism.
Retrieved September 29, 2021. This work clearly references a Marxist lineage via its intertextual ideological gesture in the direction of Lenin's famous 1917 tract *Imperialism: the Highest Stage of Capitalism*.

erature in the same year, while Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak wrote her iconic essay 'Can the Subaltern Speak?' in 1988. It was also in this decade that Stephen Levinson published *Pragmatics* in 1983 and Dan Sperber and Deidre Wilson *Relevance: Communication and Cognition* in 1986. Ultimately, the developments in postcolonial studies led, at least indirectly, to the formation of the Subaltern Studies Collective in the 1980s, which remains a central forum for debates and publications in the area, while in pragmatics, Jef Verschueren initiated the first International Pragmatics Conference in Viareggio in 1985, which, as we know, has continued to flourish and grow apace.

Such encompassing associations or groups are usually culminations of inaugural intellectual moments that may take a long time to come to fruition but when they do are often robust enough not so much to withstand as to *incorporate* strong pressures for radical change. For example, the Hong Kong 2017 IPrA statement calls for a radical overhaul of the field: it demands no less than the 'democratization of the research imagination in pragmatics' and aims 'to place all pragmatics scholarship in the margins', convinced that major gains are to be had from such an 'engagement with dirty theory' and the knotty problems thrown up by postcolonial contexts. My own essay here on a possible 'postcolonial pragmatics' is written in small caps so as to try and envisage how the very local and differentiated historical sites (Accra, Hong Kong, Kabul, the Maldives, Palestine, Rio de Janeiro, Singapore and so on) in which postcolonial encounters take place can mesh with the universalist impulses (emanating, thus far, almost entirely from western academic centers) that have long fuelled pragmatic theory. Indeed, we seem to have attested examples of such long-term changes in thought taking root, pollinated by generative texts and narratives (Nair 2003a). For example, when *Orientalism* by Edward Said in 1978 and *Midnight's Children* by Salman Rushdie in 1981 – the one a work of criticism and the other a work of fiction – appeared at nearly the same time, they appear to have constituted an 'inaugural moment' in that they had a considerable effect in the decades that followed not only in the projection of a new sort of critical discourse but also on the setting up of departments of postcolonial studies across American and other powerful academic locations. Over the years, these departments, often home to an influential diaspora of postcolonial academics, have not only expanded but produced and disseminated a number of fresh and challenging concepts. Table 1 below sets out some of these concepts side-by-side with concepts that came to be widely used in pragmatics research along roughly the same timeline.

Table 1. Next, we consider some basic definitions and descriptions of pragmatics and postcolonial theory

POSTCOLONIALISM (focus on theoretical interpretations of mainly written documents)	**PRAGMATICS** (focus on methodological analyses of, in the main, oral interactions)
Ideological frames orientalism, ambivalence, complicity, inequality hegemony, appropriation, agency, alterity, hybridity, cultural amnesia, dehumanization, resistance, worlding, strategic essentialism, self and other	**Ideological frames** truth, context, intention, interaction, use, words to world and world to words relations, speakers and hearers
Descriptive and methodological terminology alterity, auto-ethnography, subversion, double-binds, magic realism, metanarrative, little narratives, mimicry, translation, trauma, humiliation	**Descriptive and methodological terminology** speech acts and indirect speech acts, performatives illocutions, locutions, perlocutions, truth conditions, implicatures, presuppositions, conversational maxims, relevance, deixis, turn-taking, repair ethnomethodological analysis of conversation
Identity tropes: subaltern, race, caste, diaspora, immigrant, 'third' and 'fourth' worlds, nation-state	**Identifying tropes:** figures of speech such as metaphor and irony, stigma markers, forms and conventions of politeness across cultures

3. Pragmatics

3.1 Definitions and descriptions

One of the earliest and, to my mind, most helpful glosses on the 'ultimate goal' of pragmatics because of the clarity and firmness with which it is articulated, was presented by Asa Kasher as long ago as 1977. According to Kasher, 'natural languages are tools' and 'no tool is mastered without a thorough grasp of its standard uses'.

> [...] the ultimate goal of any pragmatic theory, is to specify and explain the constitutive rules of human competence to use linguistic means for effecting basic purposes [...] Thus, a girl scout has not grasped the notion of a postage stamp, if she knows all about perforated edges and can even tell the side that sticks from the side that speaks but knows nothing whatsoever about letters and postage. And a scoutmaster does not have a thorough knowledge about his organization if he knows the ropes and can tell a jamboree from a merry rally but is unaware of the constitutive purposes of his movement.
>
> (1977: 226)

Despite its 'universalist' positioning, with which the writers of the Hong Kong manifesto and others might disagree, there are three aspects of Kasher's definition that most pragmatics researchers may broadly agree on. The first is the emphasis on the *specific contexts* (using stamps or attending a scout rally) in which sets of constitutive rules are framed and followed; the second is the underscoring of 'purposes' or *intentionality* in linguistic exchanges; the third is the notion of *language as a 'tool'* that can of course in postcolonial contexts, function as a lethal weapon. Any 'dirty entanglements' that a view from the margins entails must surely include such analyses of (a) the 'messy' yet highly specific historical and contemporary contexts in which colonial/postcolonial encounters took – and continue to take – place; (b) the equally 'messy' intentions that motivated both western powers during the high colonial period in the 18th and 19th centuries to build 'imperishable'[4] empires and colonized peoples in localized non-western cultures around the globe to strategically resist these takeovers – then and now; (c) the efficacy or otherwise of the secondary tools, theoretical vocabularies and methodological procedures applied to language use in actual interactional settings. The answer to the question 'what is postcoloniality?' is likely to be well served by such attention to the constitutive and regulative rules (see Searle 1969) that could typify colonial encounters in a broad range of cases.

Pragmatics, as has often been reiterated, is by nature interdisciplinary, combining perspectives from philosophy, linguistics, anthropology, and, more lately, cognitive studies in order to illuminate the rules that regulate the use of language in context. These rules may range from overarching felicity conditions on classic speech-acts such as promising, warning and stating to politeness conventions to the micro-coordination of turn-taking rules in conversation. However, such efficient and highly reliable observational tools that have been developed since the 1960s to unpack language in interactional contexts have only occasionally been applied to fields such as those of history, conventionally thought to be a written record of significant past events that have a bearing not only on the times that follow these attested events but also on predictive 'post-history' scenarios that have not yet happened and belong to the future. This is partly because early work in pragmatics focused on the 'face-to-face', on what could be observed in the situated 'here and now' and/or on well-attested fragments of language such as, for example, deictic pronouns that changed form according to context. Can these well-honed tools be adopted – or adapted – to examine how language is used to negotiate systems of unequal power in historically framed contexts like those implied by the label 'postcolonial'? This question is at the heart of this preliminary essay on 'postcolonial pragmatics'.

4. We should note that Macaulay thought of the British Empire as 'imperishable' not so much in terms of its territorial conquests but as an intellectual force. It was to be an 'empire exempt from [...] decay [...] [reflecting the] triumphs of reason over barbarism; [...] the imperishable empire of our arts and our morals, our literature and our laws' (see Trevelyan 1886 and Duncanson 2000).

3.2 The archive: Ideology, emancipation and postcolonial interactions

This section briefly engages with the intersecting roles of what is variously called 'the archive' in postcolonial theory, 'corpora' in language studies and 'data' and 'data-mining' in techno-speak. These usages are still evolving but share a family resemblance (Wittgenstein 1953; see also Derrida in *Archive Fever*, 1996, a text that not only seeks to describe the intricate connections between political power and the 'domiciles' of the historical archive but also gestures in the direction of how the new electronic technologies invented in the late 20th century may radically impact the archive-keeping practices and ideologies of the future). Within pragmatics, the work of three or four researchers have already had, as I see it, an impact on how such an 'archive' – or 'corpus'- may be theorized with especial reference to postcolonial studies.

Ideology: Verschueren (2012) makes an important methodological move with his pragmatic study of historical textual corpora substantially relating to the 1857 'Mutiny' or 'First War of Indian Independence'. His work is an empirical guide to how ideology (in this case, colonial ideology but, in principle, any sort of ideological formation), can be systematically tracked. This thoroughgoing monograph begins by laying out a set of theses. For example:

Thesis 1.1: The common-sense (basic/normative) nature of ideological meaning is manifested in the fact that it is rarely questioned, in a given society or community, in discourse related to the 'reality' in question, possibly across various discourse genres.

Thesis 2.1: Just as there may be a discrepancy between ideology and direct experience, there may be discrepancies between the level of implicit meaning and what one would be willing to say explicitly.

This setting out of a basic framework, thesis by thesis, towards an understanding of ideology in contexts of use is followed by sets of rules relating to the formulation of 'answerable' research questions; the 'vertical' as well as 'horizontal' variation desirable in the texts surveyed; the appropriate amount or size of corpora, and so forth. Such rules are in turn followed by caveats and procedures, as in:

Preliminary Caveat 1: The following guidelines and procedures may be followed step by step. However, actual research will develop cyclically rather than linearly. Some steps cannot be completed without going on to further steps, while sometimes a new step will force you to go back to earlier ones. Therefore: Get to know the entire set of guidelines and procedures before beginning to apply them.

Procedure 1.1: In the case of audio-video-recorded data: Listen to/watch several times; transcribe all the data you want to subject to closer investigation.

Procedure 1.2: In the case of written text: Read and re-read until you are fully familiar with the materials.

A comprehensive checklist and discussion of such matters as attention to contexts, timelines, geography and location, causes, material constraints, channels of communication including graphology and inter-textual crossovers; as well as to the grammatical implications of deixis, modalities, question words, hedges, activity-types, genres etc. ground the general axioms that Verschueren lays out.[5] Most importantly, these features of 'ideology in language use' are illustrated with numerous examples from colonial texts and, in particular, history textbooks, large parts of which are included in the Appendices. This makes the text extremely accessible as a step-by-step guide not only to researchers in pragmatics but also to ethnographers, postcolonial theorists and the like in search of an as-precise-as-can-be methodology.

An emphasis that researchers in postcolonial studies will especially appreciate is that on 'interpreter roles' where '(an assumption of) intersubjectivity or common ground is involved'. This is particularly relevant to the 'translation problems' endemic in colonial and postcolonial contexts, discussed in Section 5 below. In his Postscript to the 2nd edition of *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, Thomas Kuhn actually mentions that academic and scientific transactions in academia appear to match translation issues on the ground in a way that will sound startlingly familiar to postcolonial theorists as well as pragmatics scholars – especially his reference to 'communication breakdown' as a moment that provides insights into the merits and demerits of the other's position as well as into translation as a 'potent tool both for persuasion and conversion.'

> Since translation … allows the participants in a communication breakdown to experience vicariously something of the merits and defects of each other's points of view, it is a potent tool both for persuasion and for conversion. But even persuasion need not succeed, and, if it does, it need not be accompanied or followed by conversion. The two experiences are not the same, an important distinction that I have only recently fully recognized. (Kuhn 1970: 202–203)

While Verschueren does not include the particular aspect of translation that Kuhn highlights, his scaffolding of references well outside the realm of pragmatics, ranging from Thomas Kuhn himself (in a footnote) to Syed Ahmad Khan and from Karl Mannheim to Karl Marx, is impressive. He makes it clear 'from the outset', however, that his own use of the term 'ideology' bears on much more mundane and ordinary processes than grand political theory usually does. As he puts it, 'words, praxis and processes are the

5. This careful laying out of successive connected theses by Verschueren is in the great tradition of many in the modern west, including Karl Marx's set of eleven pithy 'Theses on Feuerbach' (see Smith and Cuckson 2002; Diamond 1939), to the first of which this paper explicitly refers in its section on postcolonialism.

real focus' of his guide, since 'in contrast to the abundance of theories, there is a true scarcity of methodological reflections and in particular of research guidelines' at a time when 'ideology is no longer an academic discipline, but rather an object of investigation' (see Joseph and Taylor 1990 in this connection). Verschueren's 'starting point' is that:

> using language is essentially an activity that generates meaning. It consists in the continuous making of choices, not only at various levels of linguistic structure, but also pertaining to communicative strategies and even at the level of context.

His conclusion is that:

> If anything is clear from the cursory look at our sample data, it is the patriotic stance [...] This stance did not leave room for fundamental criticism of colonization and its related practices.

In his painstaking investigation of ideological stances such as the 'patriotic' using a pragmatic approach (see also Dennett 1987, on the 'intentional stance'), Verschueren thus appears to be creating a critical interdisciplinary space for the analysis of agency, a bedrock concept in postcolonial studies, since he maintains that 'the importance – and potential – of agency should never be ignored'. In this respect, he fully 'side[s]', he says, with the Marxist literary critic Terry Eagleton's (2007) 'observation that "it is because people do not cease to desire, struggle and imagine, even in the most apparently unpropitious of conditions, that the practice of political emancipation is a genuine possibility."' This idea of emancipation is a basic ingredient in all post-Marxist theories, including postcolonial theory. What is interesting is that it also forms a strand of thinking in recent pragmatic theory; it is to this intersection that I turn next.

Emancipation: As mentioned above, postcolonial theory, like its cousins, socialism, feminism, queer theory or 'Dalit' studies presents an unabashedly utopian and emancipatory vision. Its purpose is to demonstrate that the colonial enterprise and its 'civilizing mission' produced what Marx would call the phenomenon of 'false consciousness' in that, long after the colonizers had left, colonial populations continued to see themselves as unworthy of the highest reaches of human endeavor, as second-class citizens of the world. Colonialism by its very nature embodied some version of the classic Hegelian 'master-slave' relationship and postcolonial contexts to a greater or lesser extent reflected this inheritance (Nair 2017). They remain muted just as colonized populations once were by the auditory and visual apparatuses of empire (see Spivak 1988 on this point). The following diary accounts from the 18th and 19th century era of high colonialism are illustrative of this widespread phenomenon of often quite unselfconscious 'silencing' (Nair 2002a):

> One sees, in passing through the streets, men, women and children, sitting at their door unemployed, like statues. (Mrs. Kindersley 1777, in Dyson 1978: 97)

> If there is any truth in physiognomy, there is little or no truth in these dark villages. Though we could not understand a word that was said, we could read the indications of every vile passion on the countenance of almost every person we met.
>
> (Mrs. Sherwood 1854, in Dyson 1978: 97)

It is these disablements that colonialism inflicted and that postcolonialism inherited that the present paper suggests may be partially remedied via a rereading of the anxieties of postcolonial theory through pragmatics lenses. Notably, Sachio Ide, William Hanks and other researchers in pragmatics (see Hanks et al. 2019) have over the past two or more decades sought to develop the emancipatory potential of the discipline of pragmatics by introducing other cultural perspectives that could nuance an 'western' understanding of pragmatic contexts. Such an effort to liberate pragmatics from the blinders imposed on it by a purportedly 'universal' yet very likely ethnocentric ideology is not entirely dissimilar to postcolonial theorists' strenuous attempts to rid postcolonial societies of the slavish notion that western cultures were somehow inherently superior – more intelligent, more inventive and more morally enlightened.[6] But whereas postcolonial theory is quite combative in its rejection of the assumptions that 'western' colonizers routinely made about the capabilities of 'non-western' colonized populations, 'Emancipatory Pragmatics' appears less interested in contestation. Rather, its goal is to develop forms of collaborative 'intercultural' practice on how pragmatics can be persuaded to reexamine its cultural and philosophical foundations as a discipline by looking at the ways in which other cultures (such as the Japanese) construe basic notions such as 'context' and 'interaction' very differently from the ones presupposed in the west. This is how they put it in their Introduction to the collection of papers that make up a 'Special Issue' of the *Journal of Pragmatics* in 2010:

> The papers in this volume have developed out of dialogues and collaboration over a decade… [they have] been shaped by our collective attempt to further the aims of emancipatory pragmatics. Although the languages and topics they treat are diverse, they all investigate aspects of communicative practice in its social and historical context. The papers aim to open up a horizon of research in which different traditions of analysis rooted in diverse languages and histories of thought can contribute not only as objects to be analyzed but as frameworks for thinking of pragmatics. We aim to foster a broader and deeper approach to pragmatic variation and to encourage further international and

6. In his famous 'Minute on Education' where he argues the case for educating Indians in the English language, Macaulay claims that Indians believe in: "history, abounding with kings 30 feet high and reigns 30,000 years long…" Therefore, he continues: 'It is, I believe, no exaggeration to say that all the historical information which has been collected from all the books written in the Sanskrit language is less valuable than what may be found in the most paltry abridgments used at preparatory schools in England. In every branch of physical or moral philosophy, the relative position of the two nations is nearly the same" (1835)

> intercultural research. This future work will be the ultimate measure of emancipatory pragmatics.

While Hanks et al.'s 2010 paper lays out a 'horizon of research', their 2019 paper constitutes at attempt at the 'future work' promised in that earlier paper by presenting

> … an approach to pragmatics that breaks away from the notion of individual as starting point in order to understand interactive context as a single integrated whole. This break is made by introducing the Japanese philosophical concept of *ba* and *basho*…initiated by Nishida Kitaro and his fellow philosophers at the Kyoto School in the first half of the twentieth century… A *ba* and *basho* approach is a way of rethinking context that lies at the heart of pragmatics.

It is more or less uncontroversial that 'rethinking context' is a bread-butter issue for almost all scholars in pragmatics, as opposed, say, to scholars who work on syntax (see Chomsky 1975 and Hauser, Chomsky and Fitch 2002, who may view linguistics as a 'branch of philosophy' and increasingly interdisciplinary but still believe that notions such as 'context' belong to FLB or the 'Faculty of Language Broadly Defined' and thus outside the scope of their investigations). 'Context', on the other hand, is perpetually being rethought within the discipline of pragmatics. In this respect, Hanks et al. are well in line with the capacious and deep definition offered by Dan Sperber and Deidre Wilson:

> A context is a psychological construct, a subset of the hearer's assumptions about the world. […] A context in this sense is not limited to information about the immediate physical environment or immediately preceding utterances: expectations about the future, scientific hypotheses or religious beliefs, anecdotal memories, general cultural assumptions, beliefs about the mental states of the speaker, may all play a role in interpretation. (1986, 15–16)

Postcolonial theorists whose 'ultimate goal' (to recall Kasher's phrase about the constitutive rules of language to which he believes pragmatics as a discipline should always be attuned) is emancipation from the psychological prison(s) of colonial thought would not disagree with the Sperber and Wilson definition (see also Duranti and Goodwin 1992 on 'rethinking context' and Auer and di Luzio 1992 on language contextualization). Indeed, they might find it helpful – just as they might Hanks and Ide's advocacy of other cultural perspectives. This is not to maintain that postcolonial theorists necessarily advocate attention to the sorts of culturally 'non-western' philosophical epistemologies and ontologies that Hanks and Ide advance. They are usually agnostic on this point; they would, however, be generally sympathetic to the 'decentering' moves made by researchers who subscribe to the ideals of 'Emancipatory Pragmatics'. Conversely, Hanks et al. may be accepting of the idea of 'asymmetrical ignorance' articulated by the postcolonial historian Dipesh Chakrabarty (2000, see also Chakrabarty 1992) who suggests while 'native' populations know (or are 'persuaded' to learn, as Kuhn might put it) a great

deal about cultures of the colonizers, the colonizers themselves know or deign to learn (with honorable exceptions) relatively little about the cultures of the colonized. In this sense, postcolonial theorists and researchers in emancipatory pragmatics share an ethical stance: both believe that 'the west' could be better educated about the rich intellectual and cultural traditions, norms, customs and ideologies that flourish in other parts of the world. If they did so, they might be more self-reflexive and less entrapped within what Chakrabarty calls their 'provincialisms' masquerading as 'universalisms'. In short, possible future intersections and affinities could well be worked out between the 'Emancipatory' and 'Postcolonial' vectors in pragmatics.

Discourse: The branch of pragmatics that speaks most directly, however, to the themes in this essay is one that has already been described as 'Postcolonial Pragmatics' by its founders Eric Anchimbe and Richard Janney in a 2011 Special Issue of the *Journal of Pragmatics*, just about a year after Hanks and Ide published their Special Issue in the same journal. Anchimbe and Janney squarely locate their enquiries within discourse studies (see Schiffrin 1994).

> Postcolonial pragmatics studies all manifestations of discourse in postcolonial contexts (spoken, printed, audiovisual, internet, etc.) in which interlocutors' behaviour is influenced by, or explainable by reference to, transfers of pragmatic assumptions, expectations, or strategies from one ethnic, cultural, or lingual frame of reference to another. These include, but are not limited to, studies of:
> - influences of indigenous pragmatic practices on European language use and vice-versa;
> - pragmatic functions of choices of languages, code-switching, and code-mixing in both intra- and interlingual discourse (situated language preferences and strategies);
> - discursive constructions of social roles, identities, ethnic alignments, and group allegiances (strategies of self- and otherpresentation, identity opportunism, social inclusion/exclusion, linguistic victimization);
> - all forms of interlingual and interethnic accommodation and non-accommodation;
> - postcolonial 'refunctionalizations' of Western speech acts, discourse markers, contextualization cues, and conversational routines;
> - influences of indigenous notions of decorum, respect, and proper behaviour in face-to-face conversation (floor rights, turn-taking rules, politeness routines, avoidance strategies, etc.);
> - shared assumptions, common ground, interactional expectations, and conversational inferences in interethnic contexts (interlingual pragmatic reasoning);
> - lingual and ethnic participation in, and exclusion from, postcolonial media.

Anchimbe and Janney acknowledge that 'many issues dealt with in postcolonial pragmatics are outcomes of colonial history' and thus involve various kinds of 'institutionalized discrimination, cultural displacement…economic inequality, etc.' Much like

Verschueren, they staunchly insist that 'the approaches taken to investigating these in postcolonial pragmatics are solidly rooted in pragmatic empirical descriptive practice'; unlike Verschueren, though, they do not engage with a wider body of intellectual thought on how ideologies such as those of 'patriotism' or 'nationalism' or 'cultural superiority' permeated colonial transactions in the historical past and continue to do so in a culturally diverse postcolonial present.

So how does the present essay differ in its positioning from that of Anchimbe and Janney who also speak of a 'Postcolonial Pragmatics'? Tentatively, I would venture to suggest that it comprises a complementary approach to theirs in that it (a). attempts to take serious note of concepts in postcolonial theory such as 'subalternism', 'hybridity', 'marginality', 'translation' etc.) while Anchimbe and Janney do not; (b). following on from (a)., it seeks, perhaps in foolhardy fashion, to be 'interdisciplinary' in its linking of two distinct and imposingly large bodies of theoretical and methodological output (pragmatics and postcolonial studies) while Anchimbe and Janney rigorously restrict their focus to classic discourse phenomena such as naming and referring, identity negotiations and politeness (see Brown and Levinson 1987; Eelen 2001; Goffman 1981, 2007) that seem as allied to sociolinguistics as to pragmatics; (c). in Anchimbe and Janney (2011), the prime example of an Asian postcolonial culture is the Chinese, a cultural zone many historians might not categorize as postcolonial at all, which seems to blur the theoretical boundaries between the concepts 'non-western' and 'postcolonial'. The Indian subcontinent, 'the jewel in the crown' of the British Empire is conspicuous by its absence in their geography of postcolonialism. This is perfectly understandable, even desirable, in a journal issue requiring detail, depth and skill in the application of theoretical tools rather than a possibly spurious 'breadth' but it does leave room for other approaches, such as the more general one presented here.

Anchimbe's 2018 monograph on 'offers and offer refusals' in Ghana and the Cameroons further demonstrates the strengths of a discourse-oriented approach to postcolonial negotiations. In this work, he connects 'the emerging theoretical framework, postcolonial pragmatics' to the research on World Englishes pioneered by Braj and Yamuna Kachru (2006, 2008), using persuasive examples to illustrate in a multidimensional and prismatic fashion how 'postcolonial societies realize various pragmatic phenomena'. He also makes a move towards including the complex historical contexts in which postcolonial Englishes have evolved that inches closer to Verschueren's position as well as my own. Once again, there appears to be ample and exciting room for a conjunction of the lines of enquiry suggested in this essay and Anchimbe's admirably grounded approach to what he terms the 'emergent' area of postcolonial pragmatics.

This subsection has briefly considered three strands of thought in pragmatics that offer promising avenues of exploration in the nascent field of 'postcolonial pragmatics': Verschueren on probing structural ideologies such as the influential *longue durée* ones embedded in colonial history textbooks; Hanks, Ide and their collaborators on offering

radically different and thus emancipative perspectives from dominant non-western cultures in order to show how foundational notions in pragmatics (such as 'context') can be viewed in quite a different light; and Anchimbe and Janney on reading speech acts and other classic discourse phenomena via the detailed and nuanced implicatures generated in postcolonial environments (see also Anchimbe and Janney 2017). These frameworks go a long way towards creating a fresh, hybrid field of enquiry where pragmatic methodology can robustly contribute to an explanation of historical process and deconstruct previously taken-for-granted universalisms. Together, all three approaches substantially contribute to an understanding of the constitutive and regulative rules of engagement that characterize language use in the 'real world', the potential emancipatory power of 'dirty interactions at the margins' and the issues of 'inclusion and exclusion' or the unequal distributions of political and intellectual power across the world's societies that have been chosen themes at the last three IPrA conferences in 2017, 2019 and 2021.

4. Postcolonialism

4.1 Description and keywords

Postcolonial contexts, of course, offer textbook examples of inequality in communication. Colonialism and postcolonialism are widely documented historical phenomena where the norms of cooperative communication (see Kuhn 1970; Grice 1991) were, and are, severely affected by the fact that another culture – and, in many instances, an alien 'ruling' language – had been forcefully superimposed on local conditions. These colonial norms remain dominant even half a century or more after independence in many postcolonial societies and have deeply infiltrated 'local' systems of education, administration, law, and even entertainment (such as, for example, the multimillion-dollar, arguably 'global', Bollywood film industry; see Vasudevan 2020). A striking example of the staying power of a colonial language is the following: when in the 1950s the newly independent Indian state envisaged the role of English in the Eighth Schedule of their Constitution, they optimistically imagined that English would remain part of officialdom for a limited period of 15 years after which the Indian languages and the languages of the freshly formed federal states of India based on linguistic diversities (Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat, Odisha, Tamil Nadu etc.) would take over. Yet ever now, 75 years after Independence nothing of the sort has happened. Access to English remains highly contentious and conceptually polarizing, since English is at once characterized as an 'aspirational' lifestyle language that is a passport to the alluring west and a 'killer language' that consumes and destroys the other 'native' languages in its vicinity. This is one out of many of the mordant ironies (postcolonial theorists call it a 'double-bind') that attend language formations and alliances in a postcolonial state. Now that the world has moved to

a technological stage[7] in which overwhelming flows of information bombard us each day via e-channels of communication, another layer of 'inequality' has been added to existing conditions since what is known as the 'digital divide' (access to computers, mobile phones and elite languages) sets up new barriers to democratization in postcolonial societies especially among the young (and it must be remembered that most postcolonial societies have very young 'hungry' populations – the average age in India is 28, in Pakistan 23 and in Afghanistan only 18 or so).[8]

Literary theorists, historians and political scientists have over the past three decades produced a sturdy set of theoretical terms such as the ones listed in Table 1 to interrogate some of these injustices still being faced by colonized populations, young and old. It is quite undeniable that these concepts, from 'marginality' and 'hybridity' to 'sly civility' and 'trauma effects', have served the disciplinary complex of postcolonial studies well, as they have done adjoining disciplines such as comparative literature and critical race theory. However, it could be that they are now wearing a little thin especially when vast and unpredictable shifts in the technological transfer and current migrations of knowledge are taken into account (see also Nair 2004). This more than a quarter century old vocabulary still explains many of the workings of postcolonial states and it would be desirable for pragmatics researchers interested in inequality to acquire it. At the same time, postcolonial theory may itself require what economists call a 'stimulus package'. In this respect, I argue that the tools of pragmatics can provide a shot in the arm to postcolonial theory. The sorts of global transactions of meaning that are taking place today in an increasingly interdependent yet highly unequal and cultural riven world could be illuminatingly understood through a sustained pragmatic analysis of postcolonial situ-

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7. See the Report of the World Economic Forum, 2016: "The First Industrial Revolution used water and steam power to mechanize production. The Second used electric power to create mass production. The Third used electronics and information technology to automate production. Now a Fourth Industrial Revolution is building on the Third, *the digital revolution that has been occurring since the middle of the last century. It is characterized by a fusion of technologies that is blurring the lines between the physical, digital, and biological spheres* [italics mine]. https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2016/01/the-fourth-industrial-revolution-what-it-means-and-how-to-respond/. Retrieved September 29, 2021.

8. See the UN World Youth Report https://www.un.org/development/desa/youth/wpcontent/uploads/sites/21/2018/12/WorldYouthReport-2030Agenda.pdf. Retrieved September 29, 2021. See also, in parallel, the 'Democracy Index' prepared by the Economist https://www.eiu.com/n/campaigns/democracy-index-2020/. Retrieved September 29, 2021. We may note here the burgeoning of several parallel, virtual, intersubjective genres such as the bilingual, multimodal chats augmented by emoticons and much else now being globally used among the young in postcolonial societies. Such digital devices are technologically resetting the dials of the postcolonial paradigm, offering fresh ways to equalize or overturn received cultural hegemonies. These indigenous genres of internet pluralism produce locally generated sets of 'memes' that seemed to turn English inside-out, exhibiting linguistically subversive forms code-switching that have now taken root, for instance, among the IT savvy, English-speaking youth of the Indian subcontinent (Nair 2008, 2015).

ations and contexts. The 'future' that this essay foresees for 'postcolonial pragmatics' is the tracing of an arc that connects the complicated lessons of the historical past with the inchoate nature of global linguistic interactions today. It is possible that making such a connection could encourage more intrepid lines of interdisciplinary research in both pragmatics and postcolonial theory that fit in well with the 'youthful' inclinations of restless graduate students across the globe dissatisfied with complacent scholarship in both areas.

4.2 Postcolonialism: Towards a theoretical framing

In the previous section on pragmatics, I discussed three research directions indicated by three or four well-known figures in the field that could open up the potential subfield of 'postcolonial pragmatics'. This goal is more difficult to achieve with respect to postcolonialism as it is a far more segmented intellectual space, often actively resistant to homogenization. It is difficult to tell a priori which postcolonial concepts, if any, will be of interest to researchers in pragmatics. The following Table, even if risibly reductive and partial, gives some indication of the relationship between some prominent postcolonial theorists and the (non-exclusive) key areas of expertise associated with them:

Table 2.

Name of theorist	Core area
Aijaz Ahmad	literary postcolonialism and the public sphere
Kwame Anthony Appiah	cosmopolitanism, postmodernism versus postcolonialism
Bill Ashcroft	settler cultures
Homi Bhabha	cultural location and mimicking the other
Ranajit Guha and Partha Chatterjee	the politics of the governed, subalternism / peasant rebellions under colonial regimes
Dipesh Chakrabarty	asymmetrical knowledge
Rey Chow	where have all the natives gone?
Paul Gilroy	race and nation
Toril Moi	feminism, migration and diaspora
Stuart Hall	when was the postcolonial?
Benita Parry	resistance theory / nativism
Edward Said	orientalism, culture and imperialism
Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak	alterity, marginality, womanspace
Robert Young	white mythologies

Since it is impossible to discuss within the scope of a preliminary essay the multiple concepts listed even in the very selective Table above with any degree of nuance, let me as a matter of strategy dwell not on the work of any three or four of the individual theorists among the 15 listed above but rather on three *concepts* not included in the list, using the Indian case when required as a sort of exemplar of how these concepts work. The first of these is an idea not explicitly claimed by any particular postcolonial theorist but implicitly used by all: namely, that of '**auto-ethnography**'. The other two are ideas developed in my own work, such as it is, on postcolonialism (Nair 2002, 2011a, 2011b, 2012, 2020, 2022; Nair & deSouza 2020 etc.), the one pertaining to a copious production of subversive language in postcolonial literatures that I call '**sensuous theory**', following Marx's 'Theses on Feuerbach'; the other relating to the production of '**indifference**' as an attitudinal stance invented and practiced during the colonial period and continuing into the postcolonial period. These terms are presented here with some trepidation and await necessary criticism: my hope is simply that they could have some traction insofar as postcolonial theory has relied largely on the stylistic analysis of literary texts and historical documents – in short, very complex 'indirect speech acts' (see Austin 1962; Searle 1975)[9] in order to arrive at contextual implicatures in postcolonial settings.

Auto-ethnography: This concept, implicit in much postcolonial theorizing, sees postcolonial authors, as well as ordinary citizens *performing* (not in essence all that differently from the Austinian performative) their relationships with their national pasts in their local interactions. Postcolonial fictions could in this sense be regarded as conversations that undertake to rework the traditional form of the western *bildungsroman.* That is, they simultaneously announce a personal as well as a historical 'coming of age' of the postcolonial nation state and a rebirth of the erstwhile colonial language (in the Indian context, for example, novels such as *Malgudi Days* by R.K. Narayan, *Midnight's Children* by Salman Rushdie or *The God of Small Things* by Arundhati Roy all count as performing such acts of postcolonial rebirthing; see also Nair 1995, 2002a, 2013, and 2017). It is this rites-of-passage mode of stylistically and linguistically expressing 'Indianness' (or any other postcolonial national identity) as a hybrid, distinctively individualist, amalgam of differences that the novelist-commentator Rushdie has described as emancipatory: 'We are Indians, but there is redefinition. India has now to admit that there are different ways of being Indian, which do not necessarily have to do with being rooted in India. This is a wonderful… liberating realization. This is a kind of newness.' The literary critic

9. Austin in fact specifically states that speech acts are by no means restricted to single sentence utterances. He writes: "At a more sophisticated level perhaps comes the use of the connecting particle; thus we may use the particle 'still' with the force of 'I intend that'; we use 'therefore' with the force of 'I conclude that'… A very similar purpose is served by the use of titles such as Manifesto, Act, Proclamation, or the sub-heading 'A Novel'. […]" (Austin 1962: 75)

Gregory Castle also describes the import of 'auto-ethnography' as a sort of reclaiming of speech in postcolonial contexts:

> From the start, postcolonial literatures – especially novels such as James Joyce's *Finnegans Wake*, Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* or J.M Coetzee's *Foe* – have underscored the necessity for the co-existence of mutually exclusive narrative forms that unsettle dialectical thinking (as well as traditional notions of historical continuity)… It is this necessity that keeps the local relevant within a globalized capital market and a transnational politics. These critical interventions reveal something of the manner in which specific regions respond to the necessity for continuing the struggle for postcolonial self-determination, and they do so by sustaining a more sharply critical mode of colonial discourse analysis, one activated by new concerns for gender, class, race, nationalism and a 'fourth world' of migrants and refugees. The postcolonial critic enters into what Mary Louise Pratt[10] calls an auto-ethnographic engagement with imperialism, a specific from of writing or talking back that fashions complicity into a form textual insurgency. It is a process in which the native intellectual crafts or forges a new discourse or new literary style, a way of singing or dancing that expresses a native point of view in contest with colonial discourse. It is an agonistic mode of national self-fashioning that does not, in the end, succumb to the seduction of neocolonialist solutions to native problems.
>
> (Castle 2001, Introduction xii–iii)

The 'agonistic' mode of 'national self-fashioning' associated with auto-ethnographic postcolonial discourses of emancipation is not unconnected to the notion of 'sensuous theory' that I next attempt to outline.

Sensuous Theory: The eleventh and final one of Marx's 'Theses on Feuerbach' is easily one of the most quoted aphorisms in the world, namely: 'The philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways; the point is to change it.' But it is with his very first thesis that we are mainly concerned in the laying out of the features of postcolonial sensuous theory. In this thesis, Marx states that:

> The chief defect of all hitherto existing materialism – that of Feuerbach included – is that the thing, reality, sensuousness, is conceived only in the form of the object or of contemplation, but not as sensuous human activity, practice, not subjectively.
>
> (In Churbanov 1976: 20)

It is this aspect of sensuous and agentive human practice that challenges the language of the colonizer on its own terms which characterizes what I call 'Sensuous Theory' (elaborated in Nair 2002a, 2015). This sort of postcolonial creative writing (novels, poems,

10. The work of Mary Louise Pratt (1977, 1992) on both speech analyses of literary discourse and imperial tropes is an early and powerful example of how the methodologies of linguistic pragmatics can be used to understand the workings of imperial thought and postcolonial situations.

plays, street theatre) is self-consciously subversive, mocking and 'slyly civil' in its taking over of the former colonial language. It demands that:

1. It must be recognized as an *embedded* critique, occurring within literary texts but actually taking on some of the functions of the 'serious' academic research paper; hence, part of its mystique derives from the fact of textual 'cross-dressing' or disguise; it might be called *literature-infested theory* or, conversely, *theory-infested literature*.
2. It is, however, surprisingly easy to extricate from its literary context – that is, it comes with detachable-attachable *hyphens* or *hooks* which enable it to transfer with relative ease from one context to another; thus, it projects an engagement with the *rhetoric* of colonization, rather than its history. The task the sensuous theorist sets herself is to *re-lexicalize history as literature*
3. It can often figure very high, much higher than conventional forms of criticism, on *a quotability index*; consequently, the various *bon mots* of sensuous theory may be found circulating madly round the academic globe in quite a short while after their publication.
4. It has, partly as a consequence of the above features, a *decidedly cosmopolitan flavor*, and is particularly au fait with global trends in theory; we may think of it as 'theory with a foreign accent', that is, even if written in the master language, English, its tone must be less than stolidly Anglo-Saxon (it can be French, African, Indian or Caribbean English or what-have-you) and *performatively* '*exotic*'
5. Its discourse is likely to be *female-centered but not necessarily feminist*
6. Its language is almost always beautifully turned out, formally exquisite *haute couture*.
7. It is a variety of literature where characters in the text, as often as not, *embody a wide variety of tropes* (interlingual puns, metonym, metaphor, irony, hyperbole etc.)

My laying out of these features of 'sensuous theory' is to emphasize that we may have in these highly sophisticated forms of the postcolonial novel or poetry grounds for a real challenge to an established academic system of 'orientalist' patronage. Many of these literary texts with their emphasis on subversive linguistic play with the former colonial language cleverly dispense with the need to be theorized at all by self-reflexively theorizing *themselves*. In this respect, postcolonial literary texts have, to a considerable extent, resisted being 'owned' by western academia, even when written in English (Nair 1989, 1991, 2002a, 2002b, 2003b, 2009, 2015, 2018a). The story, though, appears different with postcolonial research practices in what were once colonial empires. In the domain of academic theorizing, for instance, 'English' still functions as the undoubted 'first language' of academia and the 'west' as the primary site of theory-production. Why is this so and what does postcolonial theory have to say on the matter? This question is briefly considered in Section 4.3. below. Before discussing the pivotal role of English, however, it may be useful to delineate the third concept of 'indifference' mentioned above that stands in

sharp contrast or 'alterity', as postcolonial theory might say, to the liberating potential of the auto-ethnographic texts mentioned by Castle as well as the texts that bear the subversively emancipative hallmarks of postcolonial 'sensuous theory' in literature.

Indifference: Just as Edward Said's 'Orientalism' offered scholars in the 1980s a powerful matrix concept that enabled an understanding of how the Western 'Occident' created and reproduced itself through a continuous, and mostly unilateral, process of inventing its Oriental 'Other', the idea of 'indifference' is offered here as a matrix within which the workings of postcolonialism, postmodernism and 'post-identity' may be analyzed. While postmodern theories of meaning in the modern West have relied, *après* Saussure and Derrida, on the key notion of 'difference' to describe relationships between signifiers – calling up a sort of joyous polyphonic buzz, the concept of indifference attempts to unlock the door into yet another significant chamber of semantics concerning negative emotion and affect (see also Adams and Tiffin 1991 on the relationship between postcolonialism and postmodernism, as well as Appiah 1991). Table 3 below presents a few of these basic contrasts:

Table 3.

Postmodern difference	**Postcolonial indifference**
Saussure: the strict concept of difference functioned as a standard marker of relations between signifiers. e.g., contrastive analysis and minimal pairs – *pest/post.*	Pythagoras, Plotinus: indifference is a measure relating 1 to other 1s.
Derrida: refashioned this straight-laced image with his famous postmodern pun – *differ/defer*.	Pareto: an indifference curve shows combinations of goods to which a consumer is *indifferent,* i.e., they render the same level of satisfaction. These curves represent preferences.
Difference, in effect, is an 'out-there' quality, which can be shown, deictically indicated, even denied. e.g., via *dress codes/address terms* etc.	Indifference is an invisible mental state subjectifying an interior condition rather than any objective property of objects.
Difference is a mostly visible, audible, tangible quantity. It is a deictic observable.	Indifference is a verbal monolith which is non-count, antonymous and also tending towards the anonymous.
Difference is a count-noun from which we get many parts of speech. e.g. *differentiate/differ/ differences*	See also Herzfeld: *The Social Production of Indifference: The Symbolic Roots of Western Bureaucracy* (1992) on modern bureaucracies as involving a set of ritual actors and actions that perpetuate the power of the state

Unlike its diametrically opposed postmodern counterpart, 'indifference' as a postcolonial pathology implies in this theorization a subjective mental state rather than any objective property of objects. When the British came to India, first as the traders of the East India Company and then after 1957 as administrators for the Crown, that is, they confronted an India so diverse and complicated with hundreds of different languages

and bewildering ethnic differences that it was only in the beholding eye of a committed colonialism that it could ever be rendered as a single cultural region (Nair 1984, 2002a).

It hardly needs restating, moreover, that the colonial period was when certain institutional forms of governance were homogenized the world over, whether the colonizers were Spaniard, Dutch, Portuguese, French or British. Throughout the 18th and 19th centuries, these gene carriers of the 'high culture' of modern Western democracies traveled outward in a frenzy of occupation, so that the being of 'high colonialism' is, in turn, inseparable from the 'Official Gaze' of administrative processes that the stamped upon an astonishing variety of societies one consolidated ideology of how to 'run a state' (see Nair 2011b).

Any first-time visitor to India today is, for instance, instantly struck by its complex legal and bureaucratic discourses of form-filling. This addiction is not *sui generis*; it is the heritage of an empire that once had, as the colonial rulers repeatedly complained, to deal with the problem of overwhelming otherness. Variously valorized as 'objectivity', 'impartiality' and 'stoicism', indifference, I argue, was in fact a very particular intellectual stance invented during the colonial period for the precise purposes of organizing the complex and extremely heterogeneous domain of the colony. It was an institutionalized mode of response to pluralism, necessarily reductionist in its erasure of differences of style, opinion and culture. Ironically, it was this basic 'colonial' idea of a homogenous India, the myth of a monolithic state existing in an uneasy relationship with the values of democracy that had later to be internalized by the rulers of independent India as they took over the bureaucratic state apparatuses (see also Althusser 1971 on ISAs or ideological state apparatuses) set up by the British. The most cherished nationalist goals of the newly independent Indian nation were thus articulated and administered through the 'one India' vision once imposed by its colonial masters. Today, the projection of a highly centralized state representing a 'Hindu India' now extends this rhetoric in current Indian politics.[11]

By and large, in modern and postmodern Western academia, the inherent plurality of the semantics of difference has ensured that its political alliances have been with multiculturalism and its natural constituency the modish left liberal establishment. Indifference, on the contrary, in a postcolonial state, even as far as academia is concerned, is ultimately associated with the conservative corridors of power in postcolonial settings. This is because 'indifference' as a mental stance derives its genealogy from colonialism, which required that intellectual power be exhibited as emotional and cultural distance – a cold life-denying apparatus of print and arcane formalisms. Although much critical attention is devoted in 'objective' sociological descriptions of postcolonial societies to the

11. There are several trenchant criticisms of this homogenization of Hinduism and its link to a muscular, rightwing nationalism in Indian politics today. See for example, Tharoor (2018). See also Anderson (1991) on 'imagined communities'.

high levels of corruption, graft and violence said to characterize them, the underlying structure that accounts for these disparate ills could comprise the bureaucratic manufacture, on paper, of the unremarkable attitudinal substance called 'indifference'. Gilles Deleuze (the author, along with Felix Guattari, of the impressive tome *Schizophrenia and Empire*) writes enigmatically in *Difference and Repetition*:

> Indifference has two aspects: the undifferentiated abyss, the black nothingness, the indeterminate animal in which everything is dissolved – but also the white nothingness, the once more calm surface upon which float unconnected determinations like scattered members: a head without a neck, an arm without shoulders, eyes without brows.
>
> (Deleuze 1994: 28)

In other words, the bureaucratic power of the written word – 'the black nothingness' plus 'the white nothingness' – are all the 'determinations' required for ideological state apparatuses to instill obedience in the populace in postcolonial states. Such structures of knowledge are articulated in a top-down language (English, in the Indian case) that permits little intimacy, let alone 'sensuousness'. In terms of conceptual structure, we might say that four linguistic pillars hold up the institution of bureaucratic indifference. These comprise the discourses of:

- *interlocution*, or the attempts made by individuals and/or groups of citizens to establish intersubjective contact or even a relationship with the remote postcolonial state
- *circumlocution*, or the modes of semantic obfuscation that postcolonial institutions have developed to a fine art
- *delocution* or the astonishing excitements and dangers that attach to the activities of individuals or groups who attempt to challenge governmental power by questioning the ideological premises that underlie its apparently impartial use of institutional and legal language; and, finally, and perhaps most importantly, an examination of
- *perlocution* or the range of feelings evoked by the uses of language in the postcolony

Postcoloniality differs from its grand predecessor, colonialism in one very important respect. No temporal sequence of events may formally be said to indicate it. No Minute of 1835, no battle of Plassey, no war of 1857, no salt marches to Dandi, signpost its territory. Rather, it is recognized that the postcolonial is a region of shadows, indicative of a mentality, an inherited condition of the psyche. It is this de-historicized but potent paradigm of indifference that is built into the very structure of reigning postcolonial institutions where the official language remains English (or whatever other language the former colonizers used) and 'good' university education is still in English (or whatever the former colonial language was). Thus, citizens of even the most emancipated and progressive postcolonial states can remain subjects of an internalized orientalism that in effect denies the value of actually being surrounded by the buzz of multiple cultures and languages. This thesis of mine (first presented in Nair 2002a) concerning the evolution of

attitudinal indifference is based on archival evidence from 1757 onwards which was the year when Clive fought and won the Battle of Plassey, through the contentious 'Mutiny' of 1857 (cf. also the archival records studied in Verschueren 2012; cf. above), ending in the inchoate present. It suggests that a sacred status is assigned in postcolonial India (and elsewhere) to the bureaucrats and politicians who took over the ritual performance of indifference from the colonizers and are now the managers of the current postcolonial state, well versed at reciting the linguistic codes or mantras inherited from a now vanished race of colonial 'gods'. The 'ultimate goal' of the project of investigating such official projections of indifference is to discover or uncover a range of subjectivities that citizens as political agents experience – from, let's say, fear, mistrust and guilt, to pleasure and anticipation – following on from the 'objective' historical phenomenon of colonialism.

4.3 Postcolonialism: The hegemony of English as a language of academic power

How do the systematic, deeply institutionalized protocols and rituals of indifference inherited from colonialism in various corners of the globe help contain linguistic and cultural pluralism not only on the Indian subcontinent, but across the world – a pluralism that could easily become uncomfortably threatening to 'world-order' if it was not administratively controlled and linguistically contained?

I have sought to partly answer this question (Nair 2008, 2011a, 2012, 2017, 2018a; Nair & deSouza 2020) by dwelling on the history and trajectories of English as a long-standing colonial and postcolonial language in India as well as, today, a global lingua franca. Anchimbe (2018) has also discussed the phenomenon of 'World Englishes' in postcolonial contexts in detail, so I will not repeat his arguments and examples here. Rather, in keeping with the theme of the intricate connections between academic and political power in 'dirty' postcolonial contexts, I will concentrate on the research implications of access to English today, once a colonial language and now the language of the world's richest and most powerful country, the US. This is not a problem of the postcolony alone of course, but it is to found in its most acute forms there.

It appears incontrovertible in these first decades of the 21st century, for example, that a researcher who does not have access to English also automatically loses privileged access to important research information. Such possible epistemic deprivation (or 'epistemic hunger', see Dennett 1996, Nair 2003a) is especially marked in postcolonial contexts such as India's, where the naturalization of English as the 'native tongue' of research means that a researcher has first to *psychologically metamorphose* into a 'native speaker' of English.

Second, a local researcher must preferably be *translated* into English, if her work is to form part of an international research network.

Third, she must, if she possibly can, *relocate* herself in a predominantly English-speaking part of the developed Western world in order to legitimately represent 'her' culture and escape subaltern 'voicelessness' (see also Chatterjee 2013 on the idea of the subaltern and 'capital', and Chibber 2013 for a hard-hitting critique of Marxist postcolonial theory a la Chatterjee and others belonging to the broad ideological 'Subaltern Studies' grouping).

Fourth, a researcher from sites like postcolonial India must perhaps begin by accepting that she is so positioned and located that it is almost impossible for her to be regarded as an *original* producer of the language, theories or paradigms of research in her field. Rather, she is a 'post-subaltern' who is only granted the right to speak 'under subcontract'. Her primary task is to scour 'the field' for material evidence that best suits hypotheses formulated by academic empire builders located 'elsewhere'. She may also be required to generate interesting counter-examples for further theorization by the masters-theorists of 'postcolonial studies.' They live away but, of course, they know the field better than her and occasionally visit the universities in her region for 'master-classes' where she may ask knowledgeable questions but must always know her place.

On the face of it, such postcolonial mimicry (following Bhabha's notion of 'colonial mimicry', 1994) fits snugly into a liberal cosmopolitan frame in which the colonizer and his postcolonial apprentice work in synch as equal partners. Yet, it could be that, in such collaborations, what is presented as a shared and egalitarian endeavor, often in the shape of co-authored papers, could actually reinforce a paradigm where intellectual inequality is a foundational premise.

By this argument, then, 'English', as *prima inter pares* among former colonial languages, exists in the postcolonial 21st century world as a sort of clone of its former exploitative 17–19th century colonial self. In the colonial world of the past, for instance, 'good Indians' learnt 'good English' because the 'owners' of the language outsourced (Nair 2018a) it to them to serve the cause of empire 'overseas.' But why do they embrace the language today?

The answer may simply be that English today is a chief linguistic means by which the fraternal tension between the harsh historical antecedents of post-colonialism and the captivating economic and intellectual attractions of western domicile is discursively regulated. While it is true that it is longer the sole preserve of 'native speakers', English remains a new, reinvigorated language of 'neo-colonial' rule as far as intellectual property and property rights are concerned. That is, the worlds of both academia and the Internet today (acamedia?) are at once ideologically divided and linguistically unified by English. A chief problem that academic departments in the humanities and social sciences have therefore to confront is: does this piquant situation contribute to extending the postcolonial role of English as a seemingly democratic but in effect hegemonic tongue?

4.4 Conceptual alliances: Pragmatics tools applied to postcolonial contexts

A host of prime research territories come to mind when one thinks not only about the hegemonic role of a master language like English but about the topics listed by the 2017 Hong Kong conference on a 'dirty' pragmatics of the margins. These were, verbatim:

Meaning and Social Context
Workplace
Diversity
Globalization
Multilingualism
Digital Technology
Identity
Social Change
Peace and Conflict
Politics
Metaphor
Embodiment
Multimodality

Translation: It is noticeable, however, that the fairly comprehensive 'Hong Kong list' above does not include 'translation' which undoubtedly constitutes one of the most troubled areas in postcolonial studies. All processes of translation logically rely on histories of cultural difference: in colonial and postcolonial contexts translations also tend to produce controversial uptakes. Marx and Austin, unlikely bedfellows, would surely agree on this point: speech does not merely *describe* a situation; it can also *change* situations. Extending the universalistic assumptions of speech act theory about the basic building blocks of human communication into the area of translation studies is, in this sense, of some ethical import since postcolonial translations are 'natural' sites of ideological struggle. To translate certain crucial texts for a foreign audience – as the Afghans did for the US military over the past 20 years or so, for example – may well demand skills other than those generally associated with the benign and peaceable tasks of mere 'passive' language interpretation. For a very long time, translation studies relied on an engagingly simple – if implicitly violent – model of translation, which looked a bit like this:

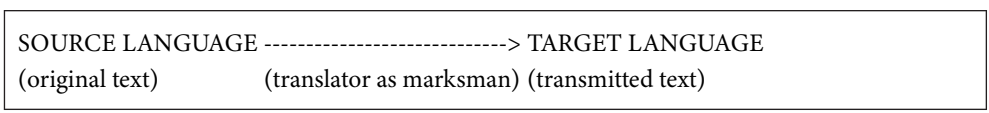

Figure 1.

What this metaphor tells us, in effect, is that the translator 'shoots' from a territorial base in the source language – his bullet or arrow being the text – while the impact of his shot is felt in the zone of another language. Translation thus exemplifies the wound, the mark, left on the surfaces or even the innards of another language by the translator as marksman, who can subsequently be evaluated in terms of how accurately he manages to hit his 'target'. However, such a description leaves the notion of the 'target' and criterion by which a 'good' marksman is to be judged unanalyzed.

To return at this point to the current situation in Afghanistan where the role of the translator has taken center-stage in a lethal battle over basic values such as loyalties and trust. Translators who worked for the imperial US power are judged to have been traitorous collaborators by the now-in-power Taliban who feel they need to be hunted down and mercilessly destroyed. At the same time, the US has been accused of letting down its bravest allies in its 'fight for democracy', the translators. Negative perlocutionary effects of fear, anger and anxiety thus swirl around the ambivalent figure of the translator in the recent postcolonial history of Afghanistan.[12] Consider for example the following adver-

12. Leading papers and journals have carried numerous articles about the plight of the Afghan translators in the present times of postcolonial transformation. These include the following, all retrieved on September 29, 2021:

- https://www.nytimes.com/2016/08/18/opinion/dimming-hope-for-afghan-translators.html?unlocked_article_code=AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAACEIPuonUktbcrYhkQFUaCybSRdkhrxqAwvTOxbk9gHC7LC-NRHNMyP5QCoaP-07LILZ5bto02z2HQ8Vadr8zQfg4hsluA3tQcSj66J2VhMZCZCwvtYO4Wm5xhMrHBe4z-mGvY2eydKIineGz-kPeaTX1XfeI1CVwIVsopccoZkjqjSJTvtrNFO9w3NB_1fwzVNstFXpbOn7877S_AA5-Od6FchjX9gAzPuhTUj3TltKXgKkSJEQQURmVCSMivhtvrY9UK9gVP67gLh4_e8KYgLQZDmdgKIfBFITneKNdpVf4dbUDyUkCQ9km&smid=url-share
- https://www.nytimes.com/2006/07/03/world/asia/03cnd-afghan.html?unlocked_article_code=AAAAAAAAAAAAAAACEIPuonUktbdrYhkT1UbACbKWsIjolqPnvnGh-RnjXnyaSGbRjZLyaIVH42EsQ_rVJZUWuESjX6dVcMTd_gmXuBzxetSeEI8RQT3rpKP3coMeX1w9InpUyZngsuUGLpj-GeyYjGwcLh1lPf3pR-JMRmcU6LV13MjJgZlsMElIQnsgSpUs_-DRu1l2dB-3eMjDoR4Q1oCbSqNu_ruA3ZuKYnMLoGcukRtBbYvCXyElsWc6rkDbAxZFVnFKXp16mo7495XU8gFtqFmYTbWIDI2cayyOlLDYw&smid=url-share
- https://edition.cnn.com/2021/08/23/politics/taliban-death-threat-afghan-translator-letters/index.html
- https://www.change.org/p/save-my-afghan-interpreter

In my own work on the connections between postcolonial research and research in pragmatics, I have proposed a formal set of speech act 'felicity conditions' on translation, attempting to harness the 'universalist' methods of speech act theory (see Vanderveken 1990) and then to put these 'felicities' in dialogue with the work of postcolonial theorists who actively question the bases of such an allegedly rigorous applications of rules in messy postcolonial contexts of interpretation (Nair 2002b, 2003a). As performatives, translations function, as Kuhn pointed out, both as rhetorical tools of persuasion and as ethical echo chambers (see Nair 2018b, 2020, 2021).

tisement for translators in Afghanistan that dramatically highlights the specific issue of what is needed of a 'good' translator in postcolonial contexts:[13]

Table 4.

VALIANT WEBSITE Pashtu/Dari Linguist CAT IB

APPLY Kabul

ALTERNATE POSTING LOCATIONS

Afghanistan AOR

STATUS

Full-time

AREA OF INTEREST

Military Support

Security Clearance N/A

Position Description

Valiant is seeking skilled Linguists to provide interpretation, transcription, and translation services in support of ongoing and new U.S operations and mission requirements. *This position is contingent upon contract award.

RESPONSIBILITIES:

Linguists shall have the ability to listen, read, write and speak in clear and concise grammar and pronunciation, and provide translation and interpretation services in the required target foreign language(s) and English at a minimum of 3 on the ILR scale in all test areas.

- Conduct accurate and consecutive translation, transcription, and interpretation from ***Pashtu/Dari*** into English
- Translate various syntax and expressions to include colloquial and slang phrases from English ***Pashtu/Dari*** and vice versa
- Accurately scan, research, and analyze foreign language documents
- Other related tasks as assigned

Advertised on the Valiant website one month

Regular/Temporary

Regular

Position Requirements

REQUIRED QUALIFICATIONS:

- This position is open to Local National Non-USC only
- Linguist shall have typing and PowerPoint skills.
- Ability to provide idiomatic translations of nontechnical material using correct syntax and expression from the foreign language to English, and vice-versa.
- Ability to conduct consecutive, accurate interpretation of on-going conversations and/or activities.
- Familiarity and ability to conduct oneself per the local culture and customs.

13. This advertisement appeared on the website of the Valiant company in the UK and can be accessed online at: https://recruiting.adp.com/srccar/public/RTI.home?r=5000592765606&c=2174507&d=ValiantExternalCareerSite&rb=LINKEDIN#/. Retrieved September 29, 2021.

Table 4. *(continued)*

– Ability to deal inconspicuously with local populace.
– Willing and able to live and work in harsh environment, to include living and working in temporary facilities as mission dictates.
– Ability to serve in a combat zone and previous SOF experience is desirable.
– Ability to function effectively and efficiently during extended periods of high pressure and stress as required by SOF.
– Ability to operate a Government furnished light or medium mobility vehicle in support of operations.

EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS:

– High School graduate, GED, or equivalent is a minimum with some college level work preferred. In lieu of education, experience may be substituted

ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS:

– ***Special Skills Highly Desired:*** parachuting, rappelling, fast roping, and other insertion/extraction techniques.
– Ability to lift at least 30 lbs. overhead and complete a 3-mile trail-hike with 30 lbs. rucksack in less than 90 minutes Highly Desired

It is obviously not educational qualifications that are foregrounded in this advertisement. A 'high school graduate' will do. It is the other qualities that he (by implication, this seems to be a job from which females are excluded) must have that are noteworthy: for example, the ability 'to deal inconspicuously with local populace'; 'the willing[ness] to live and work in a harsh environment'; to 'serve in a combat zone and to function effectively and efficiently during extended periods of high pressure and stress as required by SOF', not to mention the 'ability to operate a Government furnished light or medium mobility vehicle in support of operations'. In addition, the 'highly desired special skills' required of a translator/interpreter include 'parachuting, rappelling, fast roping, and other insertion/extraction techniques', plus the 'ability to lift at least 30 lbs. overhead and complete a 3-mile trail-hike with 30 lbs. rucksack in less than 90 minutes.' These requirements speak for themselves: these bi-literate Afghan translators must take on embodied responsibilities as living targets, danger zones. When they accept the job of a 'translator' as a means of livelihood in an impoverished, war-torn postcolonial country, their role is far from passive; their situation is inherently unequal and unjust. Far more intellectual sophistication is needed from these presumably quite young Afghan men (the average age in Afghanistan is after all 18) than is required of translators ensconced in, let's say, a comfortable UN job in New York or Paris. They must possess sensitivity to the connotative and historical values attaching to words in both the source and target language and must be aware of their own vulnerabilities both as human targets and as language users – since every translator, even the most naïve and inexperienced, knows that no interpreter of language ever gets things perfectly correct. False etymologies, inappropriate equiva-

lents and uncomfortable political questions always lurk around the corner in any multicultural context.

Dwelling on the role of the translator/interpreter in a plural, multilingual world, and in particular, a dangerously unstable postcolonial context such as that prevailing in Afghanistan, thus seems to force on every citizen of the world the responsibility to reflect anew on what it means to be 'good'. Specifically, they must consider in a Kuhn-like manner on how language exchanges require on the part of a translator at least a temporary suspension of hostility towards 'the other' and the willingness to sincerely seek to understand not just his or her language but his or her cultural perspective and values. In this sense, linguistic tolerance and the willingness to cross language boundaries exemplified by the speech act of translation appears profoundly to underwrite *all* other forms of social tolerance.[14] In future, these zones of conflict and cooperation between the disciplines of postcolonial studies and pragmatics could include, for example, at least the following six:

1. Implicature and, in particular, the application of the Quality Maxim in postcolonial contexts
2. The Austinian idea of 'abuse' in Speech Act Theory applied to postcolonial interactions
3. The role of performatives and especially perlocutions in postcolonial speech and writing
4. Politeness routines such as those involving face-saving and face-threatening acts and their relation to the ideas of subversion and sly mimicry' in postcolonial theory
5. Comparing the roles assigned to 'speakers and hearers' in pragmatics to those of assigned to 'self and other' in postcolonial theories
6. Mapping the idea of 'words to world' direction of fit in pragmatic theory onto the idea of 'worlding' in postcolonial theory which suggests that '[…]the term 'world' does not refer to an extant thing but rather the context or background against which particular things show up and take on significance: a mobile but more or less sta-

14. There is a long cross-cultural tradition of such arguments in favour of the virtue of tolerance from John Locke's *A Letter Concerning Toleration* (1689) all the way to Gandhi's voluminous writings in texts such as *Hind Swaraj* (1908) on peaceful civil disobedience under British imperial rule, to Martin Luther King's civil rights movement memorialized in his *Why We Can't Wait* (1964), to the Me-Too and Black Lives Matter marches of today. Insofar as all raise foundational issues of inequality, this historical background is of some relevance to the subfield of postcolonial pragmatics proposed in this essay. Historical inequality and aggression have also been topics that IPrA conferences have paid increasing attention to: for instance, the session organized by Theresa Neumaier and Sofia Rüdiger in which I participated at the 2021 Winterthur Conference was on 'Historical perspectives on Aggression and Rapport in English Speech Acts' which did not but could in future possibly align with current 'postcolonial' perspectives on changes in the law, notion of human rights from colonial times and earlier to now.

ble ensemble of practices, involvements, relations, capacities, tendencies and affordances.' (Anderson & Harrison 2010, p. 8)

5. Conclusion: Towards a post-pragmatics?

The use of the prefix 'post-' is so ubiquitous in popular discourse today that it almost seems to have lost its meaning. It can willy-nilly be attached to common nouns such as 'truth' or 'identity', to proper nouns like 'Covid-19' or 'Trump' as well as to adjectives like 'colonial' and so on and on. In this final section, I attempt to narrow down the features of the 'post' in the word 'postcolonial' by (a). delineating some its core features; and (b). relating these to the questions raised by particular theorists in the area. 'Post' is:

i. a **temporal** or historical morpheme, indicating a contrast between the 'post' and the 'past', pertaining to Stuart Hall's question: *when* was the postcolonial?
ii. a notion that involves **dependence** on previous structures of naming and reference, calling up Raymond Williams' question: *what* was the etymology of the words colonial/postcolonial?
iii. a perspective that necessitates the creation of **'otherness'** relating to Edward Said's question: *where and how* was 'the colony' constituted?
iv. a prefix that connotes **closure, silencing and violence**, returning to Gayatri Spivak's question: *can the subaltern speak*?
v. a percept that incorporates **cultural attitudes to space and time**, directing us to the Anthony Appiah's question: are the **'shelf-clearing gestures'** of *colonizing cultures markedly different from those of the colonized*?
vi. an idea that requires us to analyze the psychological structure of institutions, connecting to Rukmini Nair's question: *are postcolonial institutions ritually engage*d **in the social manufacture of indifference** as well as **difference?**

These half-a-dozen semantic characteristics of 'post', mean that it: is a temporal and historical affix; is morphologically dependent or 'derivational'; presupposes otherness; implies closure and silencing; involves 'shelf-clearing' actions; and requires reference to the psychological state of 'indifference'. This is, in my view, likely to ensure its theoretical longevity within postcolonial studies for a long time to come. A verbal scan of the morpheme seems to reveal that it is not in fact analytically redundant at all. I would therefore suggest that it is time to propose it as a candidate 'meme' in the world of the Internet, in line with the argument implicitly advanced in this essay that the intellectual capital of 'postcolonial studies' must today, as responsibly as possible, be transferred to the Internet if it is to retain its vitality.

It is this quicksilver, often lit by artifice, e-universe of the Internet wherein the boundaries between truth and falsehood, information and knowledge, representation

and embodiment, historical memory and present experience, are constantly being redrawn where the linguistic economies of the future – whether one's physical location is in Kabul or in Knoxville – are likely to reside for some time to come. The political economy of postcolonial theory will be charged and stimulated by a move into this swirling world of memes where foundational words like 'freedom', 'labour', 'hegemony' and 'nation-state' belong as much to the virtual terrain of Google and Wiki as to the learned territory of Hegel, Marx or Fanon. Today, the young of the human species is acquiring its ideologies through the Internet, fast replacing the intellectual under-confidence of post-colonialism with a superb hyper-confidence in the knowledge so easily available online at one's fingertips. This swift transformation of stable concepts into the world of chatter and change that constitutes the infinite reaches of the Internet is now a test case for every emancipatory theory of the past, including those mooted in current pragmatics.

In the online world, it is more or less taken for granted that almost every aspect of labour, even the academic, has a virtual element. We order out to meet the everyday need for food, buy art works online, support social causes simply by signing petitions without ever being obliged to march in the streets, proliferate friendships on Facebook, and even 'rent-a-womb' online. These new intimacies of the social media have arguably rendered our 'sense of self' more porous. Simultaneously, we seem to have become at once more vocal and opinionated and more anonymous and disembodied. In my view, these stressed transitions from 'postcolonial speechlessness' to 'active speech' online in an immensely enhanced global techno-sphere require that we fundamentally rethink the knowledge economies of the past.[15] Simultaneously, the interplay between the mechanics of ordinary conversation and 'peoples' technologies', such as tape-recorders and, now, mobile phones, has given researchers a reliable set of non-invasive tools for the micro-analysis of speech (see Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson 1974; Sacks 1992; Atkinson and Heritage 1984; Levinson 1983; Fetzer and Weizman 2017, 2018; Nair 2002a; Nair & deSouza 2020).

This paper has asked: How might the very particular structures of postcolonial interaction be studied using pragmatic methods to bring out (a) their distinctive roots in a colonial mindset and (b) their critical implications for future 'inequality studies'? How are speech act intentions and indirect speech acts decoded in postcolonial settings? How

15. This technological revolution is actually a third potent element in the 'coeval' birthing of postcolonialism and pragmatics mentioned in my first section. As we know, a slew of words such as 'outsource', call-centers, cell-phones, email etc. all came to become part of public discourse from the late 1980s on, with perhaps radical effects on our language use and strategies of communication. I have documented this elsewhere (Nair 2015, 2018a, 2018b – and indeed those essays have quite a bit of overlap with the present essay). See also Mishra and Hodge (2005) for a detailed and erudite tracking of the etymology of 'post-colonialism' and Rescher (2014) for an overview of American Pragmatism, a partial intellectual ancestor of linguistic pragmatics today.

do pragmatic criteria such as 'cooperativeness' and 'sincerity' apply within the complex of postcolonialism? And how can such a conjunction of rich historical data and pragmatic analysis significantly extend the field of contemporary pragmatics?

The answers to these big questions offered in this paper have – insofar as they have been answers at all – been both limited and lopsided. So much has perforce been excised. To cite just a few examples: the essay has not foregrounded the postcolonial aspects of 'settler colonies' such as Australia or Canada where native populations were decimated or corralled; it has not mentioned the rich literature on 'slave narratives' that are essential to an understanding of race relations and the interpretation of the very word 'liberty' in America even today; it has not considered the sorts of 'colonization' that has taken place over millennia within societies like the Indian via the concept of caste and its inherent psychology of dominance; similarly, it has ignored contemporary inequalities within Chinese society today where cultures on the outer peripheries of the 'middle kingdom' like those of the Uighurs or Tibetans are 'persuaded' as Kuhn mildly put it, to 'convert' to a more convenient Sino-centric mindset. There is, so to speak, a strong grammar of linguistic imperialism embedded in these contexts and several others that this essay has not even begun to probe. At the same time, it will likely be offensive to many pragmatics researchers because it seems to deal with subjects that are not all that amenable to 'scientific' investigation.[16] Yet, perhaps this is what the 'pragmatics of the margins' looks

16. Given these rank inadequacies, I am taking the liberty in this footnote of mentioning some additional readings on postcolonial theory, pertaining to the themes of gender, diaspora and much else. About a dozen of these are works of fiction since fictional 'rewritings' have been so influential a force in postcolonial studies (Adichie, Adiga, Armah, Bhattacharya, Chaudhuri, Desai, A., Desai, K. Ghosh, Gurnah, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, Okri, Roy, Rushdie, and Sahgal). The following do not appear in the main body of my essay but are fully listed in the References. They are:
Acheraïou 2008; Adichie 2003; Adiga 2008; Anjaria 2020; Armah 1988; Ashcroft et al. 1995, 2002; Bennett 1988; Benson & Conolly 1994; Bharucha and Sarang 1994; Bhattacharya 1978; Boehmer 1995; Bottomley 1992; Brathwaite 1984; Brennan, T. 1989; Chaudhuri 1991; Chew & Richards 2010; Coly 2010; Coopan 2009; Cooper & Ann Stoler 1997; Dabydeen 1985; Daiya 2008; Davies & Graves 1986; Desai & Nair. 2005; Deshpande 1990; Dissanayake 1993; Drabinski 2011: Ganapathy-Doré, 2011; Gandhi 1998; Gates 1986; Ghosh, A. 1988; Gilroy 1987; Goyal 2010; Grace 2007; Guha 1999; Harrison 2003; Jani 2010; Julien 1986; Kaur 2008; Kirpal 1990; Lemelle & Kelley 1994; Loomba 2005; Ma 2012; Marzec 2007; McClintock 1995; Mishra & Hodge 2005; Mongia 1996; Mukherjee 2010; Mukherjee 2000; Mukundi 2010; Nasta 1991; Nuttall 2009; Ojwang 2013; Okri 2003; Onyeoziri 2011; Parry 1996; Roy 1997; Sahgal 1999; Sangari and Vaid 1989; Schipper 1989; Shohat 2006; Singh 2009; Soyinka 1990; Stratton 1994; Suleri 1992; Sundar Rajan 1992; Thieme 1996; Thurner 2011; Trinh 1989; Trousdale 2010; Tsaaior 2013; Varughese 2012, 2013; Veit-Wild 2006; Venn 2006; Viswanathan 1989; Walonen 2011; Walters 2005; Whitlock & Carter 1992; Wilentz 1992; Williams & Chrisman 1993; Yacoubi 2012.
Useful websites include: https://literariness.org/2016/04/06/postcolonialism/ (Mambrol 2016)
and
https://www.bloomsbury.com/in/academic/literary-studies/african-asian-and-postcolonial-literatures/

like at first sight: unreasonable, untidy, intractable. If one were to stay the course, however, 'postcolonial' readings of social and linguistic variation offer us a chance to sensitize ourselves to the tendency in all cultures – but especially the ones identified as 'emergent post-identity global communities' – towards what one might call, after Marx, 'linguistic false consciousness' and 'language capital accumulation'. Consider here two quite different views of these possible post-identity societies of the future:[17]

> As soon as labour is distributed, each person has a particular, exclusive, area of activity which is imposed on him and from which he cannot escape. He is a hunter, a fisherman, a herdsman or a critic and he must remain so if he does not want to lose his means of livelihood. In communist society, however, where nobody has an exclusive area of activity and each can train himself in any branch he wishes, society regulates the general production, making it possible for me to do one thing today and another tomorrow, to hunt in the morning, fish in the afternoon, breed cattle in the evening, criticize after dinner just as I like, without ever becoming a hunter, a fisherman, a herdsman, or a critic.
>
> (Karl Marx in *The German Ideology*, Chapter on 'Private Property and Communism')

The other passage is from the first issue of an occasional journal called *Post-Identity*:

> The disappearance of the category of the Other from the Official Gaze is, like other strange cultural shifts, a belated recognition of a post-identity culture – a culture characterized by the difficulty, indeed, the impossibility – of imagining a distinct identity narrative, whether based on ethnicity, gender, class, or age. Indeed, these categories themselves have been so many times collapsed, whether in academic circles or in the popular media, that their fictive elements become too pronounced to ignore… Embraced by the culture producers, difference is everywhere and, thus, nowhere"
>
> (*Post-Identity*, Editorial Introduction, 1997)

It is clear from the passages above that Marx's view of post-identity is splendidly utopian. In the idealized communist society of the future, no individual will be trapped within a single identity deriving from the units of drudge-labour that she produces; instead, she will have the freedom to move between being 'a hunter, a fisherman, a herdsman, or a critic'. The more pessimistic perspective of the editors of the journal *Post-Identity* suggests, however, that these diverse identities may dissolve into a pernicious homogeneity. Imagining a 'distinct identity narrative' is, they seem to suggest, is an increasingly diffi-

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In a similar spirit, I want to mention three or four introductory works on pragmatics that are not directly referenced in my essay but could independently interest postcolonial theorists. They are: Allott 2010; Huang 2016; Leech 1983; Mey 1993; and Senft 2014.

17. It is worth noting that Marx's *The German Ideology* and his 'Theses on Feuerbach' are intrinsically connected. The latter were intended as an outline for the first chapter of his book *The German Ideology* (1932). In the event, neither the book nor the theses were published during Marx's lifetime; the theses being brought out by Friedrich Engels in 1888 as an appendix to his own work.

cult task in a global world powerfully influenced by the endless distractions of fast-paced electronic media. In turn, this poses a pressing, practical problem of self-identification: "difference is everywhere and, thus, nowhere".

How then does theory – postcolonial as well as pragmatic – succeed in resisting such encompassing homogenization, a 'totalizing' loss of cultural identity? Democratization and the establishment of rights are of course an essential component of postcolonial theory and, as argued in this essay, increasingly part of the 'emancipative' horizons of pragmatic theory. But, as Marx might have reminded us, it was not only the erstwhile colonizers who had notoriously undemocratic predilections and the urge to accumulate intellectual capital – but *all* users of language. For example, it is reiterated endlessly that approximately 90% of the world's languages are spoken by less than 10% of the world's population, which means that 'big' languages like English, supported by other historical and political factors, dominate discourse about 'democracy' and other such emancipatory words – roughly analogous to the way in which less than 10% of the world's population is said to command 85% of the world's wealth, while the bottom 90% hold the remaining 15%. In short, left to 'market forces' – those long-attested Baconian 'idols of the market'(see footnote 2) – language behaviour is often hegemonic rather than egalitarian. There may, therefore, be significant lessons to be drawn from the histories of language policy in many postcolonial states such as South Africa and India that have actively worked towards 'democratizing' the relationship between their multiple languages and sought to diminish the overwhelming sociocultural importance of former colonial language like English. For example, India currently boasts of 22 'official' languages, including English, and at least 326 'recognized' languages; yet it is evident that some of these languages tend to be extremely powerful while others are highly endangered. English remains a dominant language at the top of the pyramid. That is why, despite global pressure and allure of being part of a 'world community' of scholars, we must school ourselves to persistently examine those critical terminologies of supposed egalitarianism that make up our academic comfort zones.

If the preservation of language democracy – and, by implication, democracy itself – counts at all as an academic concern, it follows that we can hardly afford to be know-all 'universalist' university professors, given the global context of today's bewilderingly diverse, linguistically hybrid, 'post-identity' communities. This is a basic lesson to be drawn from postcolonial theory, so fundamentally concerned with resisting homogenization. Academic practitioners have to devise methodologies that leave them space to think themselves into the position of conflicted language users caught in postcolonial double-binds, even when they command a superior master language like English and/or live in economically stable 'western' enclaves. And few are perhaps better placed to enter these arenas of conflict than researchers in linguistic pragmatics who must, after all, be concerned in the last resort not just with the rich uses of language in multiple global contexts but with a far more troubling question, namely: 'is language [worse than] useless in

certain cultural contexts?'. For, it could be that knowing 'how to do things with words' in zones of language conflict fails to help and may even demean or destroy the users. And it is here that the current life-and-death cases of the Afghan translators/interpreters caught in the 'Graveyard of Empires' mentioned at the very beginning of this essay as well as other situations where the distribution of linguistic power is frighteningly unequal, might have profound, if ambiguous, postcolonial lessons to teach scholars in pragmatics.

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Sociology of language

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1. Introduction

Sociology is a discipline in dialogue with other social sciences to understand and analyze, under the rules of scientific method, societal organization and social change. Organization and change occur both under specific conditions of social inequalities and in institutional frameworks. Sociology originally emerged from 18th and 19th century philosophy around the change from traditional society to industrial and modern society. Following this tradition, today's main sociological concerns relate to the complexities of differently defined and approached aspects of the postindustrial reorganization of society. In particular the effects of the Information Age on the social restructuration of capitalism (Castells 1996) in the late 20th century, or more recently, in the 21st century, of the so-called 4th industrial revolution and the Internet of Things (the interconnection through the internet among things and persons).

Sociologists do not share a cumulative corpus, but they dispose of different paradigms, theoretical and methodological tools for understanding society. For a Marxist sociologist, for example, since in information society all information is linguistically coded, language (natural languages, digital codes, numeracy, computer languages, as well as all other literacies) becomes raw material in the production process, and therefore language plays a key role in the structuration of inequalities and new modes of capital accumulation. For Weberian approaches instead, the perspective on language relates to processes of rationalization oriented towards efficiency, calculability, and predictability, as well as to its control role in social closure oriented to the distribution of resources. According to Coulmas, citing a functionalist perspective, across history, written language has created social differentiation (Coulmas 1992: 36). Literacy increases the adaptive capacity of social systems by advancing differentiation and specialization (Parsons 1966), and the interaction of integration and differentiation is central when explaining social evolution (Eisenstadt 1964). Connections between theory and practice are plausible: today we observe an institutionalization of the key role of language; a wider set of literacies has become an intrinsic element of key competences for lifelong learning and to achieve both individual and collective prosperity. Therefore, the field of sociology of language encompasses a wide number of considerations that constrain this text.

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Below, readers will not find a review of sociolinguistics and its micro-macro interconnections with sociology, excellently explained by Romaine (1994). Nor can all topics covered by sociologists of language be correctly addressed in a single paper. There are many sociological fields where language is a relevant variable: education (Edwards 1976), education and social class (Bernstein 1973), religion (Omoniyi and Fishman 2006), economy (Coulmas 1992) to cite just a few, as shown in Section 5 on institutional frameworks where we illustrate a number of current research topics dealt with at sociology of language conferences. The field is also rich both in interdisciplinary dialogue and disciplinary diversity. For instance, looking at the role of language in occupations, there are at least four distinct sociological notions of language skills: positivist, ethnomethodological, Weberian and Marxist (Attewell 1990: 442; Alarcón and Joanpere 2019).

Currently sociology of language shows that there are not only interdisciplinary fields, but also distinctive and evolving disciplinary paths. Readers will find a modest review of the role of langue in the discipline according to its sociological roots, mostly focused on widely accepted founders of the discipline (Boudon et al. 1997; Giddens 2013). The point of departure in Section 2 is industrialization and modernization, passing by Adam Smith, Karl Marx and Max Weber, with a reflection on lessons to be drawn from their work for current processes in the information society. Section 3 considers epistemological questions of sociological approaches from holistic and individualistic perspectives via Emile Durkheim, George Simmel and Auguste Comte. Reference to current approaches is also made in Section 4 in the light of the social and sociological turn in the analysis of interrelationships between language and society. Section 5 bring examples of key cases of practices of institutionalization of the sociology of language as a discipline.

2. Industrialization and the (linguistic) division of labor: Smith, Marx, Weber

2.1 Adam Smith

For most sociologists, sociology finds its origin in thought about the evolution from agricultural/craft system societies to industrial societies (in objective or material terms) or about the change from traditional societies to modern societies (in subjective or interactional and institutional terms). Sociology emerged as a systematic attempt to understand changes provoked by industrialization and the ongoing process of modernization of societies and states (Solé 1976). For sociologists, the social effect of the division of labor (as a source of wealth), is a major consideration. Highly influential for the foundation of both economics and sociology, Adam Smith wrote:

> The common ploughman, though generally regarded as the pattern of stupidity and ignorance [...]. His voice and language are more uncouth and more difficult to be understood for those who are not used to them. His understanding, however [...], is generally more superior to that of the other, whose whole attention from morning till night is commonly occupied in performing one or two simple operations. How much the lower ranks of people in the country are really superior to those of the town is well known to every man whom either business or curiosity has led to converse much with both.
>
> (Smith 1991[1776]: 115)

Written more than two centuries ago, this paragraph describes a relation between occupation, social status, and language skills (or language 'competences,' the term that would be preferred by sociologists of education, in contrast to the use of 'skills' by sociologists of work). The key point is that the process of *division of labour* generates needs for homogeneity to be able to move the workforce across the country in the first stages of industrialization (from farm villages to industrial cities). Indeed, interchangeability of the workforce became important in the industrial era (Gellner 1983). Therefore, one common language becomes the management rule of the 'scientific' state. This state is, according to Anthony Smith, in the words of his student Carlota Solé,

> a polytheist that attempts to homogenize the population within its administrative confines, using the most advanced scientific techniques and methods for the sake of efficiency. The rulers use the bureaucratic machine and the fruits of scientific research and technological applications in order to procure resources and mobilize the population of their territory, to the point that the patriotic duty of the nationalist citizens is the economic growth of their nation. (Solé 1976: 320 [my translation])

On the other hand, division of labor also means a *linguistic* division of labor, with the opposite effect. Each occupation requires different linguistic skills: nurses, doctors, lawyers, plumbers have specific vocabularies and the mastery of different literacies to exercise their professions. This fact contributes to the complexity and indeterminacy of language at work, and its relations with employability and productivity. During the period of industrialization, the spread of literacy and linguistic homogenization were two key social processes with relevant consequences for social mobility and economic development (Fishman, Ferguson & Gupta 1968; Pool 1972; Gellner 1983; Coulmas 1992)

In terms of occupations, craft systems were replaced by Taylorist-Fordist models, splitting the workforce, according to literacy levels, into white- and blue-collar workers. This can be understood as the main social divide across occupations based on language needs. For blue collar workers, according to Cohen (2009: 26), talking on assembly lines was regarded as counter-productive; 'silent' and illiterate tasks performed by unskilled blue collars allowed direct integration of mass migration within industrial areas in Europe and the US. According to Josephine Boutet,

> dans le taylorisme, parler et travailler sont considérés comme des activités antagonistes. Parler fait perdre du temps, distrait, empêche de se concentrer sur les gestes à accomplir. (Boutet 2001: 56)

> [in Taylorism, talking and working are seen as incompatible activities. Talking means losing time, it distracts, makes it impossible to concentrate on the actions to be performed.]

According to Cohen, during the first third of 20th century in the United States,

> workers should not be expected to know how to read, or write, or to speak English, only to refrain from drinking on the job. The assembly-line was conceived for an illiterate population, many members of which were recent immigrants to the United States who didn't speak English (…) These unions never dreamed of unionizing these illiterate workers who were arriving from Sicily and Poland – workers they mistrusted but Fordism welcomed. (2009: 26)

Nevertheless, under the general labels of white and blue collars, there is a complex system of occupational stratification (quite different from earlier crafts systems), progressively rationalized at private and public levels during the 20th century. Whereas in the crafts system artisans enjoyed their mastery of tacit knowledge to produce commodities, in the rationalized industrial system occupation and management have become the depositories of explicit skills through codification into handbooks, guides and other forms of written instructions. Today, not only natural and professional languages but also, more generally, literacies (today including digital and computer literacy) can be understood as (yet) indeterminate bundles of skills when thinking about performance at workstations (writing, reading, arguing, human-machine interaction skills). These literacies are considered today by OCDE and the European Council as key elements of growth and wellness, in line with Smith's approach to the Wealth of Nations (European Commission 2018; Schleicher et al. 2009).

2.2 Karl Marx

For Karl Marx, the main social divide (and the source of conflict) is the distribution of surplus value between capitalists and workers. Language is part of the superstructure emerging from a given production system. Focusing on the limits of simplification of a linguistically intense labour process, many investigators have recently concentrated on the workers' skill-based role in code objectification, inspired by a re-reading of Marx' *Grundrisse* manuscripts on political economy (Pasquinelli 2014). Marxist approaches to language skills rely on the value of language work and its exploitation in capitalist production, a process in which the worker has lost contact with the market (the buyer) and the product is not his own creation, but a floor-plant aggregate of abstract and alienated labour. Employers buy skills and time as a form of labor power and obtain a surplus from

concrete labor. Buying working time and a 'bundle of skills', the process of exploitation is basically undifferentiated for mental and physical skills (Urciuoli 2008; Cameron 2005).

Exploitation is a type of social relation, and it is the human being (a member of a social class) who is exploited, not a particular abstract skill. From this perspective, Alarcón et al. (2014) do not identify language skills as a manager's indicator of value creation for call centers, but ethnolinguistic attributes of workers as markers of exploitation. The relevance of language skills in the equation is to transform labor-power into concrete labor. The capitalist objectivation process aims to deskill the labor force, and thereby to reduce the exchange value (wages) of workers, to reduce the problem of turnover and to increase the power of management over a deskilled workforce. From a Marxist point of view, wages depend more on socio-historic balances between capital and work than on the skills themselves (Del Percio, Flubacher & Duchêne 2017; Holborow 2018: 6). As the example of the US-Mexico border at El Paso shows, exploitation of workers happens both through their linguistic skills and its ethnic attributes and stigmas, and results in the subordination of Spanish speakers (Alarcón and Heyman 2013).

A challenge to the Marxist approach is that there are a number of occupations where the personalization of service (face-to-face encounters between worker and client) makes it difficult to objectivize work ("no two interactions are the same"), and implies that workers do not self-identify as 'language workers' (in the case of call centers, see Woodcock 2017: 73) – 'language worker' is far from being considered an occupation in itself by most workers.

Many Marxist concepts, such as 'commodification', are often used because of the powerful Marxist framework to explain capitalist society: the transformation of a subject into an object of the production process; the appropriation of workers' language capital by companies; the transformation of language into a commodity to be sold on the market. The debates about the misuses of Marxist concepts of objectivation and capital fetishism (Block 2019; Holborow 2018) are very vivid in today's interdisciplinary 'sociolinguistic market' of ideas and concepts.

2.3 Max Weber

The division of labor in complex societies requires strong processes of rationalization. Capitalist companies export rationalization (efficiency, calculability, and predictability) to all institutions and spheres of human interaction. The Weberian approach includes a wide range of research insights around language skills. According to Max Weber, a language is (1) a useful tool for bureaucratic control and (2) an instrument of social closure.

First, we need to pay special attention to Weber's concept of bureaucratic control and the role of protocols. Most professions (physicians, police, educators…), work with strict levels of linguistic protocols, which may become a kind of 'dictatorship' or 'iron cage',

providing security but also limiting or conditioning their professional status (Martin et al. 2017). Protocols defining processes and deliverables (contents of conversation or ways of writing reports by machine) are related to the bureaucratic control of the State as restriction on individual freedom. This restriction is aimed in the positive sense at the pursuit of equality and wellbeing among citizens. There is also a negative side to the bureaucratic State, understood as a dangerous Leviathan with the monopoly of violence. Language can be understood by the Leviathan (or any agent in the fight for power) as a tool of domination, a key to Foucaultian governmentality and punishment. There are analogies such as weaponization of language or militarization of speech in the "global war against terror" (Rafael 2012), language as a tool for both totalitarianism and revolution in the digital sphere (Hall 2018) and right-wing authoritarianism (Pascale 2019). There is no reason to think that this weapon cannot provide societal wellbeing, but conceptually, in the Weberian sense, it implies *language violence,* organizing mental frameworks as distinct from physical violence.

One major Weberian concept is that of the capitalistic rationalization of languages within an organizational context as a source of inspiration in the management of languages. This notion has produced a remarkable amount of research on linguistic organization in multinational companies (e.g., Dhir 2019). This includes reference to different types of workers according to their international mobility and position/occupation in the structure of the company (headquarters-subsidiaries).

Second, a major observation originating in Weberian concepts is that each occupation, as a marker of a social group, can deploy different levels of skill recognition according to processes of social closure (Parkin 1974; Myers-Scotton 1993). Following Max Weber,

> a social relationship can provide its participants certain probabilities of satisfying certain interests, both external and internal, whether for the purpose or for the result […] When the participants of that relationship expect that their propagation will give them an improvement of their probabilities in quantity, quality, security or value, they are interested in their open character; but when, on the contrary, they expect to obtain those advantages from their monopolization, they are interested in their closed character abroad. (Weber 1993 [1922]: 35 [my translation])

Languages, and particularly minority languages (or accents), to the extent that they define communities and proximity among their members, can provide an excellent basis for preventing the alienation of the individuals produced in the exchange of resources. Those resources which the individual is willing to renounce in the exchange may remain in a relatively close community that allows for easy subsequent access. For Weber, the choice of language as a criterion for social closure is not purely a matter of the specific role of language itself in social exchange; in a way it is an arbitrary element of segmentation:

> The increasing number of those competing compared to purchasing possibilities increases the interest of the participants in limiting their number in some way. The way this usually occurs is that some externally verifiable character of the competitors (real or potential), such as race, language, religion, place of birth, social class, domicile, etc., is taken as basis for the exclusion. In concrete cases, the characteristic chosen for elimination is irrelevant; you can use the first one found.
>
> (Weber 1993 [1922]: 276 [my translation])

This process of 'closing' a community is typically repeated and rooted in territorial 'property', as well as in all crafts and other monopolistic groups by the creation of written and unwritten laws. In this way, "a 'legal community' is born from the community of interests." (Weber 1993 [1922]: 276). Following Weber, society is built around tensions between competition and monopolistic interests around social closure. Theoretical treatments of social closure in relation to language have focused on the closure of elites in order to achieve and conserve power (Myers-Scotton 1982, 1993; Pool 1972). Myers-Scotton, in her study of African states, identifies the officiality of the English language as a segmental strategy of individuals.

> The closure of elites is a type of strategic social mobilization, through which individuals in power establish or maintain their privileges to limit access to power and socio-economic improvement to non-members of the elite or to the political opposition. The closing of the elites is possible thanks to three universal sociolinguistic propositions: (1) not all individuals in the same community speak the same linguistic varieties; (2) the different varieties in use in a community have different situational uses; (3) all varieties are positively or negatively evaluated by the members of the community according to a specific type of interaction. (Myers-Scotton 1993: 149)

3. Holistic and individualistic approaches

A central question for a sociologist concerns his epistemological approach for the study of society. The classical authors already mentioned have strongly influenced later research (as is the case for Marx's dialectical materialism or Weber's view of the micro-macro combination). But there are other classical sociological approaches to consider still.

3.1 The cement that unites us: Durkheim, Simmel

For Emile Durkheim language is, like religion, God or money, a social fact, socially produced. It is something 'objective,' different from people. What unites people in modern societies is not the sharing of the same God, skin colour, or language, but the necessity of each other's presence, because of the division of labor, creating a new bond of solidar-

ity that is called 'organic' by Durkheim, where every person in a given job contributes to the creation of a new and more complex social body. Social forms of exchange are themselves to be distinguished from the subjects involved in the exchange. They constitute 'social facts' that influence other 'social facts,' such as individualization, differentiation, or the propensity to an economic valuation of all aspects of life. Thus they generate new individual needs that determine the most appropriate forms for new exchanges. The relationship between subjects giving and receiving in interactions, far from constituting the mere reciprocity tending to a contingent balance between individuals, is limited to patterns, forms, or norms of exchange. The interaction patterns (languages, literacies) are prior to the agents who participate, although they originate in the subjects and in the relations between them, just as they are subject to maintenance, transformation, or suppression through the actions of the agents themselves. The difficulty in altering the forms adopted by the objective culture, however, becomes greater as it consolidates.

For Simmel, 'sociology' is a science dedicated to the study of 'interactions' between individuals. Sociological work, from this perspective, consists in the study of interactions as a bridge between individuals and of forms of objective culture and other structural features, such as the size of the interaction communities. Interaction takes on different forms or patterns, some of which are historically more developed than others. Thus, following Simmel, in 'primitive societies' we would find extended forms of interaction captured with labels such as 'theft' and 'gift.' But possibly the form of interaction of greatest interest to the sociologist in today's world is that of 'exchange,' since around cultural exchanges we see the emergence of objective cultural forms such as money and language, which are a consequence of man's social character, but detached from private individuals. For Simmel, the patterns of interaction constitute the essence of social structures (Ritzer 1995: 331). There is a mechanism whereby the interests of individuals are satisfied with the exchange. Then, social forms of exchange are generated and standardized in order to provide a stable pattern in the provision of benefits for individuals. "Guardians of language", linguists, are among the older professions in history since history precisely starts with the written word (Kaster 1988).

How do languages arise? Or more importantly for many individuals in our society: how are they maintained, do they acquire hegemony, or do they (or, more properly, their speakers) disappear? Given that, hypothetically, the emergence of exchange patterns, at least in their origins, is due to individual or corporate interests, whether in cooperative or conflicting contexts, the maintenance or suppression of language diversity can be related, for example, to the processes of monetary integration. More specifically, this explains how different languages are maintained (in the absence of a common repertoire) within broader monetary communities. The particular characteristics of languages, and how they have been historically made available to individuals, follow guidelines similar to those of money. The provision of the official language is comparable to the 'official' currency that is the responsibility of governments. We can consider these norms of

exchange as public goods that must be provided by means of some collective action, conditioned by factors such as group size, the existence of privileged groups or selective incentives (Olson 2012 [1965]). Such emergence, if produced and in the form it adopts, is not necessarily intended. In terms of the Weberian tradition, we can consider both the appearance and the deletion or modification of exchange rules as a consequence of the subjects' interest in the control over the external manifestation of action (Coleman 1990: 249–259). In fact, constitutions always impose barriers to exchange that separate political rights and public resources (in the form of rights of legislators, executives, or citizens to participate in collective decisions) from other private resources in the economy. These barriers are never absolute and always allow alternating decision control.

Simmel's concept of "extension of the economic-monetary circle" is analogous to that of the 'linguistic circle.' Thus, as to the first, Simmel indicates that the general acceptance of money causes its action to extend indefinitely and turn the entire civilized world into a single economic circle of reciprocal interests, complementary productions and usage analogues. On the other hand, money produces a huge individualization of the economic person. Liberal norms, linked to the monetary economy, place the individual in free competition with others, and ultimately that competition and that extension of the economic circle determine specialization of the activities and the total exploitation of special talents, which is only possible because of the compensations that may arise within the framework of a very large circle. Within the economy, money is the link between the maximum extension of the economic group and the maximum differentiation of its members, in the sense of freedom and autonomy, as well as the qualitative differentiation of work. Or, more precisely, thanks to money, the group of the natural economy, small, closed and uniform, transforms into one whose unitary character is divided into the two aspects of enlargement and individualization (Simmel 1986: 779–80).

The English language, broadly conceived as the new lingua franca, plays this role in the "language circle". As for the extension of the 'linguistic circle,' the collective benefits of linguistic homogenization, from an economic perspective, according to Gellner (1983), derive from the fact that it contributes to and enables the economic progress of society – the society of perpetual growth and of the social mobility of the individual. Particularly, the role of the state, which contributes to homogeneous education, makes possible a geographically interchangeable labor mass in a linguistically homogenized territory. Addressing this perspective in Section 3.2. with an emphasis on positivism and individualism, the state seeks the administration and defense of a single language at the territorial level, insofar as it allows the efficient administration of society (Friedman 1977). Laitin et al. (1994) have focused their attention on a historical and rational choice perspective on the importance of language as a strategic element for rulers intending to achieve an orderly and efficient administration of their territories, maximizing the extraction of resources within their territorial confines.

3.2 Positivism and individualism

On the basis of Auguste Comte's work, positivistic approaches turn away from the measurability of Durkheim's objective social facts, and focus instead on a set of quantifiable and well-defined 'linguistic variables', commonly related to linguistic diversity, to test its effects on a set of economic variables (wages, unemployment…) using statistical series and econometrical or statistical models (Chiswick & Miller 2003; Dustmann 1999; Gazzola & Wickstrom 2016). Individualistic approaches look at the micro-foundations of one of the macro characteristics of languages, that is, the tendency of a single language to operate as a monopoly, based on individual decisions. Analogous to currencies, languages with greater communicative potential tend to operate as monopolies, just like gold first and then the dollar became more efficient in international trade (Carr 1985). This is because languages with a greater communicative potential tend to produce a 'tail box' effect, that is, the extension of the linguistic network immediately generates economies of scale (Church & King 1993). Thus, to the extent that individuals cannot be excluded from their supply, we can indicate that languages are hyper goods, that is, in addition to meeting the conditions of the collective good, individual benefits increase with the incorporation of new consumers. Thus, the utility or the communicative potential that a language provides will increase for individuals as the number of speakers of a language increases (De Swaan 1998: 68–72).

A limited number of sociological studies describing occupational status with the use of ISEI/SIOPS Scales (International Socio-Economic Index of occupational status; Standard International Occupational Prestige Scale) have established links with language skills (Schnepf 2007; Tsai 2010). A relatively unexplored source of positivistic analysis requiring new techniques is available at occupational overviews which contain linguistic definitions for each occupation, such as ISCO (International Standard Classification of Occupations, International Labor Organization) or SOC (Standard Occupational Classification): these are classifications with more than 800 occupations where there are relatively detailed definitions of specific tasks for each occupation, including required skill levels (Markowitsch & Plaimauer 2009). Nevertheless, occupational classifications that contain quantitative data, such as O*NET (Occupational Information Network of the US Department of Labor), have received more attention due to econometric models involved in mainstream economics. Also, PIAAC (the OECD's Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies) offers an excellent tool to go deeper into the relationship between literacies and occupations and its implications for occupations (Quintini 2018).

4. Current directions

Sociological thoughts from various social sciences interested in language have been evident over the last several decades, in and across a wide variety of disciplines. There has been the so-called 'social turn' away from a focus on individual behavior (as in the behaviorism of the first half of the 20th century) and individual minds (as in the cognitivism of the middle of the century) toward a focus on social and cultural interaction. Gee (1999) list up to 15 movements involving this 'social turn', with special attention to The New Literacy Studies (NLS) which was one movement among a great many others (Barton 2001; Gee 1996; Street 2003).

For purposes of this paper's focus on disciplinarity, we can make claims about a "sociological turn of the sociology of language". Several scholars have created their own paths following the sociological basis of classical sociologists, focusing on language involved in modernization (Fishman 1974) or related to economic variables (Coulmas 1992; 2012). According to Pascale et al. (2009) a number of sociological studies of language have tended to:

> focus on highly technical aspects of conversation analysis, perhaps reflecting an effort to reconcile the importance of language and the demands of science. However, with changing and contested notions of what constitutes a social science and deeper appreciation for the inseparability of symbolic practices and material realities, more sociologists are turning to a broad range of theories and methods for apprehending the sociological importance of language. (Pascale et al. 2009: 1)

This situation evolves, and sociologists are increasingly concerned about the ability of studies of language to effectively comprehend routine relations of power and privilege in current society. Some examples cited by Pascale et al. (2009) include Steinberg's (1999) analysis of how material and discursive forces conjoin in shaping inequalities; exploration of the relevance of French Discourse Analysis for language-based empirical research (more recently in Williams 2014); the potency of symbolic power in strengthening relations of oppression and exploitation (Bourdieu 1991); the usefulness of post-structural discourse analysis for African scholars seeking to develop Afrocentric scholarship (Osha 2005); or the ethnomethodological and post-structural principles in the analysis of commonsense knowledge about race, class, and gender (Pascale 2007). Nevertheless, according to Pascale et al.:

> Language, broadly construed as systems of representation, is arguably the foundation of shared culture – it is the premier symbolic system. While language is central to social interaction and social structures, it remains at the margins of sociological research and theory. Given the profoundly interpretative nature of language, studies of language often have been regarded as being more humanistic than scientific. (Pascale et al. 2009: 1)

This critique and frustration towards a possible undervaluation of studies of language and society are relevant because they embody a persistent question in academia regarding social sciences. Sociology of language is an exemplary case. Its exemplary nature can be seen when we return to the initial question of the division of labour as a key notion for the foundation and development of sociology. The ethnomethodological approach has brought to language-and-society studies rich and detailed analyses of how complex language skills can be deployed in any given occupation, especially in a context of highly competitive sectors and service-oriented production. These studies cover a wide range of occupations and skills, mostly approached by anthropologists in dialogue with sociologists. Studies on call center operators' work and their linguistic tools (scripts in the case of Woydack and Rampton 2016) or on multilingual tourist service workers (Duchêne 2009) are representative of this line of research. The complexity of skills involved in their work reflects the new capitalist demands on workers in these occupations. An understanding of the complexity of language skills is not possible if the researcher uses only experts or managerial information. For example, understanding relations between language and occupations requires an emic perspective, i.e. the interpretation of singular practices, feelings and worldviews of actors involved. A substantial point here in comparison or in dialogue with positivistic approaches is the emphasis on the fact that skill is embodied in workers and related to workplace context, and not part of the occupation itself. From a perspective of public policies, this approach can be very useful when designing specific programs of training for specific groups, such as social workers or agents of an employment office. The relevance of language in informational capitalism does not explain its social constructions of language as something valued or ignored in labour markets. This is important since through different social processes language skills can be considered both as non-rewarded 'soft' skills (communicative abilities and/or ethnic attributes), or as belonging to 'hard skills' or technical competences when a certain level of language competence is required for a certain position or occupation (Heller 2011; Flubacher, Duchêne & Coray 2018: 4). But we also need the whole and detailed picture of language and occupations, comparability across a vast number of occupations, sectors, company sizes and countries, and the systematization of language skills across occupations. A systematic literature review of ethnomethodological studies on language skills detected across occupations will benefit a wider community of scholars and bureaucrats in view of the design of new sources of data information (Vidal & Alarcón 2021).

Language can be part of inequality systems and it can also be understood as an institution or social product itself. The informationalization of society and economy (Castells 1996) brings new challenges and has consequences for the functions of language in the economic and labour fields (Kelly-Holmes & Mautner 2010; Duchêne & Heller 2011; Urciuoli & LaDousa 2013). The role of language in informational capitalism – to use Castells (1996) terms comparing *industrial* with *informational* as properties of the

infrastructure of society – differs widely from its past role since the main inputs and outputs of leading companies have become information. Since information is linguistically encoded, informational capitalism makes language central to production processes, increasing language work, demanding new linguistic skills of its workers and producing its own communication jargon, codes, and protocols. Language is thus a key component of productivity, employability, wages, and control. Native and foreign languages, computer languages, numerical systems, scripts or protocols can be approached as today's working tools that must be mastered by professionals on an everyday basis. Beyond the classical 'language industries' whose outputs are books or translations, today's conversations and texts are produced in a wide range of workplaces where they can be understood as the final product of the labour process. Paradoxically, we know that language is recruited across occupations, and there are huge investments by leading IT companies in linguistic processing of artificial and natural languages, but exactly how language is objectified and contributes to productivity within firms remains a 'black box' (Grin, Sfreddo & Vaillancourt 2011).

5. Institutional frameworks of the sociology of language

The terms sociology of language and sociolinguistics have been interchangeable to some degree. Let's consider a couple of examples of the terminological interchangeability. According to Romaine (1994), in the 1950s 'sociolinguistics' was coined around "issues concerning language in society", but noticeably, sociologists have emphasized "Society" instead of "Language" itself. This means not looking at language through society but looking at society through language. This approach has been specifically promoted within the International Sociological Association (ISA), in its Research Committee devoted to language. Originally was founded in 1962 under the label "Research Committee 25: Sociolinguistics". At its origins and till the 1990s most of its conference sessions and presentations had a clear orientation towards sociolinguistics, linguistic minorities and "Language" itself, and as a consequence there was a belief among the Research Committee Board that they received little interest from other sociologists attending ISA conferences aimed to study and understand "Society". The name and orientation of the group changed in the period 1996–1998 to "Research Committee 25: Language and Society", and conference sessions navigate from micro-interactions to macro social changes; coordinators have emphasized the sociological approach in the sessions, in the process of abstract selection, and, of course, this was reflected in the presentations. From the beginning of the 21st century, there has been an increase in numbers of sociologists in the group; they now are a majority among presenters, program coordinators and board members. In other words, there has been a sociological turn.

> The objective of the Research Committee on Language and Society is to advance sociological knowledge concerning language in interaction and in systems of representation. The RC welcomes all theoretical and methodological frameworks that can be used to create sociological analyses of language. As scholars who conceptualize language and its problems differently, we make use of an extraordinary range of methods and focus on an equally wide range of topics. In RC 25, scholars whose research on language ranges from sociolinguistics to poststructural discourse analysis are united by the desire to look at rather than through systems of communication.
>
> (consulted online on 1 March 2020 at https://www.language-and-society.org/)

The aim of a sociological turn of the sociology of language was evident in ISA's XIX World Conference (Toronto, 15–21 July 2018), organized by sociologists from five continents as coordinators and organizers, and presenting numerous Joint Sessions with Sociology Research Committees on Childhood, Work, Migration, Women and Society, and Health, among others. This is a sign that sociology of language debates are becoming more prominent within the discipline, and definitely the sociology of language, thanks to previous RC25 presidents (particularly professor Pascale), has been able to consolidate a sociological debate with 'other sociologies', and not only with other disciplines (linguistics, pragmatics, anthropology...) as was usually the case. Session titles and topics will give an idea of the current interest of sociologists of language:

> Research Committee Language and Society Program at ISA XIX World Conference (Toronto, 15–21 July 2018)
>
> – Childhood at the Intersection of Discourses on Rights and Power: 30 Years after the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. SOs: Loretta Bass, Federico Farini and Angela Scollan
> – Social Media and Free/Hate Speech Debate; SO: Mieko Yamada
> – Conceptualizing Global Social Problems; SO: Roberta Villalón
> – Institutional Interaction: Struggles over Knowledge and Legitimacy; SO: Marie Flinkfeldt
> – Language & Society Keynote Speeches by Roland Terborg and Celine-Marie Pascale; SO: Keiji FUJIYOSHI
> – The Language of Multiple Belongings: An Intersectionality Perspective of Everyday Life; SOs: Stephanie Cassilde and Helma Lutz
> – Talking: An Act Against Gender Violence; Session Organizers (SO): Tinka Schubert and Natalie Byfield
> – Migration, Language Integration and Inequalities. SOs: Cecilio Lapresta-Rey and Sara Nuzhat Aming
> – Migration, Language Integration and Inequalities; SOs: Sara Nuzhat Aming and Cecilio Lapresta-Rey
> – Authentic and Denaturalized Identities; SO: Mark Seilhamer
> – Language Diversity, Power and Social Equality; SOs: Cecilio Lapresta-Rey and Everlyn Kisembe

- International Family Migration and Normative Languages; SOs: Francesco Cerchiaro and Laura Odasso
- Algorithm and Language; SO: Natalie Byfield
- Flexible Multilingualism: Rethinking Theories and Concepts; SO: Rika Yamashita
- Re-Negotiating Regimes of Truth: Knowledge, Power and Social Transformation; SOs: Attila Krizsánand Frida Peterson
- Representation and Action: Performativity of Domination; SOs: Lisandre Labrecque and Guillaume Ouellet
- Sociology and Language. Advances on Theory and Methods; SOs: Federico Farini and Amado Alarcón
- Populism in Political Discourses: The Language of Power and the Power of Language; SO: Erzsebet Barat
- Languages of Victims: Toward Advocating Contemporary Social Sufferings
- SOs: Keiji Fujiyoshi and Masahiko Kaneko; Chair: Keiji Fujiyhosi
- Language and Work: Categorizations and Significations of Work and Employment; SOs: Stéphanie Cassilde and Adeline Gilson

SO: Session Organizer

By contrast, the International Journal of the Sociology of Language, founded by Joshua Fishman, a cornerstone of the development of the sociology of language, defines itself as clearly interdisciplinary:

> The International Journal of the Sociology of Language (IJSL) is dedicated to the development of the sociology of language as a truly international and interdisciplinary field in which various approaches – theoretical and empirical – supplement and complement each other, contributing thereby to the growth of language-related knowledge, applications, values and sensitivities. Five of the journal's annual issues are topically focused, all of the articles in such issues being commissioned in advance, after acceptance of proposals. One annual issue is reserved for single articles on the sociology of language. Selected issues throughout the year also feature a contribution on small languages and small language communities. (consulted on 1 March 2020 at https://www.degruyter.com/ijsl)

It is worth noticing that neither the American Sociological Association (ASA) nor the European Sociological Association (ESA) have specific groups or sections on the sociology of language. There are few national sociological associations with Sections or Research Committees devoted specifically to language. In Spain there is a "Sociology of Communication and Language" section, but the majority of presentations deal with 'communication' and are delivered by professors working in journalism programs. In some regional associations such as the Associació Catalana de Sociologia (ACS), the Research Committee on language "RC1 Sociolinguistics" identifies sociolinguistics as its main research topic. Nevertheless, currently there is an attempt to follow ISA guidelines oriented to the sociological turn.

6. Final considerations

The roots of sociology are to be found in industrialization (as material and objective transformation of society) and modernization (as a new system of social relations). Language has a key role in these material and social dimensions, and this remains unchanged under the new conditions of globalization and the information age (flows of objective and subjective facts, diversity, mobile communications and language as code and raw material). Under a materialistic approach, information is linguistically coded and today it implies different literacies. It is central to work (infrastructure) in society. Also, today's efficiency, rationality, predictability, calculability rests on literacies crucial for prosperity and equality within society. Language is a social fact that in "peaceful" societies is used as a weapon. Given their deep and solid roots Sociology of Language Research Committees in organizations such as ISA are taking a turn towards disciplinary sociological debate rather than interdisciplinary ones. On the other hand, journals and research groups in which sociologists are interested to collaborate, have a clearly interdisciplinary orientation towards phenomena of language and society. The sociological turn of the sociology of language and its capacity to relate the particular with the socially general (Solé 1987), together with its increasing obligation to serve and reach social impact (Soler 2017), provide the sociology of language with a broad audience and a wide range of beneficiaries..

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Handbook A–Z

Conversational storytelling

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1. Introduction

A notable trend in pragmatics is the growing interest in emergent and contingent processes through which narratives are constructed in conversational interactions (Couper-Kuhlen & Selting 2018a; Mandelbaum 2003). This is a departure from the traditional approaches that are drawn from literary and historical narratives (De Fina & Georgakopoulou 2012; Kasper & Prior 2015) and therefore represents a paradigm shift that "combines a focus on local interaction as a starting point for analysis with an understanding of the embedding of narratives within discursive and sociocultural contexts" (De Fina & Georgakopoulou 2012: 3). Stories in conversational interactions are routinely assembled during every-day talk through *personal narratives* of life events (Ochs & Capps 2002) or even in less eventful personal episodes through *small stories* (Bamberg & Georgakopoulou 2008).

Analytic interest in conversational storytelling is largely credited to Harvey Sacks, who initiated and developed the empirical study of conversation analysis (CA). His empirical insights into storytelling are amply demonstrated in his lecture notes that were compiled and edited by Jefferson (Sacks 1992a, 1992b). One key methodological precept in CA is the sequential analysis that traces the temporal organization of social interaction and explicates contingent choices made by the involved parties during real-time exchanges of turns. Sequential analysis allows CA researchers to uncover various ways in which stories are constructed interactionally in the context of evolving sequences (Mandelbaum 2013; Sidnell 2010; Waring 2021).

This manuscript reviews CA studies on conversational storytelling in terms of its two major components: the *story* and the *telling*. First, CA studies are known for their insightful analyses of the *telling* aspect of storytelling that have uncovered interactive engagement between tellers and their recipients and documented an array of structurally regular features in various components of storytelling sequences (Mandelbaum 2003). Second, CA studies have also traced the constitutive processes through which topical themes are constructed and maintained. Since storytelling involves managing multiple turn-constructional units, the teller assembles these utterances into a coherent narrative trajectory. That is, storytellers work from and toward the *package* of turns and utterances

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to create a topical flow (Couper-Kuhlen & Selting 2018a; Sidnell 2010). This *story* aspect has rarely been formulated in CA circles despite the substantial number of insights Sacks provided in his lecture notes (1992a, b). This review attempts to uncover CA studies that are relevant to the constructive process in which utterances are assembled into narratives. This review also covers second language storytelling, which has been the subject of increased interest in applied linguistics (Wong & Waring 2021b).

Notable in conversational storytelling is that various analytic programs with different sets of conceptual and methodological precepts have converged (Couper-Kuhlen & Selting 2018a; De Fina & Georgakopoulou 2015a; Mandelbaum 2013; Norrick 2000; Ochs & Capps 2002; Wong & Waring 2021b). In particular, CA studies are often cited interchangeably in two other programs, sociolinguistics and discourse analysis (De Fina & Georgakopoulou 2012; Georgakopoulou 2018), and in interactional linguistics (Couper-Kuhlen & Selting 2018b; Fox, Thompson, Ford & Couper-Kuhlen 2013). This convergence is possible because, in these programs, structural and functional patterns are equally accessible through transcribed data. Each program, however, interprets these patterns differently according to its own respective conceptual principles and methodological precepts. The review begins with discussions of these two overlapping programs of how to discern CA's unique findings in relation to these two neighboring programs.

2. Analytic approaches to storytelling

Analytically, the word "*story*" refers to monologues or literary texts that are crafted by an author for a reader or listener (Mandelbaum 2003). However, recent research has investigated how narratives are interactionally constructed and locally assembled (De Fina & Georgakopoulou 2015a; Mandelbaum 2003). This alternative view pays close attention to the situated context in which socio-cultural factors are embedded and enacted in stories. The emphasis on the situated context reflects the development of sociolinguistics and discourse analysis (Gumperz 1982; Hymes 1971; Labov 1972; Labov & Waletzky 1967; van Dijk 1985), but the contexture relevance is widely recognized across diverse fields of studies, including psychology, history, anthropology, and literary criticism.

De Fina and Georgakopoulou (2015) call this perspective, "*the practice-based social interactional approach*," as it examines how narratives are embedded within discursive and sociocultural contexts. Researchers in this analytic tradition have acknowledged Sacks' pioneering work (1992a, 1992b) in merging the local and interactional properties in storytelling sequences. Nonetheless, they do not limit their analytic undertaking to the local and interactional features as seen in the following remark.

> Our approach, however, takes a further step beyond the local level of tellings and looks for links and articulations between different levels of context and different scales in order

> to explain how the telling of stories shapes and is shaped by ideologies, social relations, and social agendas in different communities, times, and spaces.
>
> (De Fina & Georgakopoulou 2015b: 3)

This analytic positioning is designed to link micro-local linguistic patterns to underlying macro forces identified from the contexts; the regular features in storytelling are considered to encode, represent, and reify contextual factors, cultural categories, social forces, and even ideologies (De Fina & Georgakopoulou 2015b; Georgakopoulou 2018), and these factors are considered to influence and shape the characters of storytelling. One important benefit of this approach is that it allows researchers to accommodate and thus consolidate diverse analytic traditions to offer comprehensive coverage of the contextual factors that underlie narratives.

This macro – micro connection is not, however, encouraged in CA studies. CA's hesitation to take on underlying factors has to do with its programmatic orientation to keep their analytic parameters within the temporally evolving sequence of interaction to trace participants' undertakings. Regarding this, Schegloff (1991: 40) argues that CA work is "grounded in aspects of what is going on that are demonstrably relevant to the participants, and at that moment – at the moment that whatever we are trying to provide an account of occurs" (1991: 40).

Another strand of research that is similar to CA studies is interactional linguistics (Couper-Kuhlen & Selting 2018b). This approach is more closely tied to CA since both programs highlight contingent and interactive processes in storytelling. Their pursuit of real-time discourse is poised to discover linguistic and discourse regularities found in storytelling sequences without extrapolating into large macro-contextual elements. The purpose of interactional linguistics research is to focus on "what participants demonstrably show these forms to be doing" (Couper-Kuhlen & Selting 2018a: 13).

Linguistic regularities found in interactional linguistics are often used to draw some structural features that are considered inherent in storytelling sequences. For example, Ochs and Capps (2002) generated several key criteria including tellership, experiential logic, and nature of sequence (e.g., temporal vs. explanatory sequence), through which personal narratives can be identified. Norrick also identified some "internal narrative structures" (2000: 27), such as the abstract, main action, resolution and code, in storytelling. This line of research can be traced back to Labov who tried to match "a verbal sequence of clauses to the sequence of events" (1972: 360).

Linguistic regularities in storytelling sequences allow researchers to appeal to a broad range of disciplines and find allegiance with stable analytic resources. With this methodological heterogeneity, the enterprise of interactional linguistics "depends less on orthodox methodology than on certain essential principles such as, first, the use of naturally occurring data from social interaction and, second, an interactional perspective on the analysis and description of the data" (Couper-Kuhlen & Selting 2018a: 14).

Despite the kindred orientation to conversational storytelling, CA has a sociological root (Schegloff 2006) that is different from that of linguistics. Linguistic regularities are also important in CA, and yet, they are not the bedrock of CA research. As Schegloff noted, "an utterance's function or action is not inherent in the form of the utterance alone, but is shaped by its sequential context as well" (1997b: 538). This does not mean that interactional linguistics does not trace the sequential organization of storytelling. CA's emphasis on the temporal ordering of sequences in storytelling is tailored for retrieving the sense of building narrative trajectories central to storytelling research (Schegloff 1997a) and the social actions that are contingently constructed. The *story* aspect in storytelling research is one such area in which this process is readily visible.

3. Telling

As a discipline, CA recognizes that storytelling is an interactional practice that engages tellers and recipients in the evolving sequences of talk-in-interaction (Mandelbaum 2003, 2013). This line of studies has uncovered a diverse array of interactive practices in initiating, developing, and then completing stories, during which recipients are also variably involved in responding and initiating their own moves afterwards. Thus, sequencing a story is a matter of *traffic management* (Antaki 1994) which produces an array of structural regularities. The *telling* aspect in CA studies pays close attention to these interactionally regular features found in the storytelling process.

3.1 Story launch

During story launch, tellers and recipients are engaged in various organizational tasks. Particularly notable is that storytelling often emerges from regular conversational exchanges (Sacks, Schegloff & Jefferson 1974). To launch a story, the teller needs to suspend regular turn-taking patterns (Sacks 1992b: 227) to secure an opportunity to produce multiple turns for storytelling.

The story launch could be prompted in various ways. The teller can initiate the launch by generating prefacing remarks such as "we could've used a little marijuana to get through the weekend" (Goodwin 1984). Some linguistic devices are regularly adopted to make a prefatory remark (Sidnell 2010), such as using characters of the story ("John and I"), temporal remarks ("a week before my birthday"), or spatial remarks ("It was in Santa Monica"). The teller also tries to ensure that the story has something new for the recipients, such as "I forgot to tell you the two best things that happened to me today" (Sacks 1974; Terasaki 2004). Routinely, a story launch could be triggered by prior talk, as a potential teller could use some patterned linguistic devices to relate his/her story to

current topics, such as "that reminds me of," "one day," or "as a matter of fact (I know) the guy" (Wong & Waring 2021a: 194).

While stories can be launched by a single turn by one person, their launch could involve a series of turn exchanges among participants (Lerner 1992; Mandelbaum 1987, 1993). For example, an initial comment by a speaker can prompt an exchange of questions and answers, as seen in the following.

Excerpt 1

1. A: Well- (0.4) we coulda used a liddle, marijuana, tih
2. get through the weekend.
3. B: What h[appened.
4. A: [Karen has this new house…

(Goodwin 1984: 225)

The story may be prompted by someone else in the form of solicitation or inquiry as L did in the following excerpt.

Excerpt 2

1. L: Oh you haftuh tell'm about yer typewriter honey,
2. J: oh yes.

(Lerner 1992: 251)

In this context, the recipient has knowledge of the source event and thus prompts the teller for the story.

3.2 Main story

The main part of the storytelling involves providing background information, developing the story to lead into the climax of the telling, and then formulating the upshot of the telling (see Wong & Waring 2021 for more details). The story has to have some face validity to be appreciated, as it is by having a proper beginning and ending, for example. A remark such as "once upon a time" is an instance of a proper beginning, while "she went to sleep" is an instance of a proper ending, given that a person's going to sleep usually marks the end of that person's day (Sacks 1992b: 252–258). The presence of these language forms in each respective position is indicative of how the positioning of an utterance is tied to the organizational structures of its corresponding story. Sacks' famous analysis of the telling of a dirty joke is a case in point (1978, 1992b: 270–277). Here, sequential ordering is a key resource for the teller to develop a coherent organizational structure of the story. His data features three daughters and their mom, and the story progresses from the first daughter to the third one. In addition, the story moves from the description of the first night of their marriages to the next morning. When utterances are assembled in a serially organized fashion, they become interpretive resources to make sense out of for the recipients.

Goodwin (1984) specified the steps through which the main part of the story is delivered interactionally. After the story launch with the story preface "*we coulda used a liddle, marijuana, tih get through the weekend,*" a recipient solicits the story with *"what happened?"* Then, a remark that works as a preliminary to the story is produced with *"Karen has this new house."* This is followed by the parenthetical information *"this is the first time we've seen this house,"* which leads into the story climax, namely *"Don says did they make you take this wallpaper or did you pick?"* This climax is often followed by a remark that shows the appreciation of the story – in this case, with laughter.

Some studies have examined linguistic patterns during the main part of storytelling. Selting (2005) documented syntactic and prosodic features that go into the dramatization process in German. Holt (2017) found that direct reported speech tends to be used at the peak or focus of the telling, whereas indirect reported speech is used in background detailing. Oh (2005) showed how a teller drops a pronoun in the climactic segment of a story, stating "Never saw a th- a mention of it," omitting the subject "I." This displays the tight continuity between the actions and the excitement generated in the story.

After the climax of the story, some linguistic or structural marks are used to indicate its completion of the story. A typical display of the completion is what is called the *return home*, in which the teller brings the story back to where it started with "we are back to the pizza joint we started from" (Jefferson 1978: 231). Similarly, Drew and Holt (1988) reported some forms of idiomatic and other formulaic expressions that are used to bring the matter to a close before changing the topic, such as "But I think it'll iron itself out."

3.3 Recipients' contributions to the story

There is a variety of ways for recipients to become involved in storytelling sequences. Their contributions tell us what they notice about the story's development and completion. Recipients' contribution may range from passive (nodding) to active responses (asking questions) (Couper-Kuhlen & Selting 2018b; S.-H. Lee 2013; Mandelbaum 1989). They can also produce a continuer such as "uh huh," "mm hmm," "yeah," or even head nods, to exhibit their understanding that an extended unit of talk is underway by the speaker (Schegloff 1982). Recipients often receive clues as to what kind of story is being told and what stance they are expected to take.

In doing so, the recipients are seen to display their alignment with the storytelling formats while conveying their affiliation with the teller's stance at various sequential junctures (Linstrom & Sorjonen 2013; Stivers 2008, 2013). Recipients have diverse ways of showing an emphatic response such as "I also like that kind of thing" or "I wish I could see his face" (Heritage 2011). These responses could mark the recipients' emotional involvement and, thus, their social solidarity (Lindstrom & Sorjonen 2013). Their emotional involvement can also be displayed through nonverbal responses (Stivers 2008) via

affiliative tokens, such as head nods and fixed gazes (Voutilainen, Henttonen, Stevanovic, Kahri & Peräkylä 2019).

Couper-Kuhlen (2012) showed that affiliation is conveyed through follow-up questions or minimal responses that are typically accompanied by prosodic matching or upgrading, whereas withholdings are shown to be non-affiliative and are accompanied by prosodic downgrading. Story recipients can also redirect the story during its telling (Mandelbaum 1989), just as they can resist the point of the story that the teller is trying to convey (Mandelbaum 1991). In their response to the story, recipients can also demonstrate different interpretations of the story's character (Fitzgerald & Rintell 2013).

4. Story part

The previous section covered structurally regular features in storytelling. This line of research, however, does not focus on the process in which utterances are connected to create topical flow during the telling of a story. In this process, each turn at talk needs to be sequenced for a particular purpose in such a way that the parts of the story are bound together (Sacks 1978). Tellers go to great lengths to make their stories appear relevant (Jefferson 1978) by assembling utterances into coherent narrative packages (Sacks 1992a: 354; Sidnell 2010). The recipients are also involved in this assembling practice by monitoring and responding to a story in progress. In sum, building a narrative trajectory involves contingent work for *topic maintenance* (Wong & Waring 2021) in the evolving sequence of interaction.

The process of building narrative trajectory and managing its topical flow is illustrated clearly in the following example by Sacks (1986: 128–129). Here, Estelle (E) calls Jeanette (J) who works at Bullocks (Department Store) and has the day off work. Estelle saw something happen at Bullocks.

Excerpt 3

1. J: Hello
2. E: Jeannette
3. J: Yeah
4. (0.3)
5. E: Well I just thought I'd- re-better report to you what's happen' at Bullocks
6. today?
7. J: What in the world's happened.
8. E: Did you have the day off?
9. J: Yeah?
10. (0.3)
11. E: Well I- got out to my car at five thirdy I drove around and of course I had to
12. go by the front of the store,
13. J: Yeah?
14. (0.3)
15. E: And there were two- (0.2) police cars across the street and leh- colored lady
16. wanted to go in the main entrance there where the silver is and all the (gifts)

17. and things),
18. J: [yeah]
19. (0.4)
20. E: And, they wouldn't let her go in,m and he, had a gun,
21. (0.2)
22. E: He was holding a gun in his hand a great big long gun?
23. J: Yeah?
24. E: And then, over on the other side, I mean to the right. of there, where the
25. (0.2) the employees come out, there was a whole, oh must have been ten
26. uh eight or ten employees standing there,

In the above excerpt, one may find numerous linguistic features that are used to connect utterances such as "and then," "over on the other side," and "of there."

For our purpose of tracing topical maintenance work, we note that *what happened at Bullocks* is progressively and reflexively tied to the subsequent descriptions. First, "what's happen' at Bullocks" in lines 5–6 becomes a resource to interpret the next turns by the teller progressively, for example, *the presence of the police* (line 15), *policemen with a big long gun* (lines 22) and *employees gather outside* (lines 24–26). At the same time, these observations about the police and employees are reflexive resources from which the recipients can recognize the urgency or gravity of the event at Bullocks that prompted the teller to begin her story in the first place (lines 5–6). Each utterance in this telling is, therefore, not a disparate observation but part of an evolving whole that is being assembled into a narrative trajectory. The *story* part in CA studies attends to this constitutive process and recovers the participants' choices in creating and maintaining the topical flow.

Furthermore, the narrative is formed in reference to the course of actions the teller had taken on that day. Estelle first got to her car (line 11) and then drove around before passing by the front of the store (line 12). In her course of actions, she spotted a police car (line 15), witnessed a policeman with a lady (lines 15–16), and then finally, observed employees on the other side (lines 24–25). Her noting of the event is chronologically presented in such a way that each successive action is being tied meaningfully to the prior one.

In building this narrative trajectory, the recipient also makes a substantial contribution. Jeannette's turn in line 7 prompted the teller to go ahead with the story. The series of continuers in lines 13 and 23 display her understanding that an extended unit of turns is underway (Schegloff 1982) and that she is listening to the story as it is being developed (Sacks 1992b: 3–16). In this regard, the *story* part in conversational storytelling addresses the interactional work of topic maintenance that builds and manages the trajectory of the theme over the course of conversational exchange. Even when there are topic shifts, participants seem to try to reduce the abruptness of the shift through linguistic devices, such as "actually," "by the way" (Crow 1983), or even "all right" (Holt & Drew 2005). Speakers often take gradual steps toward a topic shift by connecting comments to prior utterances by acknowledging, assessing, commenting on, or using figurative expressions (Jefferson 1993).

In sum, utterances in storytelling are assembled to connect utterances progressively and retrospectively during the telling. These utterances are made to hang together in a kind of package that works to form opinions, put forth arguments, register complaints, and extend compliments, for example (Sacks 1992b: 284–288). It is by tracing the sequential progression of the story that CA studies uncover the constitutive process of building and maintaining a topical flow in storytelling. This is the process by which "coherence and topic must in the first instance be constructed into the talk and progressively realized, not found" (Schegloff 1990: 54). In the section below, we examine how topic maintenance is managed in three areas of research in CA.

4.1 Membership categories

In the evolving sequence of talk, the tellers and their recipients make use of categorical devices in their exchanges. If the teller says, "he was speeding and he got arrested," we hear that the arrest is the result of the speeding (Sacks 1992a: 254). The topical flow of these two utterances is categorically tied in the evolving sequence.

In CA studies, numerous researchers have demonstrated the use of categorization devices in various conversational interactions (Day & Kjaerbeck 2019; Deppermann 2013; Hester & Eglin 1997; Hester & Francis 2003; Housely & Fitzgerald 2002; Schegloff 2007b; Stokoe 2012). Typical to this line of study is the attempt to capture categorical features in storytelling sequences and then investigate their relevance to some social and contextual categories present in the data. Roca-Cuberes and Ventura (2016) analyzed a television news story about the San Fermin Running of Bull festival in Pampolona, Spain. Their analysis revealed how *foreigners* and *women* are characterized in news stories as the *other* by seemingly portraying these individuals as being in the wrong place.

The question is how these categorical devices make utterances hang together in sequential organization of talk as part of topical maintenance. Again, Sacks' analysis provides some conceptual and empirical ground for this line of analysis (1972, 1992b: 222–241).

Excerpt 4

```
1.  A: Say did you see anything in the paper last night or hear anything on
2.     the local radio, Ruth Henderson and I drove down to Ventura
3.     yesterday,
4.  B: Mm hm
5.  A: And on the way home we saw the:: most gosh awful wreck.
6.  B: Oh:::
7.  …
8.  A: We were s-parked there for a quite a while but I was going to listen
9.     to the local r-news and haven't done it.
10. B: No, I haven't had my radio on either.
```

Sacks noted a number of categorical resources that tie utterances together to form a coherent story. For example, the teller presented "Ruth Henderson and I drove to Ven-

tura" first in line 2, and then, in the next turn (line 5), she commented "on the way home." The sequential positioning of these remarks requires the recipients to keep in mind that the teller went to Ventura and that the car accident they saw was on their way back. In saying this, the teller poses the possibility that she could have been involved in the accident because she saw *the wrecked car* on her way back from Ventura. The categorical properties of the utterances are sequentially connected as the story unfolds.

Furthermore, the teller framed the accident to be something that could be heard of on the local radio. This raises the issue of the accident's reportability, given its seriousness and relevance to the teller. The story also used a collection of terms, such as "drove down," "on the way home," and "awful wreck," which are constitutive of the coherent topical theme of the story.

Membership categorical devices in CA studies are surely not limited to the work of topical maintenance. Yet, the above example demonstrates that the use of categorical resources cannot be explicated only through their linguistic properties in the teller's remarks. They are also sequential objects that are serially deployed, and their categorical properties are connected thematically over the course of interactions. As noted by Sacks, "the hearer's business, then, is not to be listening to a series of independent sentences, but to a series of connected sentences that have that connectedness built in such that it is required for the understanding of any one of them" (1992: 232). Therefore, it is necessary to explicate how these categorical resources are assembled in the sequential ordering of utterances in the telling of a story.

This possibility of situating membership categories in sequential context can be observed in the work by Fitzerald and Rintel (2013), who examined how the characters in a story are recast in a contrastive manner to that of the teller. In their data, the teller, *Des,* is talking to her girlfriend, *Kay,* about a female lifeguard he met. In the course of the telling, two different pictures emerge about the story. Des' version is presented through the framework of having a fun conversation with a nice lifeguard. In contrast, Kay's response treats the telling in reference to her relationship with Des, invoking different categorical devices that cause her to accuse him of "flirting with her (the lifeguard) the whole day." What happened to Des is characterized differently in these two versions as each version conjures up different categorical properties in its telling.

4.2 Repair

In conversational interactions, repairs are occasioned for various reasons such as questioning, joking, teasing, clarifying, adjusting, or even correcting language use. Both tellers and recipients can initiate such repairs (Kitzinger 2013; Schegloff, Jefferson & Sacks 1977). In storytelling, however, repairs are likely to interfere with the progressivity of telling (Sacks 1987; Schegloff 2007a) and thus its topical flow (Schegloff 1979); these interferences can change the shape of the subsequent interactional exchange. For this

reason, tellers and their recipients are oriented to manage these interferences in order to resume their stories. Since participants in conversational interactions are generally concerned with advancing in-progress activities (Stivers & Robinson 2006), addressing repairs in storytelling could be part of interactional endeavors to restore the topical flow.

Organizationally, self-initiated repairs in the same-turn constructional unit interrupt the progressivity of the turn, whereas other initiated repairs interrupt the progressivity of the sequence (Schegloff 1997b). Other repair initiations are done overwhelmingly in the next turn after the trouble source turn (Schegloff 2000). Sometimes, the recipients will provide a candidate word when the teller is having difficulty finding a word, thereby allowing the turn to progress (Goodwin 1987; Norrick 2019). Some resuming moves are incorporated into subsequent turns, while others take more time (Jefferson 1987; Lee & Hellermann 2020). Nonnative tellers have been found to move forward with their stories after attending to repairs concerning language matters (Lee & Lee 2021).

There are some cases in which repairs incur more extensive interruptions of the story-in-progress. Monzoni and Drew (2009) analyzed a case in which a non-knowledgeable recipient interrupted a storytelling to ask a question. Some recipients' repairs might even show a disaffiliative move (Mandelbaum 1991). Helisten (2017) examined how a teller resumed his/her telling after its progressivity was halted due to an intervening course of actions. These tellers used special devices to inform their tellers that what comes next is not a continuation of just-prior talk but a return to a previously suspended telling using "but" and "anyway" along with gestural features.

The repair or interrupted turns often motivate the tellers to adopt a more active action. The teller in Local's study (2004) was found to recycle and re-connect to the point in the story that was suspended in the following excerpt. Here, Emma and Lot are talking about a fungal toenail infection that they both have. Notice here how Lot started off with "isn't that funny" in line 4, which is curtailed by Emma in the subsequent turn.

Excerpt 5

```
1.  E: Isn't this funny you and I: would have it h
2.     (0.4)
3.  E: This is ri[: diculous]
4.  L:           [e:verybody]'s got .hh isn't tha:t funny we
5.     were in a p-uh: [:
6.  E:                 [Oh: God it's terrible Lottie m:y toenails
7.     .hehh they just look so sick those big t:oenails it just u-
8.     makes me: sick You know they're diss (.) u-dea:d (.)
9.     Everything's dead I d- I sat ou:t (.) today and I said my
10.    Go:d am I just (.) dy:ing it's: (.) like I'm ossified
11. L: no I- we were in: some [pla:ce uh don't know if it was
12. E:                       [((sniff))
13. L: Bullock's==or somepla:ce (0.4) I guess it was Buluck's
14.    a:nd somebody was ta:lking about it a:nd I: bet there were
15.    .hhh te:n people arou:nd the:re and they a:ll started to
16.    say well they had the sa:me thing
```

Lot's turn was subject to repair in line 5. Lot's effort to resume the story began with another repair in line 11 with "no I- we were." In resuming, Lot's turn is notably louder and higher in pitch than the corresponding part in line 4 that was curtailed. Local (2004) argues that this is not just a continuation of the sequence but a re-beginning of the story that was halted. Wong (2000) found a second-saying practice in which the teller makes a parenthetical comment on their first saying before producing the second. The second saying, in this context, is designed to resume the telling that was interrupted during the interaction

In sum, repairs pull into view some interactional works through which the participants are oriented to resume a story that was halted momentarily. Their orientation toward progressivity has the effect of restoring the topical theme of the story. The length and intensity of the repair seen in resuming a sequence depends on the tellers' contingent decisions and the recipients' subsequent responses.

4.3 Epistemics

Another issue that has some relevance to topical maintenance work is epistemics. Epistemics is concerned with the knowledge claims that interactants assert, contest, and defend in conversational exchanges (Heritage 2013). There are various possible scenarios in which epistemics matters in conversational exchanges. For example, there might be some discrepancy in knowledge among participants because the teller has privileged access to the details of a scene or characters. This privileged access to knowledge may permit some telling rights, but these rights could be derived from some exclusive expertise or even an insider perspective (Blum-Kulka & Weizman 2003). Tellers' comments in a story's preface, such as "you'll never believe what happened at Bullocks today," pertain to the differential access to the target phenomenon.

In storytelling, epistemics can be problematized, contested, and acted on in the course of action. Norrick (2000) reported cases in which a recipient contested a teller's formulation of the persons in the story and filled in missing details, which indicates that epistemics can be negotiated in the interaction. This issue is particularly important when tracing the topical flow, as uncertainties and problems may influence the way the story is developed and negotiated. The following excerpt illustrates how epistemic access matters in the way that the topical theme is maintained (Norrick 2020). The teller, Brianne, is talking to her friend, Addie, about what happened at a store familiar to both parties. Norrick (2020: 222) noted that the teller seems to display her uncertainty about a character in the story, and yet she was able to complete her storytelling. In this review, it is worth tracing the story sequentially to learn what epistemic decisions are made by the teller and what effects they have on the progress of the talk during the telling.

Excerpt 6

```
70 B: there is this other story too.
71    this is a good one.
72 A: oh .
73 B: uhm .. some l lady named Judy or- something like that-
74 A: Mom told me that there was a Judy that worked there,
75 B: yeah.
76    that worked.
77    ha ha ha l like it,
78 A: for a while ((laughing))
79 B: yeah.
80    the - uhm- she-
81    okay apparently-
82    wha- was it something like,
83    she had a hair appointment?
84 A: uh-huh
85 B: I don't know.
86    I don't know the whole story but-
87    I don't know she- she was late for work.
88    or somethi.ng like [this   ]
89                       [mhm-mhm]
90 B: or she'd told them in advance.
91    that she had this appointment.
92    and she was n't gonna be in on time.
93    I don't know.
94 A: mhm-mhm.
95 B: but anyway the deal was,
96    that Astrid did not let her forget it for two weeks.
97    she- she went around the store bitching about it.
98    "yeah she had a hair appointment I bet."
99    or something like "oh-" you know.
100   "maybe I should get my hair done today."
101   or some [snotty things like that.]
102 A:        [(laughing)) oh my God   ]
103   oh Jeez.
```

Norrick found some linguistic marks that evidence the teller's limited epistemic access, including such disclaimers or hedges as "was it something like she had a hair appointment" (lines 82–83), "or something like that" (lines 82 and 88), and the repeated "I don't know" (lines 85–87 and 93). Yet, the teller was able to compensate for the uncertainties and sketchy stories with multiple gaps in lines 96–101. According to Norrick, this was possible because the recipient was informed of the requisite background knowledge.

Norrick's argument assumes that epistemic access is manifested in the participants' language use. In tracing the topical flow of the story, however, the constitutive process of the storytelling should be highlighted by tracing the line-by-line progression of the exchange. Notice that the teller introduced the name of the character in the story (line 73), which the recipient recognizes in line 74. This recognition by the recipient allows the teller to move forward with her story to explain the situation about the character's hair appointment in lines 81–83.

These turns by the teller consist of linguistic utterances that prompted repairs. The series of repairs in lines 85–93 seem to show the teller's uncertainties of the background

details before moving on, for example, "I don't know" and "or something like this" in line 88. Nonetheless, she attempts to establish that Judy gave advance notice about her appointment in lines 90–93. To this formulation, the recipient produces a continuer in line 94, and the teller says, "but anyway the deal was". Despite her uncertainty, the teller has established Judy's notification, and is now ready to move forward with the story and address the main theme of the story, namely, Astrid's negative comment about Judy (lines 96–101). The teller is characterizing Astrid's comment in reference to what she has established so far, namely Judy's advance notification about her hair appointment.

Norrick analyzed the excerpts by referring to the presence of epistemic access through language markers. Yet, CA's sequential analysis can trace the contingent process through which the teller's epistemic decisions are made in the story's progress. That is, the teller's epistemic decision is explicated not just from some linguistic markers but also from the process in which she moves from the preliminary information to the main theme of the story. Even the teller's evaluative remark on Astrid's behavior is sequentially deployed beginning with a summative formulation, "Astrid did not let her forget it for two weeks" (line 96), and then some details such as "went around the store bitching about it" (line 97) followed by a final formulation "some snotty things like that" (in line 100).

In building the narrative trajectory, linguistic features offer useful analytic resources for interpreting the semantic character of each utterance. Yet, it is the sequential organization of storytelling that pulls into view the contingent work of understanding the teller and her recipient display and that moves the story forward. In the sequential domain, linguistic forms and functions are grafted onto the narrative trajectory that the teller is trying to assemble. In this sense, epistemics offers a useful entry point from which analysts can trace what aspects of knowledge are made visible and what works the teller deploys in managing the topical flow to direct the narrative trajectory.

In sum, the story part in storytelling practices offers some useful information as to how the topical theme of a story is established and maintained interactionally. Given that storytelling involves multiple or extended turns, it is critical for the tellers to connect their turns within the story's progression. In the course of a telling, the teller and their recipients manage the work of topical maintenance by elaborating on the raised topic, tying together the categorical properties of the theme and negotiating the characteristics of the knowledge under consideration. The need to maintain the topical flow is what organizes telling sequences, and linguistic patterns are the outcome of these contingent interpretive choices. The *story* part in CA studies is organized to describe this structuring process, not just the outcome of the structures.

5. Second language storytelling

Research on storytelling has primarily focused on storytelling practices by native speakers. However, it is now more common than ever for conversations to involve nonnative speakers of a language interacting to tell a story. For this reason, exclusive reliance on a monolingual standard has been questioned (Canagarajah 2013; Li 2018; Waring & Hellermann 2017). In applied linguistics, the term *multilingual* is used widely to accommodate diverse ways in which language is used (Prior 2016). Notably, second or foreign language (L2) development is not linear nor evenly paced (Kibler & Valdes 2016), as it is characterized by variability, fluctuation, plateaus, and breakthroughs (Hasko 2013).

Since conversational storytelling is regularly undertaken by nonnative speakers (Wong & Waring 2021b), a substantial number of studies have inquired into features of nonnative storytelling and its development (Barraja-Rohan 2015; Kasper & Prior 2015; Lee & Hellermann 2014; Wong & Waring 2021b). One primary point of interests in the study of second language storytelling is whether and how storytelling practices are uniquely different in comparison to their native counterparts. In comparing audio recordings, for example, Wong and Waring (2017) found that two groups, monolingual and multilingual speakers, use similar resources to seek assistance, pursue uptake, and signal delicacy. Kasper and Prior (2015) documented highly competent storytelling practices by an adult immigrant to the US in his use of sequential organization and turn design despite his unfamiliarity with the storytelling norms of the target language. In contrast, Lee and Hellermann (2014) documented some distinctive ways in which second language speakers compensate for their limited repertoires of language resources while managing the contingent tasks of building their narrative. Wong's study (2021a, 2021b) demonstrates how social relationships like friendships are manifested in the details of storytelling episodes as the same second language tellers showed a different range of choices when reacting to the two different recipients of the story.

Notable in this regard is that the matter of language proficiency is a pervasive concern in second language storytelling. Because of the limited linguistic repertoires of second language speakers, repairs are an omnipresent possibility in managing the storytelling (Lee & Lee 2021; Pekarek Doehler & Berger 2018). For this reason, research in this area tends to center on the *learning* matter (Eskildsen & Majlesi 2018; Kasper & Wagner 2018), identifying problematic language patterns and seeking pedagogical remedies.

Aside from the pedagogical undertaking, sequential analysis has revealed that repairs involve more than correcting linguistic errors and developing language proficiency. In their paper on repairs, Schegloff et al. (1977) noted that the pedagogical operation involved in other corrections could serve as a vehicle for socialization. One indication of development is how speakers become better at monitoring and correcting their own language. Thus, it is necessary to trace the contingent choices and methods of talk in second language storytelling in addition to cataloguing tellers' linguistic errors.

If the analytic scope is expanded, repairs in second language interaction can be seen as arising due to several causes, including grammar problems, word search, or pragmatic relevance. While pedagogical research tends to emphasize linguistic problems, not all language issues are treated as such by participants (Hauser 2005; Y.-A. Lee 2013). Second language speakers are often preoccupied with managing their storytelling tasks despite the presence of language problems. In their studies of Korean speakers of English, Lee and Lee (2021) illustrated cases in which second language speakers were selectively oriented to language problems or content matters. Even when they noted language problems during their storytelling, they exposed some but not others in managing their stories (Lee & Hellermann 2014). Native interactants in second language storytelling tend to focus more on sense-making matters without dwelling on language matters. For example, native speakers may sidestep or dis-attend to grammatical errors (Wong 2005) or lexical issues (Wong 2012) and thus opt for the progressivity of the discussion. This finding confirms the early research that second language speakers focus on the larger goal of moving the conversation forward (Firth 1996; Kurhila 2001).

From the perspective of sequential analysis, second language storytelling seems to offer another useful vantage point from which the role of storytelling in interaction can be considered and explicated. Second language speakers manifest their own ways of managing the task of progressing and constructing the meaning of a story in interaction – sometimes similarly to those of native speakers – while at other times, they cope with their limited repertoires. It is through sequential analysis that we can trace the decisions tellers and recipients make in handling repairs in storytelling, which tell us about the larger issues of how overall meaning is negotiated.

6. Conclusions

Storytelling research in conversation analysis is indebted to the pioneering work of Harvey Sacks (1992a, b). The vast majority of conceptual and methodological insights have been derived from his analysis of a single case with regard to topical coherence, turn-taking organization, membership categorization devices, cultural relevance, and member methods. As the field advanced, however, CA studies has evolved into collection studies that draw findings from multiple cases (Sidnell & Stivers 2013).

The accumulation of collection studies has helped to mature the analytic enterprise by establishing stable conventions and common analytic references to which researchers across diverse fields can refer. For example, collection studies have made it possible to document the details of linguistic or structural patterns in interactional linguistics (Couper-Kuhlen & Selting 2018b). They are tailored for researchers to aggregate individual cases from which more abstract constructs can be determined. These categorical constructs serve as critical resources for researchers in sociolinguistics and discourse

analysis to gain insight into underlying contextual, social, and cultural forces (De Fina & Georgakopoulou 2015a; Georgakopoulou 2018).

In storytelling research, however, more studies that focus on a single narrative trajectory in close analytic details are needed. Sacks' insights into ordered properties of social interactions – including storytelling – are persuasive because of his assiduous undertaking of carefully documenting single cases. Storytelling involves managing multiple and extended turn constructional units through which various emergent and improvised actions are incorporated into the story in progress. To capture this process of ongoing interaction in storytelling sequences, we need to carefully tease out the detailed progression of the story and to explicate the significance of the process of interaction and decision making. In this regard, Schegloff argued that "the resources of past work on a range of phenomena and organizational domains in talk-in-interaction are brought to bear on the analytic explication of a single fragment of talk" (1987: 101). In focusing intensely on a single instance of storytelling and the issues that arise in how its meaning is arrived at will lend insight into larger trends concerning how meaning, in general, is developed in communication. It is my hope that this review offers some resources for those case studies as well.

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Euphemism

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1. Definitions of euphemism

The word *euphemism* is of Greek origin where *eu* 'well' and *phēmē* 'speaking' form a compound that means 'the use of auspicious words'. Euphemisms come handy whenever we cannot say what we really mean because what we really mean is *verboten*, offensive, or simply sounds jarring. Definitions of euphemism are many. *The Oxford English Dictionary (OED*, http://www.oed.com/) defines euphemism as (1) "That figure of speech which consists in the substitution of a word or expression of comparatively favourable implication or less unpleasant associations, instead of the harsher or more offensive one that would more precisely designate what is intended", and (2) "An instance of this figure; a less distasteful word or phrase used as a substitute for something harsher or more offensive." Allan and Burridge (1991: 11) define euphemism as "an alternative to a dispreferred expression, in order to avoid possible loss of face: either one's own face or, through giving offense, that of the audience, or of some third party." Cameron (1995: 73) defines euphemism as "a term used deliberately to avoid or soften the negative associations of words that deal directly with taboo subjects." Burridge (2012: 66) defines euphemisms as "sweet-sounding, or at least inoffensive, alternatives for expressions that speakers or writers prefer not to use in executing a particular communicative intention on a given occasion." Lutz (2000: 231) defines euphemism as "an inoffensive or positive word or phrase designed to avoid a harsh, unpleasant, or distasteful reality." Hughes (2006: 151) defines euphemism as "the use of deliberately indirect, conventionally imprecise, or socially 'comfortable' ways of referring to taboo, embarrassing, or unpleasant topics." Brain (1979: 83) characterizes euphemism as a verbal instrument of overcompensation that involves "a reluctance to face reality."

These definitions converge, first and foremost, in the recognition of the "deliberate" nature of euphemisms. That is, there is an intent to influence the perception of what is being said. The definitions also converge on the special referential status of euphemisms as substitutes. That is, a euphemism does not plainly or directly refer to or describe something. It serves as a substitute for some other usage that is deemed unspeakable and undesirable, variously characterized as negative, unpleasant, distasteful, offensive, harsh, and embarrassing and crucially associated with taboo. In other words, evasion

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is the raison d'être of euphemism. Thus, euphemism is not so much about using auspicious words per se as the deliberate avoidance of offensive or impolite ones. To this end, expressions that are comparatively favourable, less unpleasant, less distasteful, and less offensive are the preferred verbal choice. For example, "departure", "journey", and "rest in peace" "endless sleep" are typical euphemisms of "death" across cultures. Similarly, to "sleep with someone" is a common euphemism for "sextual intercourse" across languages. Indirect as these euphemisms are, they nevertheless describe or refer to reality. By contrast, euphemisms such as *the f-word* and *the n-word* are metalinguistic allusions to tabooed words and are therefore referentially even more indirect. As these examples illustrate, the rationale of euphemism lies in its vagueness and indirectness compared to that which it is intended to replace. In other words, euphemism comes with a deliberate sacrifice of referential explicitness. For this reason, euphemism has been characterized as representational displacement (McGlone et al. 2006).

2. Motivations and functions of euphemism

2.1 Motivations

Why do people use euphemisms? Liszka (1990) argues that euphemism is a strategy of displacing topics associated with intense negative affect. The connection between euphemistic language use and negative affect can be better understood in light of research on the pervasive cognitive bias in human information processing known as the negativity bias. Generally speaking, bad things have a greater impact on cognition than good things in that human beings have an automatic tendency to pay significantly more attention to unpleasant than pleasant information as a result of adaptive learning (Baumeister et al. 2001; Rozin & Royzman 2001). Schopenhauer (1851) captured the essence of this human tendency when he observed that the comfort of overall wellbeing of which we are generally unaware is easily cancelled out by the constant attention we pay to a tiny wound. To Schopenhauer who saw the negative as the default, *glücklich leben* 'to live happily' is really a euphemism for 'to live less unhappily' (*weniger unglücklich*), just as *Genuß* 'pleasure' is a euphemism of *Schmerzlosigkeit* 'painlessness'. The negativity bias leaves its stamp on language use. Jing-Schmidt (2007) argues that our greater sensitivity to negative information has implications for language use as a way of constructing what Goffman (1959: 22) calls a "social front". A key part of managing the social front is the management of negative emotions through word choice. Speakers spare themselves, their interlocutors, and relevant others negative emotions such as sadness, fear, anger, disgust, shame, and guilt by avoiding direct reference to things and events that evoke those emotions. To this end, euphemism offers a verbal solution by way of referential vagueness and evasiveness.

The definitions of euphemism sampled in the above discussion imply the role of taboo avoidance as a motivator of euphemistic language use. From the vantage point of affect as motivation, the fear of taboo inspires the desire for euphemism. Taboo is defined as that which is prohibited and thus unspeakable in a community, because the referent is "either ineffably sacred, like the name of God, or unspeakably vile, like cannibalism or incest" (Hughes 2006: 462). Allan and Burridge (2006) regard taboos as arising out of social constraints on individual behavior that can cause harm, be it physical, metaphysical, or moral. Asaah (2006: 497) describes taboos as "behavior and speech regulators" in a community where euphemism is at once the vehicle and product of behavioral and linguistic regulation. The intrinsic connection between taboo and euphemism has been described as a "symbiosis" by Hughes (2006: 463). Jing-Schmidt (2019: 393) considers the use of euphemism "a linguistic consequence of the social sanction of verbal taboos", contending that the symbiotic relationship between taboo and euphemism "reflects the negative potency of taboo words and the social risks it implies, and the desirability of euphemism as a means of risk avoidance."

Taboo changes over time. Nübling (2006: 147) observes that the secularization of society lifted the religious taboo erstwhile associated with the sacred, which in turn has altered how people view swearing of religious origin. Hughes (2006: 463) writes that taboo has increasingly come to refer to prohibitions against "socially unacceptable words, expressions, and topics, especially of sexual and racial nature." Allan (2015) points out how religious taboos remained the most offensive until the early modern period when they gave way to sexual and scatological taboos, the shock effect of which subsequently lessened when greater taboo was placed on offensive labels for people with disabilities by the late twentieth century. Pinker (2007: 328) shows how certain words in the history of English have turned from non-taboo words into taboo words and vice versa. Most recently, McWhorter (2021) provided a historical perspective on how the *n-word* has evolved in American English to become a euphemism as part of a larger cultural shift of sensibility.[1]

Recognizing that euphemisms of certain concepts come and go, scholars have speculated about what causes the short shelf life of those euphemisms. One hypothesis holds that the ability of euphemisms to provide camouflage wears off over time because they suffer associative contamination from what they intend to hide, as they get conventionalized through frequent use (Rawson 1995; Pinker 1997, 2007). This is the associative contamination hypothesis, which predicts that the more familiar a euphemism becomes in language use, the less effective it gets in managing social risk, giving rise to the need for an ever fresher euphemism. Pinker (1997) speaks of a "euphemism treadmill" in articulating this idea. From a cognitive information processing perspective, McGlone and

1. For earlier in-depth analyses of the history and usage of the N-word, see Kennedy (2002), Asim (2007), and Allan (2015).

associates (McGlone et al. 2006) proposed the camouflage hypothesis, which holds that conventional euphemisms are effective politeness strategies because they draw minimal attention to what they intend to replace thanks to their familiarity. As such they provide better camouflage of offense. McGlone's team conducted two experiments that tested the competing hypotheses. In the first experiment on the perception of euphemisms, they found a positive correlation between the familiarity and the perceived politeness of euphemisms and a positive correlation between politeness and the estimated length of a euphemism's career in common usage, irrespective of its familiarity. Their second experiment tested how participants perceived a fictitious speaker who described a "taboo" target event in one condition where she used a familiar euphemism and in another condition where she used a less familiar euphemism of comparable perceived politeness. The results showed that participants formed a more positive impression of the speaker when she used a familiar euphemism than when she used a less familiar one. While this study lends support to the camouflage hypothesis, more research is needed to shed light on sociocultural dimensions of euphemism beyond politeness that may explain the limited lifespan of certain euphemisms.

What are the effects of euphemism on people's attitudes toward actions and their intentions to perform those actions? In an experimental study that measured such effects, Rittenburg and colleagues (Rittenburg et al. 2016) found that participants were both more likely to rate an action as appropriate and to indicate they would take that action when the action was characterized euphemistically. This finding shows that euphemism has an effect on how people perceive an action and their perception of the action influences their action tendency. The human desire of righteousness as well as our susceptibility to semantic manipulation has been confirmed in a recent experimental study on the extent to which opinion can be swayed by strategic uses of euphemisms, e.g. *enhanced interrogation* vs. *torture* (Walker et al. 2021). In an experiment on the influence of face-related motives on euphemism use, participants were asked to describe photos of distasteful stimuli to a fictitious recipient (McGlone & Batchelor 2003). The researchers found that participants who believed their identities would be disclosed to the recipient provided euphemistic descriptions more frequently than those who did not believe so. This shows that the use of euphemisms was motivated by communicators' concern for their own self-presentation rather than a concern for their addressees' sensibilities, which is consistent with Goffman's (1959) "social front" framework. These empirical studies shed light on the social psychological and social cognitive underpinnings of euphemism. That euphemism influences perception and behavior is key to understanding the motivation of euphemism and the many functions to which it is put to use in communication.

2.2 Functions

The various metaphors used by scholars to describe euphemism highlight the essential functions of this trope. Cameron (1995: 143) describes euphemism as "a soft cloud of verbal cotton-wool", a rather poetic metaphor that captures the gentle and soothing effect of euphemism. Rawson (1995) calls euphemisms "linguistic fig leaves" and "verbal flourishes". The former captures the function of euphemism to hide or cover up something embarrassing. The latter points to the ornamental function of euphemism in enhancing the palatability of what is conveyed. Because the first type serves a defensive function, Rawson treats it as the negative type; because the second type serves an inflating function, he treats it as the positive type. Burridge (2012) made finer functional distinctions, identifying six types of euphemism: (1) protective euphemisms, (2) underhand euphemisms, (3) uplifting euphemisms, (4) provocative euphemisms, (5) social cohesive euphemisms, and (6) ludic euphemisms. As we will see in the following discussion, the boundaries between these functions are often blurred and one euphemism can serve multiple functions.

Burridge (2012: 67) describes the protective function in terms of the intent "to shield and to avoid offense". Euphemism protects language users from touching verbal taboos or topics that are unspeakable. Vailed and indirect references to taboo topics such as death, sex, incest, disease, private parts, and private bodily functions universally serve this purpose. In addition to universal euphemisms of death itself, death-related objects have euphemistic names as well. In many languages, the name of the place where bodies of the dead are kept makes no direct reference to death. Many European languages incorporate variants of the Latin word *mors* 'death' to avoid their familiar native words referring to either death or dead body. More indirectly, languages utilize metaphors of death as resting in peace, e.g. Chinese 安息 *ānxī* 'peacefully rest' and 长眠 *chángmián* 'long sleep' for death, Chinese 太平间 *tàipíng jiān* 'chamber of peace' and English *chapel of rest* for the morgue. When it comes to sex, Chinese has the traditional bookish expression 房事 *fángshì* 'chamber affair' for conjugal intercourse as well as the contemporary ludic onomatopoeia 啪啪啪 *pāpāpā* for casual sex (Jing-Schmidt 2019). Some sexuality-related euphemisms are less obvious. Robin Lakoff (1975: 56) points out that *lady* serves as a euphemism for *woman* because it does not have "the sexual implications present in *woman*", which, she argues, cause discomfort and guilt in men. When pregnancy is an uncomfortable topic, it is euphemized (Isaacs et al. 2015). Languages resort to circumlocutions, such as the Yoruba expression *Mo féra kù* 'I missed my body', the English expressions *I'm eating for two, a bun in the oven, on stork watch*, and *up the duff*. None is more mysterious than the ecliptic Chinese inchoative existential phrase 有了 *yǒu-le* 'there exists (now)', which hides that which has now come into existence behind a zero anaphor, an unexpressed, though recoverable, entity.

Protection is also preferred when direct and precise expressions run the risk of offending and discriminating particular groups. For example, euphemisms are commonly used in describing people who are overweight in cultures where the ideal body is skinny. Just as *big* and *plus-sized* are euphemisms of 'fat' in English, so are *rund* 'round' and *kräftig gebaut* 'strongly built' in German. The German compound adjective *vollschlank* 'full slim' is another euphemism for the same purpose. Its oxymoronic semantics betrays a delicate and desperate quest for compromise between reality and representation. Majeed and Mohammed (2018: 88) report that a Kurdish daily newspaper uses the native Kurdish phrase سەرگرتی /sær gərtɪ/ 'closed head' to avoid using the Arabic borrowing سکران /sækrɒn/ 'drunk' in describing the state of alcohol intoxication. While the prohibition of alcohol consumption in Islam may explain the need of this protective euphemism in Kurdish, it is not unusual to hear drunkenness euphemized elsewhere. The English expression *wearing wobbly boots*, for instance, avoids offense mirthfully, illustrating the jocundity of euphemism, a function to which I will turn shortly.

While euphemisms protect us from jarring semantics, that protection often comes with real-world caveats. Critics of euphemisms maintain that the danger of protective euphemisms lies in the denial of reality as a result of sanitized semantics that alters perception. In an article published on Oxfam.org, a global anti-poverty organization, Gawain Kripke (2015) debates the use of *poor* in British English in describing populations and countries that in American English are often euphemistically characterized as *low-income* or *developing*. Noting that the word *poor* sounds "archaic, even medieval – rigidly classist and fatalistic" and conveys "the idea that poverty is immovable, like an historical legacy that we must endure, but never overcome," he explains the temptation to replace the "screechy" word with more respectful, polite, "humanizing", and "more sanitized" euphemisms. That temptation, however, must be rejected, Kripke concludes, because hiding and white washing the "wrenching experience" of poverty does the opposite of challenging the injustices that cause it.

When white washing is the intention, the use of protective euphemisms serves the underhand function, which is abundantly observed in discourses on politics and policy, marketing, medicine, and in the military domain (Lutz 1988, 2000; Cameron 1995; Pully 1994; Chovanec 2019; Chwastiak 2015; Tayler 2005). Rebuking euphemisms of war such as "use of force" "armed situations", "servicing the target", "suppression of assets", and many more, Lutz (1992: 48–49) argues that such "technical, impersonal, bureaucratic, euphemistic language" is a linguistic coverup of the cruelty of war. As such it "separates the act of killing from the idea of killing", and creates a "psychological detachment from the horror that is war". He concludes, "in war, the first casualty is language, and with the language goes the truth". Similarly, Pully (1994) discusses *friendly fire* for "shooting our own troops" and *collateral damage* for "killing civilians" as part of the English inventory of military euphemisms designed to "deceive the public or ameliorate

the ravages of war". While underhand euphemisms are particularly conspicuous in the military lexicon for the chilling truths they are intended to hide, they occur everywhere the truth is feared as painful or inconvenient. Two popular euphemisms in English, *negative patient care outcome* for death of a patient and *revenue enhancement* for tax, occupy the title of Lutz (2000). While the former circumvents reality the latter puts a positive spin on it. Lampooning such euphemisms as lies pretending to tell the truth, Lutz (2000) considers them prototypes of doublespeak.

In the history of underhand euphemisms, Nazi usages that hide systematic genocide behind innocuous words stand out in their coldblooded methodical linguistic engineering. The phrase *Endlösung der Judenfrage* 'final resolution of the Jewish question' makes mass murder of Jews palatable both to the German public and for the perpetrators; *Abgang* 'exit' and *Evakuierung* 'evacuation' stand for "death", just as *entlassen* 'to dismiss' substitutes for "murder", as documented by Nachman Blumental in *Innocent Words* (1947) and in *Language of the Third Reich* by Victor Klemperer (1947). Another well-known underhand euphemism designed to cover up the atrocities of war, in particular military sexual slavery, is the Japanese 慰安婦 *ianfu* 'comfort women'. It referred to young women from Japanese-occupied countries who were forced or lured into prostitution to serve the Imperial Japanese Army during WWII (Toomey 2001; Tanaka 2002). Hasegawa (2005: 127) regards this example as part of a larger effort of "semantic purification" of the Japanese Imperial Army's war crimes, citing additional examples such as *teishintai* 'voluntary labor corps', another euphemism for the women coerced into sexual exploitation, and *nihon mura* 'Japanese villages' for Japanese occupied areas during WWII. Gründler (1982) discusses the linguistic packaging of atomic energy during the pro-nuclear movement in the 1970s whereby *Kern-* 'core, nuclear' was adopted in German to replace the dangerous sounding 'atomic', as in *Kernkraft* 'nuclear power'. Opponents of nuclear power, to the contrary, insisted on keeping 'atom' in their slogan *Atomkraft nein Danke* 'Atomic power no thanks'. Braatz (2004) takes issue with the use of the catch phrase *a clash of cultures* in official historical summaries at the Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument.[2] He argues that the phrase hides more than it reveals of the history of conflict and violence as part of the U.S. government's armed campaign to displace the Northern Plain Native American tribes.

Stark truths are hard to face everywhere. It has been observed that the word *hunger* is too much of a gut punch that it is replaced by *low food security* in certain contexts to soften the blow. Accordingly, hunger-related issues are referred to as food security issues (Castiel 2005). Castiel (2005: 618) cautions that "the terrible individual experience of hunger is over-attenuated and 'transformed' in collective terms into something comparatively harmless", when it is referred to with the impersonal and cold technical designation

2. The museum's website continued to use this phrase at the time this article was written: https://www.nps.gov/libi/learn/historyculture/battle-story.htm (accessed June 6, 2021)

of "food insecurity". Converging with Kripke (2015) who worries about the counterproductivity of *low-income* and *developing* in instead of *poor* in combating poverty, Isenberg (2021: 46) takes issue with *left behind*, a more recent euphemism for *poor*, calling it a "form of intellectual evasion" that gives "a seemingly positive gloss to the process of becoming poor, which sidesteps the active agents of class exploitation." Cameron (1995) illustrates the role of euphemism in the politics of discourse with the example of *collateral damage*, initially used during the first Gulf War by allied forces to describe the killing of civilians in attacks on military targets. She explains that while this euphemism obscures the fact of civilian deaths, minimizes their impact, and conceals the responsibility of the allied forces, it is "impossible to come up with a description which could not be interpreted as in some way taking sides". This perspective raises a potential moral dilemma in representation. However, as Kvalnes (2019) argues, competing moral concerns are not always on an equal footing and a distinction should be made between taking sides that are equally wrong and making a decision between right and wrong.

To critics of doublespeak, the purpose of communication is to tell the truth and the truth only, which ought to obviate the need for euphemism (Lutz 1988, 2000). However, truth telling is not always straightforward. The reason, some argue, is the arbitrariness of the linguistic sign. Saussure (1959/2011) explains that there is no intrinsic connection between the two sides of the linguistic sign, the signifier and the signified. Consequently, the arbitrariness creates a representational loophole that enables substitution of an undesirable signifier with a less undesirable one. Cameron (1995) thus maintains that the "irreducible distance between words and things" leaves room for euphemism in the construction of viewpoints in the game of politics. In this way, euphemism is an inevitable and invaluable tool of framing in the sense of Goffman (1974) and a device of spin in terms of Fairhurst and Sarr (1996).

Euphemisms are ubiquitous. In a quantitative study of corporate social responsibility reports of the 50 biggest multinational corporations, La Cour and Kromann (2011) found that euphemisms were pervasively used to manage the communication of the economic interest vis-à-vis the philanthropic interest while avoiding the accusation of hypocrisy. For example, they found that 77% of the corporations used one or more euphemisms for "employee" to hide its economic association. These included 'ambassador,' 'people,' 'volunteer,' 'teammate,' 'hero,' 'champion' and 'associate.' Notably, some of these items, while being silent on the economic element, go the extra mile to profile the charitability and public spirit central to the philanthropic cause. In this sense, they may be considered as serving an uplifting function.

Burridge (2012) characterizes the uplifting function of euphemisms in terms of talking up or inflating a referent. Many labels of non-prestigious social roles are designed to elevate those roles and fall under this function. The word *engineer* is a favorite uplifter. It can be combined with various modifiers vaguely indexical of the social roles in question, e.g. *domestic engineer* for a stay-at-home parent and *sanitation engineer*

for a person whose profession is to collect garbage. The word *technician* has found a similar euphemistic calling, as in *debris disposal technician*, whose profession is to collect garbage, and *nail technician*, who is a professional provider of manicure and pedicure services. Rawson (1995) describes *technician* as an "all-purpose label for upgrading job titles." According to Robin Lakoff (1975: 54), the use of *lady* in job terminology is euphemistic: the more demeaning the job, the more the woman holding it is likely to be exalted as *lady*, e.g. *cleaning lady* but not *lady doctor*. Speaking of uplifting a profession, a prostitute is referred to as a "seller of love" in Saudi Arabia (Al Azzam et al. 2017). Address terms that historically were confined to persons of social nobility but came to be doled out to commoners as a flattery, such as the German *Frau* and the English *lady*, may be considered examples of talking-up as the initial motivation behind their semantic broadening over time (Keller 1990). The uplifting function of euphemism often involves a shift of focus. In a culture consumed by body image concerns, the winsome use of *curvy* to describe women of size (another euphemism) inspires confidence and body acceptance. Instead of focusing on size, *curvy* puts the emphasis on shape and in doing so highlights an attractive quality of the female body. The German *wohlbeleibt* 'well-figured' and *Rubensfigur* 'Rubenesque figure' have a similar effect, describing a voluptuous female body (Škifić & Pavić Pintarić 2019). The Chinese *fùtài* 'of a look of abundance' emphasizes the positive connotation that being fat is indexical of affluence, which is desirable from the socioeconomic perspective. Similarly, spoken Arabic in Saudi Arabia describes a person of size as مستصح /mʊstæsəħ/ 'healthy', highlighting that a full body is a sign of good health (Al Azzam et al. 2017). One could argue that by shifting focus away from what is perceived as negative toward a positive, if unrecognized, perspective, euphemisms such as *curvy*, مستصح, and *fùtài* fulfill not only the uplifting function, but can also reveal individual potentials and positive cultural values.

Under "provocative euphemisms" Burridge (2012) discusses what is commonly known as double entendre that conceals "only as little as to be all the more titillating", as in the *Camera Song* by Grit Laskin, which artfully plays with the sex taboo. Burridge sees a similarity between this kind of euphemism and what she calls political correctness euphemisms that "challenge prejudices embodied in language". It is worth noting, however, that prejudices embodied in language tend to be intentionally derogatory and unpleasant. In other words, they are typically expressed by dysphemisms. If so, positive labels that reject those prejudices are more appropriately considered anti-dysphemisms than euphemisms. For example, the Chinese feminist neologism 胜女 *shèngnǚ* 'victorious woman' offers a powerful resistance to the patriarchal gender order by which women are expected to marry young. It is a lexical denunciation of the homophonous 剩女 *shèngnǚ* 'leftover woman', a derogatory label intended to shame and control modern professional women who are well educated, financially and emotionally independent of men, and generally remain single. By swapping out the homophonous morpheme of the first syllable, it provokes and repudiates sexism and empowers women in their pursuit of

self-determination. Is it a provocative euphemism? To the extent that 'victorious woman' strikes back at a sexist attack on female independence and self-determination, it is not so much a euphemism as an anti-dysphemism. The two differ in intentionality in a fundamental way and treating anti-dysphemism as euphemistic validates the power of dysphemism that it purports to reject. It is for the same reason that Cameron (1995:145) challenges the view of respectful terms as euphemistic, arguing that "just because an expression is considered more polite than some other expression does not automatically make it a euphemism". Polite language about disability may appear provocative and euphemistic to those who scoff at it as "politically correct". Thus, there is a caveat with the notion of provocative euphemism if we do not interrogate the perspective from which a term is seen as provocative and euphemistic.

A brief survey of institutional guidelines on disability language suggests that there is also a semantic argument to be made against treating respectful terms as euphemisms. The way respectful disability language accomplishes its goal is not through the euphemistic strategy of using "deliberately indirect" and "conventionally imprecise", "feel-good" words. For instance, the Stanford University Disability Language Guide explains that the phrase "people with disability" is factual and does not shy away from mentioning disability. In this sense, it is qualitatively different from euphemisms the purpose of which is to wiggle out of a harsh referential reality, *differently-abled, challenged*, and *handi-capable*. These are condescending because they "reinforce the notion that disability is something of which to be ashamed" by "shying away from mentioning disability", advises the Guide.[3] This example illustrates that expressions that treat people with dignity are not necessarily euphemistic and that true respect cannot be accomplished by euphemism. To the contrary, true respect requires truthfulness and factuality, which fly in the face of evasive euphemism. That euphemisms of disability are ineffective is supported by a study that found a negative perception of the euphemistic expression *special needs* compared to the factual *disability* (Gernsbacher et al. 2016).

Euphemisms can be used for solidarity within an in-group. In contexts involving deviant activities, they protect ingroup secrecy, thus in a way bordering on code words. This is the social cohesive function in terms of Burridge (2012). To the extent that certain euphemisms are intended to hide information on illicit activities, they quite literally serve a protective function at the same time as they provide an in-group recognition device. In addition, if such euphemisms elevate the status of what they refer to, they may be considered uplifting for the relevant group. Slang words for drugs and drug use are excellent examples. For example, some marijuana users refer to themselves as *herbalists* or *herbivores* and use *potrepreneur* when referring to a seller or a dealer.[4]

3. https://disability.stanford.edu/sites/g/files/sbiybj1401/f/disability-language-guide-stanford_1.pdf

4. https://www.addictioncenter.com/drugs/drug-alcohol-slang/

Language is more than a tool of communicating ideas. One aspect of language that is ubiquitous but often overlooked is the joy and jocularity that words afford us. David Crystal (1998) refers to the ludic function of words as "language play". Euphemisms can be ludic and playful. Burridge (2012) observes that many euphemisms are invented "largely to amuse." The double entendre of the *Camera Song* mentioned previously certainly has a tongue-in-cheek whimsicalness to it. The Chinese cyberspace is a hotbed for neologisms designed to mock censorship that targets keywords considered verbal taboos, either due to their political sensitivity or vulgarity (Meng 2011). For example, 草泥马 *cǎo-ní-mǎ* 'grass mud horse' gained digital fame for its mischievous jab at the censorship of the homophonous curse word based on sexual obscenity (Tang & Yang 2011). 河蟹 *hé-xiè* 'river crab' was coined as a jocular mockery of, and substitute for, its homophone 和谐 *hé-xié* 'harmony', which itself was an official euphemism for censorship of dissents but became politically sensitive over time and had to be avoided. Similarly, 民猪 *mín-zhū* 'people-pig' is a flippant substitute for 民主 *mín-zhǔ* 'people-rule, democracy', another sensitive topic in the Chinese cyberspace. To the extent that these irreverent neologisms play with homophony in substituting for verbal taboos, they may be considered ludic euphemisms at the same time as they serve as code words.

Burchfield (1985: 29) argued that "a language without euphemisms would be a defective instrument of communication". Given the wide-ranging roles euphemism plays in regulating linguistic behavior and the various functions it serves in communication, Burchfield's assertion is no exaggeration.

3. Linguistic devices of euphemism

How are euphemisms formed? Warren (1992) identified two general methods of creating euphemisms: (1) semantic innovation and (2) formal innovation. This binary analysis has some limitations in describing languages in which euphemisms regularly involve a combination of formal and semantic innovations, e.g. when a near homophone carries a semantic twist. The binary analysis also overlooks euphemisms that involve larger chunks of form-meaning pairing that comprise both formal and semantic innovations. In this article, I organize the formation of euphemisms by linguistic level.

3.1 Lexical devices

Most euphemisms are lexical variants of the verboten words they are designed to replace. The conceptual connections between the verboten words and their euphemisms are typically metonymic and metaphoric.

3.1.1 *Metonymy-based lexical devices*

Metonymy involves a relationship of conceptual congruity whereby we "take one well-understood or easy-to-perceive aspect of something to stand either for the thing as a whole or for some other aspect or part of it" (Lakoff 1987: 77). The essence of metonymy "resides in the possibility of establishing connections between entities which cooccur within a given conceptual structure (Taylor 2003: 325). This possibility allows for the desirable indirectness of euphemism while ensuring conceptual access to what is being referred to indirectly (Ruiz de Mendoza 2005; Herrero-Ruiz 2018; Littlemore 2015). A well-known example is *loose nappy* for diarrhea based on a CONTAINER FOR CONTAINED metonymy (Littlemore 2015). Saudis refer to menstruation metonymically as العذر /ælʕʊðər/ 'the excuse', which is contiguous with the tradition that women are excused from prayer during their period (Al Azzam et al. 2017). Zulu *ucansi* 'sleeping mat' for sexual intercourse draws on a PLACE FOR EVENT metonymy (Mchunu 2005). Biblical Hebrew בּוֹר /bor/ 'pit' stands metonymically for the mystical underworld of the dead (Mangum 2020), as does Chinese *huángquán* 'yellow spring', both utilizing the metonymy PHYSICAL PLACE OF BURIAL FOR MYSTICAL DWELLING OF THE DEAD. Herrero-Ruiz (2018) discussed the euphemism *pull the trigger* for shooting to kill someone as a case of CAUSE FOR EFFECT metonymy. The Chinese neologism of *chēzhèn* 'car-quake', a euphemism for sex in a car, is an example of EFFECT FOR CAUSE metonymy (Jing-Schmidt 2019). While most of the examples discussed here fall in Warren's (1992) semantic innovation type, the Chinese examples *huángquán* 'yellow spring' and *chēzhèn* 'car-quake' exemplify formal innovation as well in the sense that they are novel words coined by morphological compounding. A common type of metonymy-based euphemism involves part-for-whole substitution, as when *the use of force* stands for war whereby a narrow focus on the instrument of war displaces the totality of war, ostensibly backgrounding killing, bloodshed, and destruction.

3.1.2 *Metaphor-based lexical devices*

Metaphor is a conceptual process that structures our thought in a way that helps us understand abstract, complex, and intangible matters by the use of familiar and accessible concepts as cognitive heuristics (Lakoff & Johnson 1980). As such metaphor offers a powerful tool of indirect reference that is key to euphemism. In English, when you commit the linguistic offense of using the *f-word,* your action is euphemized as *drop the f-bomb*, a metaphor that conceptualizes VERBAL TABOO as an EXPLOSIVE DEVICE. In Yoruba, someone with a psychiatric condition commonly described as mad or insane, is characterized as *O fesi I* 'an ill wind has blown on him' (Abijo & Akandeo 2018). The underlying metaphor is a conceptual mapping of PHYSICAL HARM BY AN EXTERNAL FORCE onto MENTAL ILLNESS. When a child dies, Yoruba describes it as *o kanbo* 'plucking an unripe fruit', suggesting the underlying metaphor LIFE IS A PROCESS OF FRUIT DEVELOPMENT. But when the chief of town, known as oba, dies, it is called *ope ye* 'a pillar

has fallen', which is based on the related metaphors AN INSTITUTION IS A BUILDING and LEADERSHIP IS PILLAR. For pregnancy, the English expression *a bun in the oven* draws on a CULINARY metaphor while the German *etwas unterwegs* 'something underway' utilizes a JOURNEY metaphor. A common euphemism for menstruation is a metaphoric VISITOR who regularly shows up, e.g. Yoruba *alejo* 'guest' (Bamgbose 1986; Olúránkinse 1992), English 'Aunt Flo', and Chinese *dà yímā* 'elder maternal aunt'. Writers in Europhone African literature use *cutlass* and *cultivation of the land* for sex and sexual intercourse (Asaah 2006). In the official Chinese Communist Party discourse, the Hong Kong Extradition Bill, introduced in 2019, is described metaphorically as 保护伞 *bǎohù sǎn* 'protective umbrella' and 安全带 *ānquán dài* 'safety belt, seatbelt' for Hong Kong society (People's Daily, May 28, 2020). Both metaphors construe the legislative intervention as a safety measure, an instrument of protection. While most euphemistic metaphors are semantic innovations, *drop the f-bomb* is best described as a hybrid of formal (e.g. the abbreviation *f*) and semantic innovations. The idea of detesting a person is expressed euphemistically as "I cannot digest him" in spoken Arabic in Saudi Arabia (Al Azzam et al. 2017). The same idea is expressed as *Ich kann ihn nicht riechen* 'I cannot smell him' in German. Interestingly, the former draws on DIGESTION while the latter draws on OLFACTION as the metaphor source domain, both being basic bodily experience.

3.2 Phonological and morphological devices

The most pervasive phonological device of euphemism is lexeme homophony where two or more semantically distinct words sound the same or similar. The phonological connection between homophones makes them prime candidates not only for puns but also for euphemism to avoid offensive words. I have discussed the compounds 草泥马 *cǎoní-mǎ* 'grass mud horse', 河蟹 *hé-xiè* 'river crab', and 民猪 *mín-zhū* 'people-pig' as jocular euphemisms. All of these are homophones of verboten words to be avoided for the purpose of verbal hygiene and ideological control in the Chinese cyberspace. At the same time, the phonologically driven substitutes insert new meanings from the new characters that represent semantically unrelated morphemes. Therefore, formal and semantic innovations are intertwined in each of these examples. Homophony-based euphemisms are no strangers to speakers of English who habitually use *shoot, darn, fudge, golly*, and *gosh* in place of words associated with profanity or blasphemy. The profanities on this list require a bleep censor on television and radio in the United States. While these English items generally share the same syllable structure and the initial consonant with the taboo words they are intended to substitute, they are not strictly speaking homophonous with those words, though similar enough to provide lexical priming of what they are intended to hide. When it comes to covert euphemistic phonological operations, English may pride itself on the rather ingenious *eff*, which spells out the name of the initial letter of the *f-word*. A similar example is *a-hole* that euphemizes a profanity by way of abbrevi-

ation. Chinese shows its own creativity in dealing with sexual profanity. As a substitute for *cào*, the Chinese counterpart of the *f-word*, the rhyming *kào* 靠 has been repurposed as a euphemistic expletive. By swapping out the initial consonant and the written character, the euphemism achieves both phonological and graphic displacement of a dirty word.

Creativity knows no bound in phonological manipulation for the purpose of euphemism. Olúránkinse (1992) reported that when speakers of Yoruba pronounce the city name *Kano*, it sounds like *Ka nu*, an imperative sentence 'Let us get lost (in travel)' that might invite a mishap. So, Yoruba speakers simply opt for its antonym, pronounced as *Ka bo* 'Let us return (from our travels)', in favor of auspiciousness. This operation is reminiscent of the renaming of the Cape of Storms as the Cape of Good Hope by Portuguese sailors and the name change of the city of Maleventum to Beneventum (Benevento) when ancient Romans conquered it (Griffin 1985). Clearly, behind these euphemisms is a credulity in the magical world-changing power of words. In linguistic anthropology, this is referred to as "word magic" in the sense of Frazer (1911: 318) who describes it as an inability to "discriminate clearly between words and things". Word magic is prevalent across cultures, suggesting that a universal fear of the unknown has left an imprint on languages (Blum 1997; Jing-Schmidt 2019). In terms of their linguistic mechanism, these euphemistic new names integrate both formal and semantic innovations.

3.3 Other linguistic devices

Olúránkinse (1992: 195) discusses third personation as a euphemistic device in some dialects in Yorubaland, involving "reference or diversion of disquieting ideas and events to the third person" to shield the speaker and addressee from harm. East Asians are known to have a hard time delivering direct refusals (Kwon 2004; Pulvers 2007; Jing-Schmidt et al. 2016). Instead, squirmy euphemistic phraseology is employed for indirect refusal to protect the interlocutor from a threat of face in the sense of Goffman (1967), a key concept in the politeness theory of Brown and Levinson (1987). To soften the face threat, East Asian languages offer semi-idiomatic hedges, e.g. 有点不太方便 *yǒudiǎn bú tài fāngbiàn* 'It's a bit inconvenient' in Chinese, *kangaete okimasu* 'I will think it over' in Japanese, and 어렵겠는데요 *gess-neun-de-yo* 'It's difficult, I'm not sure' in Korean. These indirect refusal strategies may be considered interactional euphemisms to the extent that they serve to tone down the unpleasant social consequences of a blunt face threat in interaction. Such strategies, however, are not limited to East Asia. Fear-based hedging devices are widely observed and point to shared affective impacts of face threats (Jing-Schmidt & Kapatsinski 2012).

On the other hand, cultural preoccupations shape verbal restrictions. In Saudi Arabia, when the question "When will you complete your religion?" is raised, it is understood

as an indirect and more polite inquiry about when the person in question will get married, as marriage is considered a religious duty (Al Azzam et al. 2017). A phenomenon known as "hlonipha" has been observed in various indigenous cultures of Southern Africa, a custom that serves the enculturation especially of women into a patriarchal social order (David 1875; Werner 1905; Mchunu 2005; Rudwick & Shange 2009; Fandrych 2012). The linguistic aspect of this custom is called "inhlonipha", a language of respect particularly applied to married women by prohibiting them from pronouncing or using words that share a syllable with the names of their relations-in-law, especially their father-in-law from whom they should keep both a physical and a referential distance (Mchunu 2005). Inhlonipha can be considered akin to euphemism to the extent that it mandates the avoidance of a social taboo to prevent offense.

Borrowing is a useful and convenient device of euphemism (Winter-Froemel 2017). Warren (1992) discusses the euphemistic function of Latinate words in English that are historical loanwords. These loanwords hide the vulgarity of their Germanic counterparts by sounding formal and bookish, e.g., *anus, urine, rectum, feces* etc. Foreign words are also good candidates of drug euphemisms because their foreignness obscures the referents, e.g. *hashish, marijuana* and *cannabis* are well-known examples. Diez-Arroyo (2016) found that Anglicisms are adopted in Spanish women's fashion magazines, not to fill lexical gaps, but as euphemisms that avoid the undesirable connotations of their native Spanish counterparts by constructing a classy, attractive, and modern style. Similarly, Western loanwords in Japanese are used for their modern touch and Western trendiness. For example, the phonetic loan *rabu* 'love' is used as a euphemism for sexual activities in compound words such as *rabu hoteru* (love hotel) and *rabu shiin* (love scene) (Goddard 2005). Olúránkinse (1992) observed that Yoruba euphemisms were originally only applied to sexual organs, but spread to other semantic domains under the influence of verbal prudishness of Victorian English. Al Azzam and associates (Al Azzam et al. 2017) observed that the wide spread of euphemisms in Saudi Arabia is a recent development resulting from socioeconomic and educational progress in a society that is increasingly open to a global world. Thus, euphemism offers a window onto cultural influence, cultural change, and societal transformations.

Euphemism has a part to play in the visual domain. When it comes to writing, visual displacement is called for. Written signs representing taboo words of the vulgar kind are orthographically and visually euphemized in Chinese. For example, the character 逼 *bī* is used as a graphic substitute for the ideographic character 屄 *bī*, which represents its semantically unrelated, vulgar homophone, the Chinese c-word (Jing-Schmidt 2019). The need to do so is understandably exacerbated by the imagistic offense that arises from the graphemic combination of the radical for private parts 尸 and the character for orifice 穴. More recently, the cross-mark ✗ and the initial *B* have gained ground as imagistic euphemisms in casual Internet language, thanks to their ease of use, especially in insults (e.g. 傻✗, 傻 B, 'idiot'). These examples illustrate the great lengths language users can go

to avoid taboo, even when they engage in name calling. The use of imagistic euphemisms by way of visual displacement has also been observed in sign languages. American Sign Language users avoid pointing at the genitalia when making reference thereto. Instead, the signers use lexicalized signs as euphemisms, although gestural pointing is the default referential strategy in naming other body parts (Pyers 2006). Similarly, deaf signers in a study on four Asian sign languages showed a tendency to gesturally reduce, replace, or delete the visual iconicity of sex-related taboo concepts that are visually offensive (Sze et al. 2017).

George Orwell (1946) deplored euphemism as a tool of mind control. To him euphemism corrupts language and truth largely by naming things without calling up the visual imagery of them. It appears that dissociating the visual imagery from the signs with which they are associated is a key strategy of euphemistic displacement of representation in natural languages, spoken, written, or signed.

4. Conclusion and future directions

The literature on euphemism is extensive. This brief overview only scratches the surface, providing a bird's eye view of the definitions and functions of euphemism, as well as the common linguistic devices with which euphemism is constructed. While we find similar euphemisms across a wide range of cultures, there are also cultural differences in the domains in which euphemisms are employed. The significance of euphemism also varies across languages because of culture-specific norms on verbal taboos. This said, at the heart of euphemism seems to be something fundamentally, if not uniquely, human that unifies the cultural particularities and functional variabilities of this trope. That is, we are able to reason about epistemic mental states, namely beliefs, desires, emotions, and intentions. This cognitive capacity, commonly referred to as theory of mind or mindreading, is a foundation of human sociality (Penn & Povinelli 2007; Apperly 2011). Equipped with this capacity, we can regulate our behavior to influence meaning making, as is well known in normative accounts of inference and implicature in philosophy and linguistic pragmatics (e.g., Grice 1957, 1989; Sperber & Wilson 1995). If euphemism is a strategy of regulating behavior and managing social relations, it would seem reasonable to suggest that its operation presupposes theory of mind, whether it is intended for politeness, aggression, deception, or charity. This, however, does not mean that mindreading is necessarily performed on the fly every time a euphemism is deployed. Speakers make sense of linguistic conventions as formulas the way social actors understand norms without a theory of mind (Andrews 2009). Like any other form-meaning associations, euphemisms become conventionalized and entrenched across recurrent usage events in a linguistic community, allowing for spontaneous use when similar contexts arise.

On a methodological note, it is clear from this overview that most research on euphemism is descriptive and provides a wealth of qualitative data from a variety of languages. While there is a scattering of experimental studies that test hypotheses about the perception of euphemism and its use, as well as its affective and behavioral consequences, there is a scarcity of quantitative analyses that investigate usage patterns of euphemisms and factors that influence usage. On the other hand, given the dynamic nature of language change, empirical data on the changing patterns of use from a diachronic perspective will throw light on how and why euphemisms change over time, under what circumstances, and what the changes tell us about sociocultural transitions and transformations in society. Our understanding of euphemism will benefit from further research on these themes.

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Feminism and language

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1. Language and feminism

This entry aims at describing the relationship between language and feminism, which is a complex and multifaceted one. Like all political movements, the feminist movement and its advocates have been using language to promote feminist interests. Feminists have been delivering speeches, founding magazines, using slogans, and producing theoretical concepts to understand the nature of the oppression of women, among many other things. But unlike most political movements, the feminist movement has also identified language as one of its main challenges, pinpointing its active part in the oppression of women and making the struggle for equality, empowerment, and liberation harder. The critique has had two major themes: verbal degradation, and the silencing of women. This has made sexist language, e.g., gendered structures in the grammar and vocabulary of language, and ideologically motivated sex differences in linguistic practice such as the ban on female public speaking the focus of the critique.

The critique has been closely connected to making or proposing linguistic changes. Since language has the potential to both "making and breaking oppression" (Hall et al 2021: 8), feminists have put a lot of work into changing language *per se*, language use and language practices. Language activism has been a substantial part of much feminist political activism affecting not only the lexicon but also language use, which makes the relationship between language and feminism an interesting one.

Proposing alternatives to sexist language in the form of style guides has been a substantial part of the work to make language more inclusive. And since making women count in politics and on the professional arena has been a major goal for much feminist work, much emphasis has also been put on proposing strategies aimed at making women visible and heard in public debate and discourse. Finally, the work to promote sexual health and the rights of women have included much effort to break many of the taboos connected to female speaking on personal matters, with the Me Too movement of 2017 as one of the more prominent examples of the organized resistance to the culture of silence connected to sexual abuse and harassment.

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Even though the LGBTQ movement and queer theory should not be conflated with feminism and feminist theory, the work done by trans and LGBTQ communities to critique the lack of discoursal space and to develop language to talk about and name trans and non-binary bodies and battle cis-sexist language share many common traits with feminist language reforms. Therefore, this entry will also give examples of this where relevant.

2. Important concepts

Feminism is a diverse social and political movement, built on the assumption that women are treated unjustly in society, and working to promote the equality between the sexes. Born in the eighteenth century the movement took until the nineteenth century to gain enough force to implement change in any significant way.

The feminist movement is one of the large human political movements during modern times, and although it has made big progress it still has a long way to go (World Economic Forum 2019). The feminist movement is diverse both in its understanding of the problem and in the ways proposed to solve it. Feminism, seen as a theory of the gendered social order, has also entered the academic world, and is contributing important theoretical concepts and analytical tools to many academic fields of today.

The feminist movement is often conceived of as consisting of a temporal sequence of several waves during which the feminist struggle intensified and focused on different social problems. Although this wave metaphor has been criticized (see for example Henry 2004), it will be used in this entry to structure the presentation.

The first wave of feminism took place in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and concentrated on women's political and professional rights. The second wave, culminating in the 1970s, was concerned with reproductive rights and equal payment. The third wave, in the 1980s and early 1990s, put questions of class, race and sexuality into the forefront. This period also saw feminism enter the academic world on a larger scale than before, and sex and gender were theorized in several ways. There is now some debate of whether society is still experiencing the third wave or has moved into a post-feminist era, or perhaps a postmodern feminist era.

Language planning and *language policy* are two concepts deeply intertwined with much of the feminist language work. Language planning refers to the activity of promoting "systematic linguistic change in some community of speakers" (Kaplan 2013: 2). It is closely connected to the concept of language policy, which refers to the explicit plans – laws, regulations etc. – made to make the change happen (ibid.). Since the feminist movement's ambition to change language practices have been carried out by large organizations, sometimes even on the governmental level, it has been called *language planning* in many instances (see for example Cooper 1996). In some other cases the term

feminist linguistic activism is used (Pauwels 2003), thus highlighting that the change is most often a bottom-up process impelled from below, from the grass root level, not the other way around.

Using *metalanguage* (Jaworski et al. 2004), language about language, to analyze, comment on, and evaluate other people's language, language use or linguistic competence is a powerful tool for social differentiation. Since gender is deeply connected to aspects of power and social hierarchies, the role and power of *metalinguistic, metadiscursive* or *metapragmatic* discussions cannot be underestimated.

Feminist linguistic activism is a kind of *micro-activism*, a small-scale and everyday political activism that is often, but not always, exercised outside the traditional arenas. Although it does not always aim at traditional mobilization, it can also have great political value (Marichal 2013). It is a new way of conducting politics that has grown out of the opportunities offered by language, the emergence of social media and a mobilized feminist movement.

Language ideology is a set of beliefs about language connected to larger societal hierarchies. The beliefs may be connected to linguistic practices, speech genres, registers, speakers, and communicative communities, and serve to promote the interests of groups of individuals in power. Much of the feminist critique of language has pinpointed gendered language ideologies, serving to reiterate patriarchy and keep women subordinated.

Deborah Cameron has coined the term *verbal hygiene* (Cameron 1995, 2004), with which she wants to describe the *metadiscursive discussions* that serve ideological purposes. One of their characteristics is being about so much more than language:

> The reforms that 'stick' are not the most 'natural', 'efficient' or 'rational' in linguistic terms, but those which are found to be congruent with widely and deeply held beliefs about 'the way things ought to be'. (Cameron 2004: 319)

The linguistic reforms fit into a larger discourse, which may stand in opposition to some other discourse, which has its own ways of talking and writing. The metadiscussion often attracts public interest and captures the attention of the media, which is crucial for any political struggle (Milles et al. 2018). Parts of the discursive struggle are thereby conducted through a struggle over words. This makes it passable to call the reforms *discursive political activism* (Young 1997). Since the reforms strive to change not primarily the language but what the language stands for on an ideological level, the reforms not only propose new linguistic constructions but new social paradigms. All social movements use linguistic interventions, but feminism considers these interventions to be central (Young 1997: 13).

Reappropriation (Galinsky et al. 2003) or *resignification* (Ronee Washington 2020) are deliberately implemented ameliorations of a word, where a derogatory term is reclaimed by a group negatively impacted by the usage of the term, in such a way that the word's negative and pejorative meaning changes into positive or neutral meanings.

Sexist language is gender-biased language that reinforces or reiterates sexist and prejudiced ideas about men and women. *Nonsexist* or *gender-neutral language* is language that avoids gender bias.

3. The feminist critique of language

Feminists early realized that sexism was deeply rooted in language and pointed to how the many gendered norms concerning its use, the gendered language ideology, were complicit in keeping women subordinated in society. Three themes are discernible: the silencing of women's voices, the erasure of women in linguistic resources and the representation of women in a derogatory way. This critique has often been closely connected to factual or proposed suggestions for change.

One of the earliest feminists to criticize language was the Chinese anarchist He-Yin Zhang (何殷震). She saw the tradition to make women give up their own family name and take the husband's family name upon marriage as a clear sign of men's power over women in society. The custom was not only a cause of patrilinear rule but also a way to make women "carry on the eternal celebration of men's conquest over women" (He-Yin 1907/2013: 111), to pay tribute to their subordination. He-Yin believed the social revolution abolishing social ranks would be accompanied by a revolution overthrowing men's supremacy and promoting equality between the sexes. This new state would inevitably also affect language – "the nouns 'men' and 'women' would no longer be necessary" (He-Yin, 1907/2020: 18).

In Sweden, the feminist and writer Frida Stéenhoff, found the address terms for women problematic. Just like in English, women indicate marital status by the titles *fröken* ('miss') or *fru* ('mrs'). Frida Stéenhoff found this both impractical and degrading (Stéenhoff 1910). Addressing women in public was a complicated matter, always imbued with the risk of making mistakes. And since married women were of higher status, the address term *fröken* added the burden for the unmarried, always being positioned in their lower rank.

In her utopian novel *Herland*, published in 1915, the American writer Charlotte Perkins Gilman includes some language issues, for example masculine generics and patrilinear family names (Matossian 1987).

This early critique drowned in the feminist struggle for more fundamental civil rights such as the right to vote, work and own property. But in the 1970s the question of the role of language in the subordination of women gained momentum in English-speaking communities, in France, Norway and Spain (Pauwels 2003: 553). Later, the debate spread to many countries around the globe to varying degrees.

The analyses often targeted professional titles, generic pronouns, and other wordings in written texts, but other linguistic features such as the balance between women and

men mentioned, metaphors, inferences, presuppositions, and syntax were also highlighted (Mills 1995). Also, sexual slurs, such as *slut* and *cunt*, terms of address used in professional contexts, for example calling women employees by first name and male employees by surname or calling women "girls" or "ladies" (Mills 2008) were criticized.

4. Early theories

One way of understanding the connection between the subjugation of women and language is to see language as made by and for men's needs. The most well-known advocates for this radical notion are Robin Lakoff, Dale Spender, Luce Irigaray, Julia Kristeva and Hélène Cixous. Their writings were the first serious academic attempts at understanding the relationship between language, language use and gender, and as such very influential in their time. Over the years, their theories have been thoroughly critiqued, and they no longer set the terms of the debate. But as pioneers of the field, they defend their place in this overview.

The U.S.-based linguist Robin Lakoff published her *Language and Woman's Place* in 1975, a book that has been very influential in putting the question about how language use by and about women reveals society's devaluing of women. The first claim is that women are taught to speak in a way that makes them subordinate. Language can be divided into men's and woman's language with differences pertaining to vocabulary, intonation, and speech acts. For example, the use of tag questions makes women sound insecure and less assertive than men. The second claim is that the way women are spoken of also both reflects and reaffirms their lesser status. For example, the excessive use of euphemisms for women's role as housewife (e.g. *homemaker, household executive*) and the non-parallel definition and use of gendered terms of address, such as *master–mistress* reveals and reiterates women's low status. The book spurred a lot of debate and was accused of reproducing rather than questioning stereotypes about women. More importantly, the different language styles of women and men have been hard to document in empirical studies (Cameron 1992a: 44). This has not prevented the idea of two opposing language styles to persist: "it is as though people want to believe Lakoff because her account fits so well with prevailing ideas" (ibid.).

If Robin Lakoff's theory saw women partly complicit in their own subordination, the Australian feminist writer Dale Spender focusses more on the part played by men. In her book *Man Made Language* she proposes that men are in control of language and use it to subordinate women by labelling and categorization. Women who do not comply with patriarchal rules for proper behavior are silenced, shamed, and punished with labels that put their mental and sexual normality into question (Spender 1980).

French philosophers and linguists have also made substantial contributions to this discussion. Luce Irigaray, French feminist activist and thinker, took as her starting point

the theory and practice of psychoanalysis, which she found too dependent on society's insufficient understanding of the specificities of female sexuality and desire. In psychoanalysis, the feminine is understood not only as differing from the masculine but, in analogy with Freud's theory of the penis envy, as a lack. This insufficient understanding of the sexual difference between men and women are embedded in language (Irigaray 1990: 93). Since men are the rulers in patriarchy, language is not universal but "constructed and maintained by men only" (Irigaray 1990: 80). This language serves as an instrument to alienate and exploit women and renders women unable to speak their truths and describe and express their sexual feelings. Instead, she envisions a language "adequate for the body, sex and the imagination (imaginary) of the woman" (Irigaray 1990: 80). This language cannot obey the same grammatical rules as the patriarchal language of subject, verb, object, but must put all syntactical rules into question (Irigaray 1990: 82). Irigaray makes an analogy between language and genitals. Since the female sexual organ is not, as perceived in patriarchal ideology, a lack of a penis and a hole, but rather "above all, made up of '*two lips*'", "neither identifiable nor separable", "*always joined in an embrace*" (Irigaray 1990: 83, italics in original), this translates into a vision of a language without "unique meaning" (Irigaray 1990: 84), a language with always at least two meanings, corresponding to the two labia.

Julia Kristeva, Bulgarian-French feminist philosopher and writer takes as her point of departure psychoanalytical theories of the child's early development. By identifying a primary semiotic, more primordial, and a succeeding symbolic order characterized by logic, through which the child passes, and placing the feminine subject position in the first and the masculine in the latter, she understands the divide between women and men as partly an effect of discourse (Cameron 1992a: 173).

The French poet and philosopher Hélène Cixous launches her visionary idea of a female way of writing, *écriture féminine*, in her influential text "Le rire de la méduse", The Laugh of the Medusa, (Cixous 1976, French original 1975). She states that writing and literature has been governed by male politics and capitalist logic. Just like Irigaray, Cixous sees correspondences between women's writing and their bodies, and this should be used when the woman "must put herself into the text – as into the world and into history – by her own movement" (Cixous 1976: 875). She uses breastmilk as a metaphor for ink and the woman writer "thus writes in white ink" (Cixous 1976: 881). The *écriture féminine* is impossible to theorize or define but will make it possible to "always surpass the discourse that regulates the phallocentric system" (Cixous 1976: 883).

5. Empirical studies

The theoretical claims about the nature of language and its relation to the patriarchy and oppression of women in time led to empirical studies. Many studies have tried to test the

claims of the quantitative and qualitative dominance of males in public and private settings. Cross-linguistic descriptions of how gender is represented in languages across the globe are presented in for example Hellinger and Bussmann (2001–2003). By comparing the gendered nature of the languages spoken in a country and the country's relative level of gender equality, studies have found some correlation. Countries where gendered languages are spoken on average score lower on gender equality. But this does not mean that genderless languages, such as Finnish, Turkish and Swahili, automatically lead to gender equal societies (Prewitt-Freilino 2012).

Numerous studies have shown how sexual slurs, foul language, and words with sexual content in many languages both reflect and enforce a double moral standard where men are supposed to have a big appetite for sex and women none. Linguistic analyses of police interviews (MacLeod 2020) show how conversational implicature (Grice 1975) and the constrained discursive resources available to women during those interviews restricts their opportunities to get a fair trial. Similarly, court trials about sexual assault have shown how language reconstructs patriarchal and prejudiced notions about rape (Ehrlich 2001). Profanity used by young men may reinforce hegemonic masculinity (Diabah 2020). The language used by so called *incels*, self-identified unattractive men, is an expression and cultivation of misogyny and normalization of violence against women (Tranchese and Sugiura 2021). Feminist philosophers are using Austin's speech act theory (1962) to understand pornography's authoritative force and function to both shape desire and instruct how sex is supposed to be acted out (Tranchese and Sugiura 2021). Today, linguistic scholars are also contributing important work on homo- and transphobic hate speech, such as *deadnaming*, referring to trans people by the names they have rejected (Turton 2021).

The metaphors and terms used for genitalia often convey patriarchal notions of male sexuality as an unstoppable and sometimes dangerous force and the female sexuality as passive and weak (Cameron 1992b; Braun and Kitzinger 2001). Erotic literature portrays sexual activity as an asymmetric relationship between an active agent and a passive patient, instead of as a collaborative activity. In the majority, but not all, cases the male is portrayed as the active agent (Lischinsky 2018).

There is also a vast number of studies trying to establish the relationship between gender in language and gender as a social and cognitive construct (se for example Braun et al. 2005; Samuel et al. 2019; Boroditsky et al. 2003; Tavitz and Pérez 2019). Cross-linguistic studies give evidence to the claim that linguistic gender marking affects perception of gender (Chen & Su 2011).

Empirical evidence is given to the fact that gendered language does not affect thought but also attitudes towards women and men. This might perpetuate inequalities in the workplace. Several studies have shown that gendered language in job advertisements affect readers' assessments of female and male applicants, for example resulting in women being ranked lower than men for high status positions. Women applicants were

ranked as less fit for a high-status position than male applicants when job advertisements used German masculine generics to name the positions (Horvath and Sczesny 2016). Job advertisements with wordings associated with masculine stereotypes in English like *leader* and *dominant* made women readers find the jobs less appealing, and readers of both genders perceived there to be more men than women within these occupations (Gaucher et al. 2011). Double forms in French, such as *nettoyeurs et nettoyeuses* 'cleaner') used in French lessened stereotypical assessments of female and male jobholders compared to single masculine forms used as generics, such as *nettoyeurs* (Vervecken et al. 2015).

Feminist theory also helped revise and rethink some traditional linguistic fields of inquiry such as sociolinguistics, where prejudice and lack of theory had produced a lot of questionable claims about sex differences in linguistic behavior. Deborah Cameron (1985/1992a, 1990) critically examines the different feminist understandings of language and points to the ways it may be counterproductive to the feminist cause. For example, stating that women had no language of their own, may silence them instead of liberating them (Cameron 1990: 188). Cameron distinguished and named different theoretical models: The one which saw women lacking in linguistic ability is called *the deficit model* and the one that focusses on the differences between the sexes is called *the difference model*. A model taking power into account and relating the differences to dominance is called *the dominance model*. Cameron later also distinguished a *second deficit model*, claiming that men in the new economy were the ones seen as lacking in linguistic ability.

Cameron argues that feminists should turn to investigating *metalanguage* – language about language – and what it tells us about cultural beliefs connecting gender to linguistic practice (Cameron 1992a: 97). The connection between women and silence is not a given, but a cultural construct, and as such has functioned to keep women from raising their voices and claiming their place and right. Thus, she urged feminists to "have faith in the capacity of language to empower as well as oppress", and to use "the power to shape new meanings for a different and better world" (Cameron 1992a: 227).

There are several early introductions to the theoretical and empirical debates. In *Sexual/Textual Politics*, Toril Moi addresses both the Anglo-American and French theories about how literary texts relate to feminist politics (Moi 1985). Deborah Cameron takes a linguistic perspective and critically relates the development of feminist theory to the linguistic understanding of language use in *Feminism & Linguistic Theory* (Cameron 1985/1992a). In *Feminist Stylistics*, Sara Mills uses the insights from both the literary and linguistic fields to propose a method to expose gender bias and sexism in texts of various genres (Mills 1995).

Today, the academic field of gender and language is a large and diverse one. One of the more prominent journals of the field is *Gender and Language*. The journal was established in 2007 and is "an international forum for language-based research on gender and sexuality from feminist, queer, and trans perspectives" (*Gender and Language*: index).

Also, the *Journal of Language and Sexuality* "present research on the discursive formations of sexuality, including sexual desire, sexual identities, sexual politics and sexuality in the diaspora". This John Benjamins journal is deeply influenced by Queer linguistics. *Feminist Media Studies* is a transdisciplinary journal for research on media and communication, which sometimes publishes articles relating to linguistic and pragmatic dimensions of feminist activism on- and offline.

6. Feminist language reforms

Aside from the empirical studies, the theoretical claims have also led to concrete proposals for change that in many cases have resulted in changes in language use.

During the first wave of feminism these proposals were few. When the Chinese anarchist and feminist He-Yin, who had critiqued the patrilineal custom that wives took their husband's name upon marriage in the beginning of the 20th century herself married, she not only resisted this tradition but also added her mother's maiden name to her father's surname (He-Yin is thus her family name). She also replaced her given name with 震, Zhen, which translates as "thunderclap". The Swedish feminist Frida Stéenhoff, who criticized the two terms of address for women in Swedish around the same time, tried to introduce a new title, *minfru* ('mywife') which would be used for both unmarried and married women (Stéenhoff 1910). Neither the Chinese nor the Swedish proposals seem to have been met with any enthusiasm and did not spread.

But during the second wave of feminism the belief in the political impact of linguistic intervention grew stronger and was advocated not only by individual feminists, but by feminist organizations, spurring collective change on the societal level. In the 1990s Deborah Cameron concluded that "one constant theme of the feminist critique is the need to change words and make them fitter for our use" (1990: 2).

The activism has been informed both by the theoretical advances made by scholars such as the ones presented above, empirical studies confirming their claims and by more activist feminist writing, such as the writer and poet Audre Lorde's call to action: "What are the words you do not yet have? What do you need to say?" (Lorde 1984: 82). Later on, influential feminist thinkers like Judith Butler (1990, 1997, 2011), Donna Haraway (1991), Seyla Benhabib (1992) and Sara Ahmed (2017) have been discussing the performative power of language and how names and categorizations are both part of the structures that subordinate women and a powerful resource for resistance and liberation. Using and promoting a feminist language use can thus be a way of *living a feminist life* (Ahmed 2017) and is seen as one of many strategies for resisting and creating a more equal world.

Feminist movements in many different countries have since implemented various types of linguistic change with varying degrees of success. Proposed changes include both attempts to make women more linguistically visible and represented in spoken

and written discourse and attempts to make language less gender-marked through more gender-neutral designations and formulations. There are also many initiatives to question and replace derogatory and explicitly sexist formulations and names.

One well-known example of this was the introduction of the title *Ms.* in the U.S.A. In line with Frida Stéenhoff's critique of the sexist system of address in Swedish half a century earlier, American feminists during the 1970s advocated a non-sexist honorific in English: *Ms* instead of *Miss* or *Mrs*, a title that did not indicate marital status. The National Organization for Women passed a resolution to use the title in 1970 and the feminist magazine *Ms.*, named after the honorific, explained its use thus: "a standard form of address by women who want to be recognized as individuals, rather than being identified by their relationship with a man" (from *Ms. Magazine*, quoted in Atkins-Sayre 2005: 11). The use spread quickly but the establishment of it as the standard was severely hampered by the resistance of the newspaper *Times*, who did not accept it until in the late 1980s (ibid.). A recent development is the gender neutral honorific *Mx*, combining *Mr* and *Ms* (Zimman 2017).

But the reforms have not been restricted to changing terms of address. The following sections deal with work to change the terms of women's public speaking, terms in non-sexist language guides, feminist dictionaries and writing, and new terms in the field of sexuality.

As Cameron (1992a: 105) remarks, depending on the context of the sexist language, the strategies for resistance and change must differ. In unregulated contexts, such as the everyday exchanges between colleagues in an office or strangers in the street, the resistance may have to be "informal, guerilla-style". The kind of language use regulated by editors, style-guides, and dictionaries, such as news texts and printed literature, are easier to discuss and to propose changes to.

Today, much of the activism is happening online. Not surprising, just as the internet has been the site of much sexism and hateful trolling of feminist activists, it has also developed into a forceful tool for feminist political mobilisation and action. The debate and implementation of many reform proposals today takes place on social media, and feminists are also using these different resources for spreading information and spurring debate such as hashtags and internet memes for their political ends.

7. Women and speaking

Although women, just like men, are born with the ability to learn to speak and write, girls and women are in many ways prevented to make use of that ability, by the force of the law or by cultural norms. Feminist struggle has thus worked to make women speak up on both political and professional as well as private matters.

It is no surprise that one of the first and strategically important struggles for the feminist movement was the right to vote. This was prevented by law all over the world, and a global struggle for suffrage was one of the driving forces for the organization and mobilization of the feminist movement during the 20th century. New Zealand was the first nation to implement the right in 1893 and after that the right has been implemented around the globe at various times. But it was not until 2015 that women were allowed to vote (in the municipal elections) in Saudi Arabia.

But women have also been prevented to speak in the literal way. In the Christian world, this has been implemented for example by the infamous passage the Letters of Paul in the Bible, stating that "As in all the churches of the saints, the women should keep silence in the churches. For they are not permitted to speak, but should be subordinate, as even the law says. If there is anything they desire to know, let them ask their husbands at home. For it is shameful for a woman to speak in church". (Letters to the Corinthians 14:34–35).

One unexpected consequence of the suffrage movement was that women learned to use language in the public arena for political and parliamentarian purposes, thus breaching the cultural norms restricting that use. Organizing the feminist movement with its public speeches, meetings, demonstrations, magazines etc., taught a whole generation of feminist activists important lessons on how to use language for political ends (DiCenzo et al. 2011; Milles 2017).

The restraint on women's public speaking and voicing of their opinions naturally did not end with universal suffrage, and the feminist movement continued its criticism and work to make the public arena more equal in terms of speaking rights and impact.

In the Nordic context, the term *master suppression techniques* have often been used to highlight the unjust silencing of women in meetings and other speech events linked to professional arenas. The five techniques are making women invisible by ignoring them, by ridicule, by withholding information, by placing them in a double bind and by heaping blame (Ås 1978). Later additions include objectifying and physical threats (Ås 2004). To counteract the master suppression techniques, counterstrategies such as questioning, and documentation have been formulated (Milles 2008).

Making women speak up in private has also been used as a feminist political tool. Starting in U.S.A. in the 1960s, the American feminist movement started to arrange consciousness-raising groups. The groups were all female and small, and under the device "the personal is political" the women took turns sharing personal experiences on different subjects such as abortion, marriage, and children, going on to analyze common traits in their stories and connecting them to wider cultural patterns and shared conditions for women more generally (the Chicago Women's Liberation Institution 1971; Sarachild 2000). The goal was not only to make women politically conscious and aware of the structure of female oppression but ultimately to increase feminist organization and action.

Feminist activism of today uses internet and social media to spread information, create community and mobilize, and is thus an important resource for making women's voices and opinions heard. By using digital techniques (texts in the form of blogs and tweets, films, hashtags and internet memes) it is possible to effectively create political momentum. Much of the content on social media has a humorous twist, and this is used by the networked feminism, using it as part of the feminist media tactic to counteract sexism and online hate, for example using sarcastic memes and tactic retweeting (Rentschler and Thrift 2015; Sundén and Paasonen 2020).

The MeToo-movement is an influential example of the organized feminist resistance to the ban on women's public voicing of personal and private suffering under patriarchy. In 2017, women were encouraged to use the hashtag *#metoo* on social media to give testimony to having been subjected to male sexual aggression or abuse. Hashtags are rhetorical devices with the potential of creating political agency. The hashtag #metoo gained global attention and led to a lot of media attention and in some cases to scandals and legal consequences for a few of the accused perpetrators. In Sweden, the hashtag managed to create a feminist account of structural, rather than individual explanation of oppression and sexual abuse (Hansson et al. 2020), and it also led to a new law prohibiting non-consensual sex in Sweden in 2018 (Pollack 2019).

Other hashtags that have spurred feminist activism around the globe is among others the Basque #EzpainGorrienIraultza, 'the Red lips revolution' (Larrondo Ureta and Orbegozo Terradillos 2021), the Filipino #BabaeAko, 'I am a woman' (Alingasa and Ofreneo 2020) and the Indian #LahukaLagaan, 'tax on blood' (Fadnis 2017).

Another online phenomenon is the internet meme, a group of digital items sharing common characteristics (Shifman 2014). The items are often humorous in content, which enables their fast and effective spread, sometimes resulting in virality. Although the internet is still full of sexist and hateful content directed at women (see for example Agyepong and Diabah 2021), there is also a lot of feminist content. The creation of a successful internet meme such as the 2012 "Binders Full of Women", may create derisive laughter to energize the feminist movement (Rentschler and Thrift 2015).

But the feminist movement has also critiqued and tried to influence the communicative patterns of men. The modern feminist men's movements have tried to prepare men for life in a gender-equal world by focusing on communicative skills. One example is the Swedish conversation-based method #guytalk, aimed at promoting a more *inclusive masculinity* (Anderson 2009) and a non-confrontational and supportive conversational style (#Guytalk n.d.). An American version of this is the initiative evryman (evryman .com), an online community developing strategies for all male conversation groups.

Another example is the neologism *mansplain* (Solnit 2014), denoting a man's patronizing and condescending way of explaining something to a woman, which went viral in 2008. The word has resulted in translation loans such as the Danish *mandskueliggøre* (from *mand* 'man' and *anskueliggøre* 'clarify/illustrate') and the French *mespliquer* (from

mec 'guy' and *expliquer* 'explain') (Kinney 2017). The word functions as a feminist analytical concept that exposes how women and their achievements can be systematically invisible in both private and public contexts, which in the long run contributes to women not being valued according to merit. But apart from this cognitive function it also has a clear pragmatic one. As a *gendered metapragmatic commentary* (Bridges 2017: 94), it also empowers women to speak up when exposed to it and further reduce its occurrence by attaching negative social value to the phenomenon and thus making men avoiding it.

8. Reappropriation and resignification of derogatory terms

Gender is discursively and iteratively constructed through repeated gendered performances such as dressing and talking (Butler 2011). This analysis opens up the possibility for change through subversive rearticulations of gender that destabilize the norms. To counteract the *semantic derogation of women* (Schulz 1990), many proposals for *reappropriation* (Galinsky et al. 2003) or *resignification* (Ronee Washington 2020) have been made.

The American separatist feminist Mary Daly advocated reclaiming slurs and invectives such as *hag* and *witch* (Delap 2020: 87). By playfully turning the word *hagiography* into *hagography* and writing about women of the past, she hoped to change society's views about strong women and female power (Hedrick 2013: 462).

The LGBTQ rights movement have reclaimed the slurs *gay* and *queer* ("we're here, we're queer – get used to it") (Cameron and Kulick 2003: 28). But since language is always developing and largely dependent on context, neutral terms such as the Chinese *tongzhi* ('gay', originally 'comrade'), may undergo pejoration again if used in hateful contexts (Wong 2005). In Sweden, the Swedish Association for Sexuality Education, RFSU, a pronounced feminist organization, has reclaimed the colloquial and derogatory term *fitta*, which roughly corresponds to *cunt* or *pussy*. The use of so called pussyhats, pink hats with crafted corners resembling ears, during the feminist protests in 2017 is also part of feminist political tactics using multimodal and humorous resignification of the derogatory term *pussy*.

Another example is the resignification of the derogatory English term *slut.* In the feminist quest to end sexual violence and assault, so called *slut-shaming* have been criticized for putting the blame on the victims of sexual assaults. The resignification takes many forms. In the U.S.A. and other places, staging of so called *slutwalks* arranged protest marches often including open-mic sessions with rape victims giving testimony. Starting in Canada in 2011 the arranged protests are now transnational (Reger 2014). The reappropriation of *slut* includes many protesters wearing short skirts and other attire considered "slutty". This is also done by questioning the meaning and semantic scope of

the term *slut*. In 2017 this was done by the black actor and model Samira Raheem when in an interview during a slut-walk she called everyone a *slut* (Ronee Washington 2020).

9. Feminist vocabulary

Dictionaries have a profound impact on language use. The impact concerns not only the spelling but also which words are considered part of the standard language, their connotations and proper use. This has made dictionaries another target for feminist linguistic reforms.

Feminist linguists have pointed out the reproductive force of dictionaries and shown their sexist attitudes towards women. Traditionally, dictionaries are compiled by men for men in a patriarchal society, based on the speech and writing of men. The theoretical point of departure is that dictionaries not only describe the views and attitudes of the society, but also actively reinforce and reproduce those views.

Lexicographical work is based on the texts written by recognized and praised authors, and since those historically mostly have been men this excludes a lot of words and word meanings coined and used by female authors writing about female experiences and areas of interest. The dictionaries also reproduce sexist ideas (Kramarae and Treichler 1985) and have been made and compiled by mainly male editors (Rose Russell 2018).

The critique led to the publication of alternative dictionaries such as *A Feminist Dictionary* by Cheris Kramarae and Paula A. Treichler (1985), in which derogatory terms such as *bluestockings* are both explained and radically redefined. *Bluestocking*, mainly applied to learned women in the 1800s, for example is redefined as "women who gather for artistic, literary, intellectual and witty exchanges".

Feminist texts often also introduce new words and new ways of using existing words with the aim of changing the dictionary in the long term. Mary Daly's *Gyn/Ecology,* originallyt published in 1979, is a case in point. The book not only discussed and critiqued language, but it also incorporates an index of the new words and meanings. "Although many of these words are not new in the old sense, they are new in a new sense, because they are heard in a new way" (Daly 1990: 469). The word list consists of more than a hundred words, among them *hag, hag-ography, crone*, and *crone-ology*. The wordplay and puns are all deliberate attempts at promoting a playful and creative spirit in the feminist activity to change the dictionary.

The feminist quest to understand patriarchy, gender and power has led to the development of many new theoretical concepts and terms such as *gender, heteronormativity, cissexism.* Others are coined and mostly used in feminist organizations and activist networks outside of academia, such as *mansplain, slut-shaming* and *pink-washing.* On an

ideological level, these words function as feminist tools of thought, as part of *feminist theoretical conceptual development and knowledge production*.

Even though many imbalances and omissions still exist (Westveer et al. 2018: 377), the critique has also led to some changes in traditional dictionaries. Today, women are also active as dictionary makers along men (Rose Russell 2018: 169). New lexicographic methods are used to meet new demands for more inclusive dictionaries when it comes not only to gender but also to other grounds of discrimination such as transgender identity and expression, sexual orientation, and disability (Pettersson and Sköldberg 2020).

10. New terminology relating to gender identity and sexual activity

Another important field of linguistic interventions has been the introducing of new terms relating to gender identity, sexuality, and sexual and reproductive health (SRH). The metalinguistic discussions and debates these interventions often lead to play an important role in raising public awareness about LGBTQ and feminist sexual health issues (Milles et al. 2018).

Feminists have long critiqued the usage of generic *he* and advocated more inclusive forms but the coining and spreading of the use of new and non-binary pronouns has also been a part of queer activism. In English, the singular *they* have been supplemented with *xe* and *ze*, to mention two of the more widespread ones.

Trans activists in the U.S.A. are developing strategies to meet the challenges connected to the use of gendered lexical items and third person pronouns (Zimman 2014, 2017). Because of the profound part of language for both forming and expressing identity, "trans activism is often centered around linguistic reform" (Zimman 2017: 85–86). To avoid misgendering and counteract *cissexism*, the favoring of cisgender people, metapragmatic strategies regarding the use of gender labels such as *woman/man* and pronouns such as *he/she/they* are developed. These may include advising health professionals to avoid gendered terminology or the distribution of pronoun pins on university campuses. To avoid misgendering in a group, initial *pronoun rounds* where participants declare their preferred pronoun along with their name, are sometimes used in meetings and educational contexts to create safe spaces and to avoid misgendering.

On social media platforms such as Tumbl there are playful invention of so called English nounself pronouns such as *fae, bun* or *bird*, that indicate personality rather than gender (Hjorth Miltersen 2016).

The introduction of a gender-neutral pronoun, *hen*, in Swedish has been a huge success. Formerly, there was only the feminine *hon* ('she') and the masculine *han* ('he'). *Hen* can be used either as a generic pronoun, replacing generic *han* ('he') or as the pronoun of choice for trans or non-binary people. Following a rather heated debate in 2012 the pronoun is now widely used and included in dictionaries, such as *The Swedish Acad-*

emy's Swedish Language Dictionary (Svenska Akademien 2015). Similar neologisms are also discussed and used in other Nordic countries such as Norway, Denmark, and Iceland. In Iceland, the gender-neutral pronoun *hán* was introduced in 2013 and is widely used by trans and non-binary people. In 2016 it sparked a major debate about gender-neutral language. *Hán* is also widely accepted – but men are less inclined than women to respect someone's wish to be referred to with *hán*. The primary reason for not using *hán* is fear of insulting someone by addressing them wrongly (Guðmundsdóttir 2021).

The insistence to make others use one's pronoun of choice has spurred a controversy in places like schools and universities, making it a debate between anti-discrimination and free speech (Cossman 2018; Nash et al. 2019)

Evaluations of the spread and effect of gender-neutral pronouns are now being conducted for different languages and contexts, for example for Swedish (Sendén et al. 2015) and for non-native English learners (LaScotte 2021). Negative attitudes towards the new pronoun *hen* in Swedish shifted to positive attitudes in a few years and although the use of the word did not increase to the same extent, it did increase during the short period (Sendén et al. 2015). Experiments also show that gender-neutral pronouns are as easy to process and understand as gender-marked pronouns (Vergoossen et al. 2020b).

But the use of pronouns has not been the only way to fight discrimination, misgendering and invisibility. Metalinguistic work has also been used to liberate female sexuality and fight against sexual violence. In Sweden, the feminist movement has contributed to the coining and establishing of several words aimed at promoting women's sexual agency, for example *snippa*, a neutral and colloquial term for female genitalia, *slidkrans* (English *vaginal corona*), replacing the Swedish word for the hymen *mödomshinna* (lit. 'virginity membrane') which reinforces the patriarchal myth of a membrane covering the vagina. This was done to promote awareness that, counter to popular belief, there is no membrane covering the entrance to the vagina supposed to rupture during the first penetrative sexual activity (Milles 2011a; Milles et al. 2018). Another example is the verb *klittra*, denoting female masturbation, a *portemanteau* coined by combining the word *klitoris* ('clitoris') and *glittra* ('to sparkle').

Sexologists who study female sexual pleasure have coined the term *outercourse*, meaning kissing, caressing, and fondling (Komisaruk et al. 2006: 95). The term is used when focusing on activities that give sexual pleasure besides penetrative sex. The term *penetrative sex* has also been under scrutiny since it makes the female activity during sex invisible. Terms such as *engulfing* or *surrounding sex* have been proposed (Ehrlich and King 1992: 152). The term *omslutande sex* ('enclosing sex') is sometimes used in progressive sexual politics in Sweden.

The latest development in this field may well be trans activist efforts to develop a vocabulary to speak about bodies and genitals that do not fit the binary logic of most words connected to gender. Although it is possible to make intersex bodies intelligible without specific lexical items naming intersex genitals (King 2016), there is a devel-

oping vocabulary to name and specify different types of genitals and body parts that transcends the male-female binary, such as a *neo-vagina* (a surgically created vagina), along with metapragmatic advice on how and when to use the terminology, such as the advice to gynecologists to name a client's neo-vagina *vagina* unless more specific terminology is relevant. More inclusive terms to be used in medical encounters such as *birthing/nonbirthing parent, chest feeding* instead of *breast feeding* (Dinour 2019), *people who menstruate* instead of *women, pregnant person* instead of *pregnant woman* etc. (Dahlen 2021) are also being discussed. Still, the gender-inclusive strategy constructed to include transgender persons, which often leads to the avoidance of the word *woman*, may in turn function to exclude "women who may feel erased or dehumanized by terminology labelled 'neutral'" (Dahlen 2021: 1). There is also the question of clarity and jargon-free language: depending on a patient's (educational, socioeconomic etc.) background, there may be a requirement for plain and simple terminology. The question of how to communicate in both a clear and a respectful manner has thus to be discussed further.

11. Non-sexist language guides

Starting in the 1970s, the anti-sexist language campaigners started creating elaborate guidelines for anti-sexist language, to be used by publishing houses and scientific journals' editorial boards, newspapers and magazines, workplaces, organizations, and the like. The goal was to reduce discrimination and the amount of offensive language, and to raise awareness (Cooper 1996: 18).

Anti-sexist language campaigning began early in English-language communities but is now taking place around the globe. Large supranational organizations such as UNESCO (UNESCO 2019), Council of Europe (1990) and the European Parliament (2018) have also adopted guidelines for inclusive and gender-neutral language.

The grammatical features of the targeted language tend to influence the non-sexist strategy. There have been two strategies, largely depending on the structural properties of the language in question: *feminization* or *neutralization*.

Languages with strong gender marking such as Spanish (with for example gendered nouns and adjectives) tend to promote feminization and a language use which makes women visible, e.g., proposing feminine and masculine professional titles, for example *médica* ('female doctor') for women and *médico* ('male doctor') for men. Languages with less strong gender marking (for example English) tend to promote neutralization by choosing gender-neutral titles used by all genders, for example using *fire-fighter* for both genders instead of *fireman*.

The campaigns to introduce less sexist and more gender-inclusive language is often met with a lot of resistance. The arguments used are often the same, revolving around

dimensions of efficacy of change, freedom of speech, semantic or etymological arguments etc. An early analysis identified eight arguments (Blaubergs 1980), and studies made later have either confirmed or added to this list. Additions made are for example acceptance of sexism and hostility to change (Parks and Roberton 1998), the importance of gender information and the distractive attention of gender-neutral language (Vergoossen et al. 2020a and b).

The debate in each language community is shaped by the status of feminism in the political landscape and in language planning organizations (Milles 2011b: 93). Resistance is often part of larger, conservative, nationalistic and anti-gender discourses. In Germany, the use of masculine generics has been widely debated. The most common argument against the inclusion of feminine forms – often referred to as "Gendersprache" – is that masculine generics do not represent men only. However, when feminine generics were used in a law proposal, they were condemned by the interior minister who claimed they were deemed incorrect by language institutions. So far, the Council for German orthography has not accepted the combination of masculine forms such as *Lehrer*in* (*in* = feminine suffix) (Lobin 2021). A debate in Brazil concerning the new use of the letter "X" as a Portuguese gender morpheme was deeply dependent on the struggle between feminist and LGBTQ and more conservative right-wing politics (Borba 2019). In Sweden, the official language policy's goal to minimize sexist tendencies in official Swedish helped the Language Council of Sweden to produce and publish a handbook on gender-neutral language (Milles 2008), but a few years later the conservative and nationalistic political party played an important part in the antagonism against the proposal to introduce a gender-neutral pronoun (Milles 2013). In Spain, the implementation of a law recommending non-sexist Spanish has trouble being implemented partly due to lack of funding and resistance from the Spanish Academy, *la Academia Española* (Bengoechea 2011). In France, the French Academy, *L'Académie française*, is opposed to the implementation of feminine job titles (Coady 2018).

12. Feminist writing

Even though there still is a lot of debate on whether it is possible or even desirable to distinguish a female literary style, a lot of work has been put into promoting and cultivating women's literature. Another strategy here is *rewriting* (Cavarero 1995) and *talking back* (hooks 1989), giving rise to movements such as feminist writing, feminist rewriting (Plate 2011), feminist translation and their academic counterparts.

Feminist activists not only urged others to change their style of writing; an integral part of feminist textual reform work has in addition been the quest for new ways of writing and speaking feminist, to develop genres and vocabulary fit to convey and discuss

feminist issues in a feminist way. This meant feminists should not only urge others to use language in a non-sexist way, but also themselves use language in a new way.

One strong such activism has taken place within academia, especially in the fields of gender studies and qualitative fields of study such as ethnography. The feminist academic writing style strives to break free from many of the norms governing traditional academic prose. New methods to write academic text have been explored and developed, often using methods from creative writing to question power dynamics (Lykke et al. 2014). Since writing is often an integral part of one's research process, the methods and language used might also influence the thinking and the reasoning (Richardson 2000). Ethical questions about the writer's position (the "I" in the text) and relation to the object of inquiry are considered to find "ethically and politically accountable ways to write" (Lykke et al. 2014: 4). Trying to write *intersectionally* from a position in-between normative categories based on gender, race, age, sexuality etc. (Lykke et al. 2014: 6), reworking typical moves in scholarly articles (Lykke 2014), and using free-writing techniques to generate fruitful research questions and ideas (Lie 2014) are all part of the methodology to write a feminist academic prose. Autoethnographic approaches that place the personal in connection with the social and cultural contexts are used (Richardson 1995), making a personal narrative on the writing process an integral part of the academic text itself, as part of the description of the method used (St. Pierre 2002: 58).

13. Conclusion

All in all, feminism has made a huge contribution to linguistic research and has made theoretical, methodological, and empirical advances to other fields such as pragmatics, sociolinguistics, lexicography, conversation analysis, communication, and discourse studies.

Feminism has thus expanded our understanding of language as not only a tool for communication and cognition, but also as a tool of power and influence. It has had a substantial impact on linguistic research and has contributed to discussions inside and outside academia on the understanding of language as a social tool for communication, identity, and power wielding. The academic work has also done a great deal to inform the public, since "feminist, queer and trans linguists have also contributed significantly to the mainstreaming of gender and sexuality, making the public aware of language as both a mechanism of hate and a tool for combating it" (Hall et al. 2021: 4)

On a deeper level, the linguistic turn in feminism has been part of the opening up of taboo subjects in sexual politics such as female sexual agency, sexual assaults, and rape.

Feminism has had a large impact on language use in many parts of society, text genres and communicative communities. But all is not well. Patriarchy as well as sexist, misogynist, homophobic and transphobic discourses are still around (Hall et al.

2021: 4–5). Patriarchy and male dominance might be likened to the Greek myth of the hydra, a monster with multiple heads. If you cut one off, more heads grow back. Another way of understanding the problem is to use sociology's term *wicked problem* (Rittel and Weber 1973), complex social problems with no single solution, which as such cannot be expected to be easily solved only by introducing new words and ways of using language.

Even so, feminists have realized their own power to use language to question gender-based power hierarchies and promote change, to "shape new meanings for a different and better world" as Deborah Cameron (1992a: 223) puts it.

14. Topics for future research

The field of language and gender research is a dynamic and growing one. While initially being dominated by research on languages and speaking communities in North America and Europe, there are now a growing number of interesting studies on languages and communities all around the globe.

Still, there are themes and areas that need more attention. To map the feminist and trans activist initiatives to introduce guidelines for non-sexist and inclusive writing, progressive pronoun use etc. is an important task that may shed more light on the ideological force of metapragmatics. Another pressing topic for future research concerns the strong connection between conservative, nationalistic and anti-gender and anti-feminist political forces and the hateful opposition to both feminist and LGBTQ people and their feminist and LGBTQ-friendly and inclusive language proposals around the globe. Finally, it is of utmost importance to examine how the opportunities for survivors of sexual oppression and violence to give voice to their experiences without being punished have changed in the wake of the global MeToo movement.

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Identity

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1. Introduction

"Two-factor authentification is a method of signing-in that requires the user to provide two pieces of their *identity* to enable login."

Hm? You mean this is not the identity you are interested in? Don't rush! Following the lead of Giddens (1991), Bauman (2004) among others, I have argued elsewhere that we are living in the age of identity (Coulmas 2019a, b). If this claim has any merit, there must have been other ages where identity did not feature prominently. This is undoubtedly true, as can be ascertained by looking at the frequency of occurrence of the term "identity" in printed materials over the decades, as in Figure 1, for example.

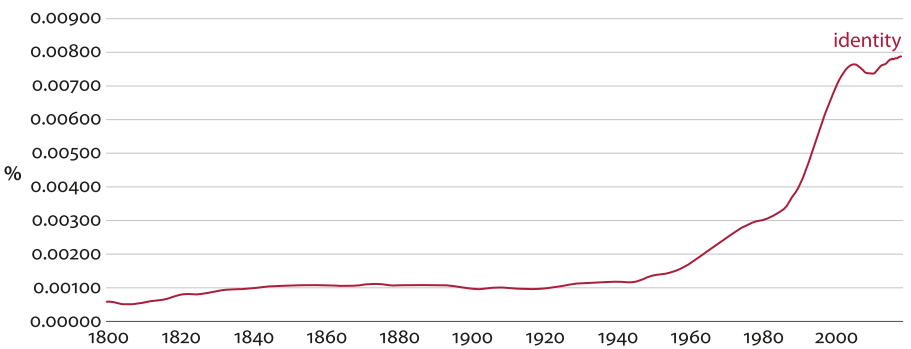

Figure 1. Frequency of occurrence of the English word "identity" in printed materials, 1800–2010. NGRAM viewer

Similar statistics can be adduced for French "identité", German "Identität", Italian "identità", among others, that all exhibit the same upward curve, slowly rising since the early 1800s and turning exponential around the middle of last century. Or we could inspect book titles containing "identity" and equivalent terms in other languages and

https://doi.org/10.1075/hop.24.ide2

would find the same tendency. A look at WorldCat,[1] probably the world's most comprehensive catalogue of books, reveals how massively the interest in identity increased in recent decades. To mention just two figures, 1813 books published in 1975 bore "identity" in the title. The corresponding number in 2019 was 16,281 (further details in Table 1).

Table 1. Number of published books containing "identity" and equivalents in the title, 1975 and 2019. Source: WorldCat

Year	Number of titles	Non-fiction	Language
1975	1,813	1,749	English 1417, German 43, French 34
2019	16,281	14,4687	English 13,273, French 344, German 298

In a longer time frame, but on a smaller scale we see the obsession with identity building up in the course of the last century, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Frequency of „Identität" in German book titles. Source: Deutsche Nationalbibliothek, Katalog

„Identität"	Number of titles
1920–1950	50
1950–1980	284
1980–2010	3114

The frequency of words in texts and book titles changes for various reasons, for example, simply on account of the number of all books published which increased superlinearly in the twentieth century (Figure 2) and can be linked to the rising literacy rates in Europe as a result of compulsory education. More books, more book titles, more book titles containing the term "identity". That's a straight line, no surprise. This may be so, however, it does not invalidate the observation that many more people take an interest in identity today than two hundred years ago. Whether or not this has anything to do with rising literacy rates is an empirical question which to my knowledge has not been investigated, but it is highly likely. People who don't read books or blogs, I surmise, worry less about identity than people who do.

Literacy is a social parameter that today distinguishes societies in different parts of the world, as well as contemporary from ancient or medieval societies. Just recall that as recently as at the beginning of the nineteenth century only 12 per cent of the world population could read and write (Roser, Ortiz-Ospina 2016). Two hundred years later,

1. https://www.worldcat.org/search?q=Identity&dblist=638&fq=dt%3Abks+%3E+yr%3A2019&qt=facet_yr%3A

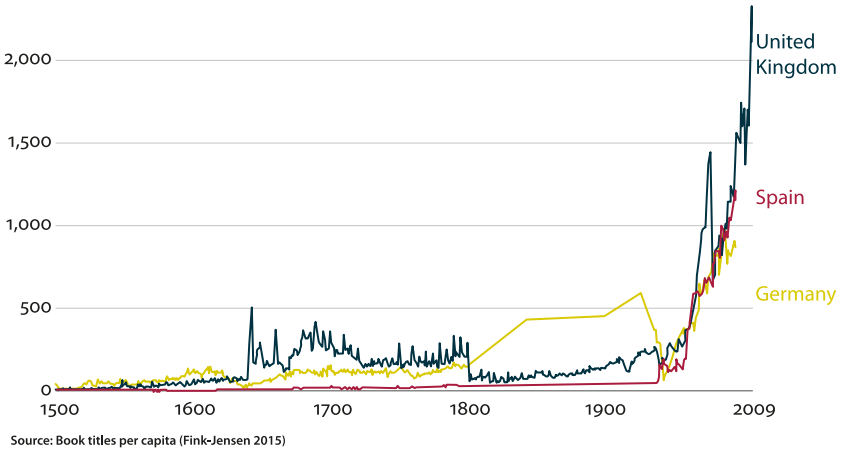

Figure 2. Increase of book production per capita in UK, Spain and Germany, 1500 to 2009

the proportion of literate and illiterate people is reversed, having been spurred by, and in turn promoted, higher levels of education and social integration. In addition to literacy, other variables are likely to have a bearing on how identity is being dealt with, which in the present context suffices to justify the title of the book mentioned above. In the sense that today people concern themselves with identity more than in former times, we are living in the age of identity, that is, modern times.

Identity, if not a modern invention, has become a critically important characteristic of modern society. It should also not be forgotten that identity, like practically all social science concepts is a Western product. Consider, for example, the Chinese term *shēnfèn* ('identity') which refers to the social or legal status of a person, not to larger social units. Or take Japanese, where the English loanword *aidentiti* spread in the 1970s. According to a 2002 survey, some 53 per cent of respondents had heard of the term, and of these some 40 per cent understood or somehow grasped what it meant.[2] If we do not simply accept the Western bias of our research as inevitable, based on these and similar observations, instead of asking what does "identity" mean, we should focus on what it is that relates identity to modernity and why identity is considered to be so important nowadays.

2. Modern identities

Should then the "two pieces of *identity* to enable login" be disregarded in a discussion of identity? I don't think so because this particular use of the term is indicative of a contem-

2. Tanaka Makiro. 2020. Gairaigo wo tsukau sai niha dono youna koto ni kiwotsukereba ii desuka (What to be careful about when using loanwords) https://kotobaken.jp/qa/yokuaru/qa-104/

porary aspect of identity and thus, in a more general sense, of its historical contingency. Come to think of it, this is surprising if not paradoxical; for if anything should be identical with itself it is identity. But in fact, it is not. Once you start reading about identity, you will find out that there is no generally agreed upon definition of the term, not in public debates, or in scholarly writing. It seems like everyone can do with identity what they like. Putting it more generously, there are several different aspects of identity, based on different criteria and relevant in different contexts.

The first ten of the 2019 books with "identity" in the title listed by WorldCat display some variation of topics:

1. Identity
2. Hidden Identity
3. White Identity Politics
4. Identity
5. Identity. A Very Short Introduction
6. Nonbinary: Memories of Gender and Identity
7. Gender Identity: Beyond Pronouns and Bathrooms
8. National Identity in Translation
9. Critique of Identity Thinking
10. Language, Identity and Community

The next ten titles broaden the spectrum, and the next ones again. Genetic, personal, family, gender, broken, conflicting, bicultural, tribal, ethnic, racial, national, European, class, occupational, political, religious, vegetarian, cultural, post-colonial and, of course, linguistic; well-nigh anything can be an attribute of identity, or, to put it differently, identities can be of all conceivable kinds, not to mention the fact that they can be stolen.

Is there still a common denominator? As a general rule, the more frequently a term is used, the fuzzier its meaning becomes. This certainly holds true of "identity". When someone speaks of their identity, it could be anything, and when they speak of it today it is not necessarily the same as yesterday. Who still remembers the proper sense of the notion that refers to an object being exactly the same, that is, identical with itself, or of exactly the same kind, for instance, an identical virus detected in different places? From a well-defined descriptive notion, "identity" has transmuted into a catchphrase making it hard to disagree with Zygmunt Bauman's (2004: 77) remark that "a battlefield is identity's natural home." Identity, as the term is used today, is good for promoting cleavages and conflicts, which must be seen as a side-effect of the upheavals of modernization, the formation of national states, industrialisation, social class restructuring, and a shift from hereditary tradition-directed social relations to "contracts" between self-responsible autonomous individuals endowed with rights and accountability.

To evade the obvious phlogiston embarrassment, instead of discarding the concept of identity, some scholars have transformed it into a verb. "Identity" has become "to iden-

tify (with or as)", Born again something or other, speakers of Bambiyya, Asian Americans, or a refusal to identify as either female or male, etc. But this is not forever, at least not for all identities. Some can be exchanged like a T-shirt, others are more difficult or impossible to get rid of. However, the need, imagined or real, to identify with something or some group is the subject of another paper. Here we concentrate on what moulded our minds to pay so much attention to identity.

This complex process, which had its origins in Enlightenment Europe, where it found expression in the concept of human rights and the transformation of subjects into citizens, is still continuing. The idea that every human being has his or her identity deserving of recognition and respect is a positive legacy of this intellectual current taken up and still pursued by the United Nations, which declares "legal identity for all, including birth registration, by 2030" as one of its Sustainable Development Goals for advancing the "2030 Agenda commitment to leave no one behind."[3] Legal identity means more control and hence also protection – for instance, from slavery, human trafficking and abuse. At the same time, the concept and administrative reality of the rights-endowed autonomous citizen is part of the fractionalization of society into lonely individuals seeking security in a hostile world which in the wake of World War II and decolonization became increasingly volatile (Remotti 1996). In the Western world first and then all around the globe, identities emerged that promised the self-contained individual a firm hold. Instead of "emerged", and more in keeping with current social thought (e.g., Taylor 1989; Cerulo 1997; Segre 2016), we could say they were "constructed" because the inflation of identities in public and scholarly discourse can no longer be explained by referring to essential properties and shared attributes. Rather, the focus of analysis had to become the purpose of highlighting certain features of individuals, social groups or polities rather than others, and to demonstrate how these features are instrumentalized for constituting group agency, inclusion and exclusion. Making identity claims without any substance is difficult, but substances alone are not what identities are made of. Rather than assuming their phenomenological existence, as pointed out above, identities came to be seen increasingly as being constructed in specific sociohistorical contexts serving specific psychological and political objectives. Language-related identities provide an apposite illustration.

3. Linguistic identities

Like other identities, language-related identities combine individual and collective aspects. Let us move from bigger to smaller units, that is, from speech communities and languages as collective products to individual speakers.

3. https://unstats.un.org/legal-identity-agenda/

Assisting Catherine II in her endeavour to record on the basis of correspondence with the leaders of the world the languages of her empire and the world, Peter Simon Pallas compiled *Linguarum totius orbis vocabularia comparativa: augustissimae cura collecta*, published in 1786, which is likely the first comparative index of the languages of the world. It comprised some 200 languages. As of January 2020, the International Standards Organisation in its ISO 639–3 listed 7,868 languages. Several lessons can be learned from these two figures, 200 vs. 7,868. For one thing, following up on her inspiring initiative, linguists today know more about the world than Catherine did in the late 18th century. Still we have to explain the great discrepancy between the two figures. Catherine's world had not yet passed the mark of the first billion planetary inhabitants. By 2020 the world population had increased eightfold. Could demographic increase account for the observed increase of languages? More people, hence more languages, doesn't look like an altogether unreasonable hypothesis. What is more, since before the 9th or 10th century CE nobody ever spoke French, just like the Dutch language was never heard of before the 12th century or Afrikaans before the 20th, and since nowadays nobody speaks Hittite or Egyptian, we know that languages come and go. We could correlate historical demographic data with the number of (known) languages and along the way try to find out whether for a language to thrive there is an ideal size of the speech community. Intriguing as it is, this approach is not very promising because data about languages spoken in former times, especially outside Europe, are few and far between and, more importantly, there was no common standard for counting languages and thus separating them one from another.

In the 20th century, linguistics became the most scientific of human sciences, and for some time linguists had to live with the discomfort that everybody knew what languages were, only they did not. The way out of the predicament was to recognize the fact that languages are social rather than linguistic objects, an insight captured by the term "named language" which has recently gained currency in sociolinguistics and the sociology of language. This leads to the question, who gives a language a name, phrased differently, who identifies some speech form as a language, and why. The answer involves two aspects of identity, one relates to linguistic features in the narrow sense of the word, that is, phonology/phonetics, morphology, syntax and lexicon. The other is to do with social, political and cultural aspects and subjective preferences of individuals relating to them. Thus, the inner identity of a language is intertwined with its speakers' desire to use it to manifest their identity by emphasising features that distinguish it from similar speech forms.

Consider Afrikaans as an example. Formerly known as *Kaaps Hollands*, "Cape Dutch", some of its South African speakers after codifying the vernacular claimed language status for it in 1925, giving it the name *Afrikaans* (Den Besten 2012). Loanwords from African languages have been incorporated in Afrikaans, but not in Dutch; Afrikaans uses double negation, Dutch does not; and various other distinctions can be

found. Still, both are largely intercommunicable and from a linguistic point of view could with much justification be treated as varieties of one language. From a social point of view, they are two, for identity's sake (Coulmas 2018: 219–222).

Afrikaans is one of South Africa's national languages. Linguists used to be much attached to the notion of "natural language", a somewhat dubious notion because unlike flowers and weeds, all languages are human products, co-constructed by their speakers. National languages, although sometimes portrayed as naturally grown entities that from time immemorial embody the spirit of a nation, are very obviously not natural languages. Like nations and national states they are historically contingent entities. Afrikaans was brought into existence by a process for which Heinz Kloss introduced the concept *ausbau*, that is a conscious, deliberate intervention in the formation of a language. "Language, as implied in the very concept of *ausbau* (reshaping), may change not merely because of those slow processes which we are prone to call natural. To a large and increasing extent, language change is the result of innovational language planning" (Kloss 1993: 166f.), or a construct, in sociological parlance.

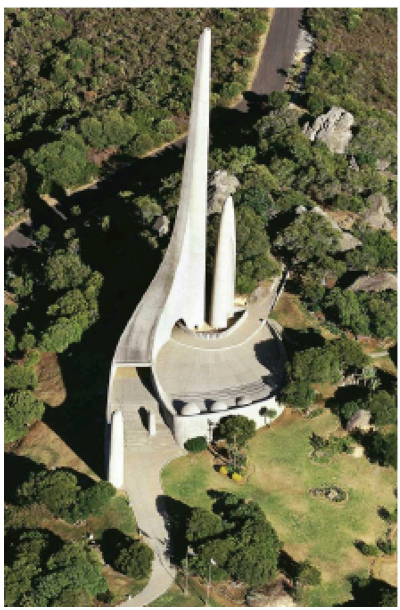

Figure 3. Afrikaanse Taalmonument "language monument" in Paarl, Western Cape, South Africa © Gerard Hoberman (courtesy Die Afrikaanse Taalmuseum, Paarl, South Africa)

Afrikaans is an *ausbau* language, a national monument; so much so that a concrete monument was erected in 1975 to celebrate fifty years of its *ausbau* (Figure 3). It differs from Dutch by virtue of the fact that it has been constructed as such. From Zulu, another of South Africa's official languages, it differs for reasons of descent and long-term devel-

opment. Kloss (1993) calls languages that differ from each other without language planning intervention "*abstand* languages" that is, languages of distance. Afrikaans and Zulu need not be constructed as separate languages; they are. Afrikaans and Dutch until 1925 were not. Where languages are sufficiently different because of *abstand*, identity is not usually an issue; where *abstand* is lacking it may be. When it comes to that, two different identities come into play, that of the language and that of the speech community. For the community of speakers calling their vernacular *Afrikaans* instead of *Kaaps Hollands* meant they no longer spoke a substandard despised dialect of the language of a far-away country but a proper language in its own right. In retrospect, language independence declaration was a success, since a large portion of the relevant population accepted Afrikaans as their language and as a significant part of South African identity. Whether and when differentiation involves contestation of identity depends on a variety of factors that determine on the basis of what kinds of loyalties and ideologies groups want to define themselves.

Consider Bavarian. More than 70 million people in Germany don't speak Bavarian, as a philanthropic citizens' initiative that supports immigrants puts it in a humorous video clip.[4] In the event, the widely acknowledged differences between Bavarian and German, while appreciated as a marker of regional identity, has not led to linguistic secessionism – for the time being. The Bavarians do not instrumentalise the differences between Bavarian and standard German for political purposes. Take the same issue, that is, the affiliation of two related but clearly distinct linguistic varieties, elsewhere, for instance, to Catalonia (Miller & Miller 1996), Bosnia-Herzegovina (Šipka 2019), or Moldova (Prina 2013), and you stir up a hornets' nest. This is largely due to the 19th century national language ideology which, given the great disparity between the number of states – 193 UN member states in 2020 – and languages – more than 7,000, as mentioned above – could only bring about discords between speakers of more and less privileged languages, as sociologists recognised early on. Thus, Max Weber matter-of-factly stated:

> Today, *in the age of language conflicts* [emphasis added], a shared common language is pre-eminently considered the normal basis of nationality. Whatever the "nation" means beyond the mere 'language group' can be found in the specific objective of its social action, and this can only be the *autonomous polity.* (Weber 1978: 359)

According to Norbert Elias, "linguistic polemic corresponds to a very specific, social stratification. It shows the *group that is currently in control of the language* [emphasis added] and its limits" (Elias 1939, vol. I: 151). This implies that the group "currently in control" may not be in charge forever. Changes will likely be brought about by contest, if not conflict. In a similar vein, Pierre Bourdieu (1975) distinguished le *langage autorisé*,

4. http://fill.de/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=158:integration-durch-sprache-ueber-70-mio-menschen-in-deutschland-koennen-kein-bayrisch&catid=60:integration

rephrased in English as "legitimate language", from other languages used in the same society that are not equally legitimate, but may be charged with identity claims.

A hundred years after Max Weber, few signs suggest that the age of language conflict is coming to an end. On the contrary, conflict linguistics has become a field of study, and it can hardly be considered fortuitous that this line of research took shape relatively early in Belgium where time and again governments stumble over the language issue, that is, frictions between Dutch-speaking and French-speaking Belgians (Nelde 1997; cf. also Laitin 2000). Self-determination, equal rights and national language privileges are hard to reconcile, especially where the national language, instead of just fulfilling this function for pragmatic reasons, is ideologically charged to embody the spirit of the nation, the people's identity, etc. If one language is valued for the symbolic qualities attributed to it, then why not others! Arguments like this one have gained traction with the spreading of democracy and minority rights.

Looking at language through the lens of identity brings to light social attitudes and intergroup relationships in a society, power differentials and prejudices. Language often functions as a stage for social tension and conflict. This is especially true for linguistic purism, the spiritual companion of racism (Thomas 1991; Langer and Nesse 2012; Hosokawa 2015). The foreign contaminates our identity, that is, the age-old authenticity of our ancestral legacy and must be kept out. Like (socially demarcated) races, (socially demarcated) language varieties are hard to hide and therefore lend themselves easily to discrimination. A faint accent may trigger bullying, a foreign language can warrant exclusion. Again, identity matters are acted out at the level of speakers and of languages, loanword dictionaries and segregated living quarters exhibiting a comparable mindset.

The perceived need to protect languages from corruption as a component of nationalist identity building has travelled from Europe to many other places. To cite one indicative example, Z.B. Chuluundorj and Ch. Zegiimaa, two members of the Mongolian National Academy for Language Policy, in an attempt to balance the demands of Mongolian language identity and multilingual education, state that

> Mongolian society has to avoid a loss of its cultural and linguistic identity. We can see that appearances in advertisements and public service leaflets are changing: use of foreign languages in place names, public signs and road signs become very common. The real problem is in our capacity to tolerate these changing appearances.
>
> (Quoted from Marzluf 2012: 210)

Forever worrying about Mongolian being too much influenced then by Russian and then by Chinese, the arrival of global English in post-socialist Mongolia poses a new threat to the country's linguistic identity as traditionalists desire to mould it. They would prefer it to be written in the Mongolian script, but due to lengthy Soviet influence it is also written in Cyrillic and nowadays Roman letters, especially in social media communications. Which takes us to another adventure playground popular among identity enthusiasts.

4. Writing

I have shown elsewhere (Coulmas 2020) that its visible and durable nature renders writing particularly prone to be pressed into the service of identity manifestation. Without unduly repeating myself, let me mention just a few examples. What could be more emblematic of Chinese culture than Chinese characters? They embody the oldest unbroken written tradition still in use today, a clear symbol of Chinese identity and the pride of the nation. However, if you have a problem with China's current identity, minor differences in writing are a way to show it.

China	Hong Kong	English
孔子今天的教学	孔子今天的教學	Confucius' teachings today

Figure 4. Indicating identity in writing

Capitalist Hong Kong never accepted the character simplification scheme enacted in the 1960s in Communist PR China. If you used simplified characters in Hong Kong you were identified as a Beijing sympathizer. Taiwan, too, refused to implement Beijing's writing reform. Similarly, the Greek monotonic spelling that eliminated all unnecessary diacritics that no longer corresponded to Modern Greek pronunciation, introduced in 1982 (Bunčić 2017: 23) quickly came to mark a divide between traditionalists grumbling about destroying Greek identity and progressives pleading for functionality. Identity often stands in the way of functionality. The German curly *s* <ß> is another illustration. In Switzerland it is not used, which does not in any way hamper comprehension, but in Germany it continues to be used as a symbol of Germanness. Polish <ł>, Danish <Ø> and Spanish <¿, ¡> are comparable symbolic signs. Functionality, symbolism and path dependence, i.e., tradition, interact to determine the choice of writing system, script, individual graphemes and orthography. If this weren't so we would all be using 한글, that is, Hangeul, which is the most ingenious writing system ever invented. However, identity overrides excellence. Only in Korea both coincide and Hangeul is celebrated as the supreme icon of national grandeur and identity, not only but most prominently in the National Hangeul Museum[5] in Seoul.

More impressive and lasting than flags and anthems, scripts are popular symbols of national identity in many places. After the disintegration of the Soviet Union, linguistic nationalism raised its head in several new states, such as Armenia, for example, an independent republic since 1991, where the Armenian alphabet monument was unveiled in 2005 to commemorate the sixteen hundredth anniversary of its creation. Other countries,

5. https://english.visitseoul.net/museum/National-Hangeul-Museum_/20600

too, enacted writing reforms that were motivated by symbolic rather than functional considerations. Azerbaijan replaced its Cyrillic alphabet with the Roman script, signalling a shift in identity orientation from the Russian orbit to the West. Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan likewise shifted from Cyrillic to Roman, while Tajikistan, pressed by the Islamic Renaissance Party, adopted the Arabic script in addition to Cyrillic, Tajik being an Iranian language that is mutually intelligible with Farsi (Persian), Iran's official language. The biggest difference between Hindi und Urdu is the script, Perso-Arabic for Islamic speakers of Urdu, Devanagari for Hinduist speakers of Hindi. Rather than emphasising commonalities to promote mutual understanding, the two scripts have been described as dividing a single language, Hindustani, into two and are used as symbols of different identities that foster divergence. In the event, a toxic mixture that favours division rather than mutual understanding is formed by combining religious identities, Muslim nationalism emphasising the long history of Urdu as the language of learning in India, and linguistic purism on the part of Hindus who want to steer the language away from its Perso-Arabic and Turkic heritage toward its pre-Islamic past and the Hindus' classical language Sanskrit (King 1994).

Do writing reforms or writing a language with one script rather than another actually affect identities? It does not really matter. What counts is that many people embrace the ideology of identity and accordingly see it that way. Writing and the identity attributed to it defines a country's place in the world on several planes, notably culture and religion. Cyrillic is not just the script of Russian and Russia, but also of Orthodox Christianity. Latin is Roman Catholic and Protestant; the Arabic abjad is Islamic; Hebrew Square denotes Judaism; Chinese characters are intimately related to Confucianism. All of these scripts transcend languages and define cultural spheres which, as the Central Asian examples just mentioned illustrate, may on occasion be enlisted for identity purposes. In these and similar cases, writing systems, scripts and orthographies are anchors and manifestations of national, religious and personal identities that are intertwined and can, but do not have to, be highlighted for political purposes.

Bilingual road signs and place names are favourite targets of vandalism in interethnic and interreligious strife, for instance in Northern Ireland where parts of public signs written in Irish have often been defaced. Reacting to an incident in 2018, a local politician commented: "The vandalism of this sign is indicative of the attitude of some in society who show a complete disregard and lack of respect for the Irish identity" (The Newsroom 2018). Since the breakup of Yugoslavia, anti-Cyrillic protests in Croatia have been the order of the day.[6]

Writing is linked to identity in several other ways, notably in symbolic politics, literary studies, sociolinguistics, and forensics. In many places, swearing-in ceremonies

6. Cf., for instance, https://www.dw.com/en/serb-party-billboards-vandalized-with-hate-messages-in-croatia/a-48740805

involve taking an oath on *scriptures*, that is, holy books. Those who put their hand on the Bible or on the Quran before assuming office simultaneously identify with a political system and a religion, a symbolic act that illustrates the fact that some identities are adopted or chosen rather than being a fact of life, especially those occupying a place at the intersection of politics and religion or other ideological orientations. Solid and unalterable as they are, scriptures are prototypical instances of the identity function of writing and therefore, like road signs, figure prominently in conflicts, as when U.S. troops in Afghanistan in 2012 took to burning copies of the Quran.[7] In this connection it is worth mentioning that all faiths with claims to universality are book religions providing believers and potential converts with a firm foundation to base their spiritual identity on. The codification in scriptures of the "right faith" creates infidels, pagans and heretics, and legitimizes proselytism and intolerance.

Texts radiate an aura of authenticity embodying rituals and world views employed for identity formation and reformation in the service of power, as paradigmatically symbolised by the Tablets of the Law or Tablets of Testimony (in Hebrew: לוחות הברית Luchot HaBrit, Exodus 34:1) which Moses conferred to humanity in the form of two slabs of stone inscribed with the Ten Commandments. No one can tinker with them.

This may be different with texts written by mortals, which, however, hold the secret of identity nonetheless. Identifying the authors of anonymously published works has long been an occupation of students of literature. They investigate styles, vocabularies and other parts of systems of linguistic meaning that characterise genres, historical periods, and authors. Shakespeare, for example, who collaborated with several co-authors, raising the question of who wrote what. Explains Shakespeare specialist Brian Vickers (2002: 3): "We cannot form any reliable impression of his work as a dramatist […] unless we can identify those parts of collaborative plays that were written by him together with one or more fellow dramatists." The underlying assumption is that text fragments can be attributed unmistakably to individual writers constituting, as it were, a part of their identity. The fact that Shakespeare's co-authors often remained nameless in publications of and reports about his plays does not necessarily mean that their work was deliberately suppressed by Shakespeare or his publishers, but rather that individual authorship is a modern development that culminated in copyright protection which began to be given a legal structure only in 18th century Europe.

Meanwhile authorship identification has evolved into a field that occupies lawyers and forensic experts, which would not be the case if no economic interests and law-enforcement problems were involved. In many countries, copyright is protected by law and infringements are accordingly punishable. Needless to say, *author* and *authentic* derive from the same Latin root *augere* 'originate'. In Europe, the handwritten signature

7. As reported by Reuters August 28, 2012. https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-afghanistan/u-s-troops-punished-over-koran-burning-urination-video-idUKBRE87Q0PP20120828

is testimony to the authenticity of a document, a piece of its author's identity. Notice however, and this alerts us once again to the contingency of most identity matters, that the lively and unique handwritten signature is a convention. In East Asia for a long time it did not mean anything because, that was the general perception, it can be forged easily. For acts of legal testimony, authentication or contract you need a seal stamp that is officially registered. Like the signature, the seal stamp indexes both individual and collective identity. While in many countries the Covid-19 pandemic promoted teleworking, Japan was lagging behind in this regard. The reason: many clerks had to go to the office in order to put their stamp under the usual stream of documents which without it would come to a halt and delay everything. A cabinet minister therefore said the practice was obsolete and called for it to be abolished, sparking a storm of indignation because 判子 (hanko), the personal seal stamp, is part of Japan's identity. How long will it last? In yet another contest about shaping identity, it may become a museum piece before long, pushed aside by the encrypted electronic signature.

A final point about authorship identification is to do with authors who refrain from authenticating their writing with signature, stamp, or encryption. In the form of hate mail, ransom notes and other forms of cybercrime, the internet is awash with texts of this sort, putting many computational linguists to work who use large data corpora to develop ever more sophisticated methods of analysing grammatical peculiarities, style, word frequencies, sequencing and size of vocabulary to reveal their identity. No longer a niche of painstaking philologists, e-mail content mining for author identification, or authorship attribution, for the purpose of forensic investigation has become a matter of social urgency (Chaski 2001). New kinds of crime are indicative of the ongoing migration of identity forming constitutive norms, social practices and cognitive models from the print world into cyberspace where groups are formed, sometimes without the members' awareness or consent, which, however Big Data reveal to advertisers, secret services and others in the know. On the basis of handwritten texts, graphologists used to identify human beings not just as authors, but also in terms of belonging to speech communities, generations, gender, perhaps social class and psychological characteristics. These and other categories are now investigated by data specialists who examine the written traces of CMC.

What remains is that individuals and groups identify with and are identified by their use of language. Since the raison d'être of language is social communication and, accordingly, a private language does not exist, language always combines collective and individual identities, which, however, are internally diverse and hence subject to cultivation. Every speech act is an act of choice, not free choice, but choice nonetheless. In the choices speakers make they are constrained, by their birth place, their upbringing, the language(s) used in their environment, social conventions, and so on. But rarely does a person have no choice of what to say how. This is how identity is enacted: It is always the result of choice under conditions of constraints.

5. Conclusions

Combining the personal with the collective as a means of individual articulation for the purpose of social communication, bonding and demarcation, language is a suitable object for the study of identity. This is so also because the sense of belonging to a community that a common language affords need not obliterate other affiliations if a person so desires. At the same time, languages can be and often have been used by groups to distinguish themselves from others, draw borders, and justify discrimination. Given the nature of language as a human artefact that encompasses constraints of its own the individual speaker can transgress but not entirely ignore, the question remains why what Max Weber, as mentioned above, characterised as the age of language conflict appeared when it did. To answer this question, however, tentatively, three forces can be singled out that distinguish modernity from previous epochs and shape contemporary social reality: Self-responsibility, neo-liberalism, and globalisation.

The Enlightenment changed the way human beings are perceived and categorised. Ideally, if not in reality, rather than as peasant, artisan or serf, the modern individual is born a self-responsible person. Most important in the present context is that unchosen identities shaped by inherited traditions, place of birth, the religion and language(s) of the community in which a person happened to be born was supplemented by identities of choice. The constraints of identity formation including the idea of a national language changed, making the individual more aware of the discriminatory potential of language on the individual as well as the collective level.

Neoliberalism is an umbrella term that covers multifarious phenomena. Of interest here is the ideological blessing to commodify everything, including language skills and languages as such. Self-marketing is a hallmark of neoliberal society, turning one's language(s) from destiny into marketable goods, symbolic capital, in Bourdieu's (1979) terms. In this perspective, the universe of human languages gets subdivided into more and less valuable ones, inviting a transfer of such assessments from languages to their speakers. For markets mean options and quality gradations, but also constraints by institutionalising inequality. Self-marketing, as advertisers know and the contemptuous concept of "human resource management" reveals, requires consciously shaping one's self-identity for presentation.

Globalisation further strengthens the tendency of fractionalization and individualisation forced upon the self-responsible citizen of Enlightenment and the self-marketing member of neoliberal society. However, in conjunction with decolonization, massive population movements and the emergence of transnational businesses and institutions, an increased awareness of having options, the possibility of choice, is for many accompanied by an increased sense of uprooting, making them look for a firm foothold *à la recherche du temps perdu*. The identity game is thus played out in in a field of tension between options and constraints, rapid innovation and fading and therefore to be

reconstructed memories, between the global and the local, the collective and the individual. The various identities that seem to offer a firm hold are forever malleable, temporary crutches that need to be adjusted at every turn of the way.

At the present time, the autonomous self-marketing individual in the globalised world is one that is routinely and now on a daily basis asked to identify themselves. – "Is this you?" "Yes, this is you. You can proceed." – And now, if you want to learn more about identity, please present two pieces of your identity – your fingerprint, your voice or your password, for example – to log in and allow the internet giants to exploit them for their dubious purposes.

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Nigerian hospital setting discourse

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1. Introduction

Discourse in hospital settings or hospital setting discourse (HSD) signifies a relatively broad area of communication among different professionals involved in medical care and hospital visitors. Its scope over the relationship between doctors and patients, doctors and other professionals (for example, nurses, pharmacists, laboratory technicians, physiotherapists, etc.), between patients and other medical professionals, between patients and other hospital visitors (for example, relatives and heath service inquirers) and among patients themselves, represents a wide array of engagements which demands varying layers of orientation to institutional and social contexts. This broadness precludes the possibility of any exhaustive treatment of "discourse in hospital settings" in a single handbook contribution – not only because, barring some general similarities in interactional or language use patterns, the binary relationships exhibit role-related peculiarities and, therefore, distinctive discourse manifestations – but also because the contexts of the encounters between the groups impose different communicative constraints. Thus, for a relatively complete (but not exhaustive) account, the focus, in this entry, is on the discourse features of the interaction between doctors and patients (representing a cross-section of medical interactions) in Nigerian hospital settings.

HSD, an aspect of the broad medical discourse (perceived largely in the narrow sense of doctor-patient interaction in this study), captures the deployment of verbal and non-verbal linguistic resources in the communication and/or exchange of medical information, and dispositions and judgments between medical professionals and hospital visitors. It is important in at least two ways: It is not only sometimes theoretically-grounded;[1] it is also, and, most importantly, practice-oriented (whether praxis-wise or discourse-wise). Thus, research into the field is not to be left only to linguists; it is equally conducted by a wide array of professionals, including anthropologists (e.g. Wilce 2009), sociologists (e.g. Stivers 2001), and medical educators and clinicians (e.g. Roter and Hall

1. Ainsworth-Vaughn (2005) notes two categories of linguistic studies on the discourse of medical encounters: those that are atheoretical, which she tags "praxis literature" and those that are theoretically-grounded, which she tags "discourse literature".

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1992). In Nigeria, Ajayi (2003), Abioye-Kuteyi et al. (2010), Abiola et al. (2014), Nwodoh et al. (2018), Lawal, (2018), Iloh et al. (2019), among others, represent contributions on HSD from clinicians.

To account for HSD here, I first seat the discussion in the concept of discourse for a clearer conceptualisation. Then, I define and briefly characterise medical discourse by focusing on the features of the discourse that are largely distinctive to HSD. Following these, I thematise Nigerian HSD (NHSD). While I draw most theoretical resources from the available knowledge in linguistics and medical communication, I add a few new theoretical insights to the pool. Examples are drawn predominantly from my own previous research (conversation and interview texts) and from some new data on medical communication; I also cite the works of other Nigerian scholars to explain a number of the principles of HSD addressed in the study. The analytical method used, best described as a loose mapping between discourse features and exemplifications, offers brief explanations of the theoretical or domain-based features highlighted across the study. This means that there are no specific theories or concepts favoured since the study offers a broad description of doctor-patient encounters which naturally attract different theoretical orientations. Conversational excerpts from (or full) sampled interactions are labelled "Extracts" for convenience and are numbered throughout. Short uncontextualised texts are integrated into sections and numbered independently. All English texts are marked in regular font, Yoruba texts in **bold** font and Nigerian Pidgin in *italics*. Where transcriptions apply, Jefferson's (2004) notations have been adopted. In this overview, I give attention to the interface of medical discourse, pragmatics and doctor-patient interactions in Nigerian hospital encounters, and highlight the key themes in NHSD.

I take any use of language, written or spoken, by individuals or groups of persons, that can be situated in a context to qualify as discourse (cf. Cook 1989). In the context of hospital or health-related interactions, all uses of language by healthcare providers and patients or other hospital visitors, any documented rules or guides for communication, or any communicative formulas, life-style recommendations and all forms of information provided on health issues in general (for example posters on HIV/AIDS) and/or for particular patients in particular (for example verbal instructions to patients or their relations on regimens) are classifiable as discourses in the hospital. All these, in the long run, revolve around communication between the parties in the hospital setting. Thus, on the part of the patient, Cassel's (1985) observation that patients' complex psycho-social and physical nature resides in their communication is a valid position.

All manifestations of HSD are organised communications designed to achieve particular goals in certain contexts: to provide information about a disease, to douse tension, to seek cooperation, to announce good/bad news, to review healthcare services; to mention but a few. Validating this perspective, Ainsworth-Vaughn (2005: 461) correctly noting that joint story telling is deployed in consultative encounters to constitute diagnoses, contends that "doctor and patient used narratives and stories to propose, argue

against, augment, or accept – i.e. to construct – an overarching diagnostic hypothesis and its associated treatment plan". Thus, HSD always requires knowing what physicians and other healthcare providers, patients and other hospital visitors are doing with words and the relationship between this and the affordances of the medical institution, the culture in which Western medicine is hosted and the local environment in which talk or other forms of communication are held.

2. Medical discourse, pragmatics and doctor-patient interactions in Nigerian hospital settings

From a lexicographic perspective, medicine is "the science and art dealing with the maintenance of health and the prevention, alleviation and cure of disease" (*Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary*: unpaginated). This definition identifies not only the systematic knowledge of medicine but also other skills with which medicine handles care. These other skills centrally encompass communication and other non-scientific activities which complement the science of medicine. In a thought that connects with this view, Wilce (2009: 199) acceptably defines medical discourse (generalisable almost fully as HSD) as "discourse in and about healings, curing, or therapy; expressions of suffering; and relevant language ideologies". This definition is adopted in this overview.

The definition by Wilce (2009) comes with the following scope:

a. Talk, communication or acts encircling healing.
b. Exchanges or texts that show parties' (patients'/doctors') expression/indication of suffering or pain.
c. Beliefs and role-defined tendencies that govern interactive parties' utterances and stances.

In this scope, HSD, restricted to doctor-patient interaction in this overview, strikes a clear relationship with pragmatics. It is impossible to process or understand talk, beliefs, roles or ideologies in the encounter among the parties involved in HSD without recourse to contextual influences both from the lexical choices made by interactants (which create their own contexts) and from the situation or condition that feeds the interaction. HSD in whatever guise is context-restrictive and intention-driven. These ground it almost strictly in radical contextualism (Bianchi 2010; Odebunmi 2016) and the (cognitive-)philosophical school of pragmatics (Haugh 2008; Archer and Grundy 2011) which respectively take context as the sole consideration in human communication and intention as a *sine qua non* of human encounters as seen in the interactions between doctors and patients.

Pragmatics connects words to speakers and context (see Lakoff 2007: 130). This happens at two levels: when speakers are connected to generic human experiences, and

when speakers are connected to individual human experiences. Diseases are generically classified and have words attached to them in a way that distinguishes one condition from the other. Thus, each time the words are mentioned, their contexts come with them. Take for example, malaria. Each use by the doctor and the patient evokes its cause, its effect and the responses to it. When a patient tells a doctor that he/she has malaria, for example, the doctor processes his/her presentation with a social and professional script: He/she had contact with a malaria parasite-infected mosquito which injected him/her with malaria parasites; consequently, he/she is exhibiting features consistent with doctors' epistemic understanding of the disease, named "malaria". Thus, when the doctor clerks the patient, he/she listens for symptoms such as "fever and flu-like illness, including shaking chills, headache, muscle aches, and tiredness. Nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea… anemia and jaundice (yellow coloring of the skin and eyes) because of the loss of red blood cells" (Global Health, Division of Parasitic Diseases and Malaria (nd): unpaginated) to establish his/her diagnosis. In the interaction in which this is done, the words chosen by the parties are restricted to the symptoms expected and sometimes to the type and socio-economic experiences of the individual.

However, sometimes, given individual human distinction, medical discourses pick out experiences that connect only particular persons to certain contexts that are not shared with some others. In other words, in hospital encounters, each speaker and their context are distinct and, therefore, not generalisable.

In Extract 1 below, I cite a text in which a Nigerian consultant-general practitioner in an in-depth interview with me re-affirmed the individual-factor and context in medical practice: a patient once complained of insomnia caused by the use of paracetamol, a scenario that is logically unexplainable with medical science, and that, therefore, had to be treated in isolation of generic medical epistemics and in its own right:

Extract 1

I was one of the staff Baptist,[2] I was attending, I was taking care of staff that time and **Mama** [elderly woman] said she complained of body aches and pain but the drug they gave her stopped her from sleeping; the drug was not making her to sleep. And I checked the drug, "**se** [is it] this one particular, what's that drug?" Paracetamol! @@@ You know sometimes, this is what; I give my some of these errors to my younger colleagues when I teach them. **Mama** identified Paracetamol as a drug that was causing her sleeplessness, no connection at all! I say, alright, don't worry **Mama,** you will sleep. Then I took some time to listen to her, the frustration she was having and other things; she poured out her mind. I say well, it's alright. I gave, in fact, what I gave her was almost like a placebo apart from anti-depressant that I gave her.

2. Baptist Medical Centre now Bowen University Teaching Hospital (BUTH), Ogbomoso, Oyo State, Nigeria (https://buth.edu.ng/).

That paracetamol which was recommended for headache and pain caused the patient to sleep establishes the need for the doctor to review not only his previous recommendations but also the patient's medical condition differently from *normal patients*' whose body system aligns with the generic treatment format. This situation evokes word choices which contextualise the patient's distinctive condition and, as a consequence, redefine generic realities, confirming that medicine is not a precise science (Odebunmi 2021a). "Placebo" and "anti-depressant", for example, create a different context from the one a conventional paracetamol prescription and normal patient body response will generate.

Studies in pragmatics can also spell out what participants hope to achieve by talking (see Lakoff 2007: 130). No one visits the hospital for comical reasons. Globally, patients have the overall goal to be healed while doctors have the goal to preserve life. These goals guide all clinical encounters. Hence, it is inappropriate for medicine to continue to uphold exclusively paternalistic stances which put the patient in a subordinate position and suppress their life world voices (cf. Mishler 1984). In traditional clinical encounters, paternalism (also known as the doctor-centred or disease-focused approach) relies exclusively on the doctor's epistemic and deontic direction which places on the doctor the whole task of unilaterally determining the nature of the patient's ailment, the correct therapy plan and the eventual course of the healing process. While this style saves time in busy clinics and permits an exclusive application of the doctor's training skills, its disadvantages are sometimes huge when compared to a patient-centred setting. Apart from its inability to bring the patient into accepting responsibility for their health, should there arise unexpected prognoses, it has the tendency to reduce patients' participation in therapy decisions (cf Landmark et al. 2015) and sometimes results in physicians' errors. The patient-centred approach (also known as the humanistic approach, or person-centred medicine) which contrasts with paternalism reflects a synthesis of humanism and evidence-built practice, adopts a physico-spiritual and psycho-social approach and considers the patient's cultural experience in the consultative process (cf. Robert di Sarsina and Iseppato 2010). One of its top priorities is the negotiation of available therapy options between the consultative parties and the exploration of patients' expression of epistemic and deontic perspectives. This approach, to a large extent, ensures a smooth relationship between the doctor and the patient and naturally increases patients' satisfaction as therapies are mutually decided by the parties. Licensing patient participation in humanistic clinics fulfils the discursive conditions of pragmatics. Thus, it deploys tools in conversation analysis and socio-cognitive pragmatics to negotiate diagnosis, recommendations, disagreements and preferences (see Odebunmi 2021a). Studies such as Stivers (2002, 2005), Costello and Robert (2001), Bishop and Yardley (2004), Sinding et al. (2010), Landmark et al. (2015), Lindstrom and Weatherall (2015) and Belanger et al. (2016) which examine medical encounters from conversation analytic and discourse

analytic perspectives, and which focus on clinical negotiations, are equally connected to the principles of patient-centred communication.

Another aspect of research in pragmatics which is instructive for HSD is its reflection of the relationship between the form participants choose and the effect they plan to achieve with their choices (see Lakoff 2007: 130). Some of these choices are deliberate and/or strategic, but some others are routine and coincidental. In most cases, by these choices, pragmatics provides tools for determining intentions which help consultative parties (particularly doctors) to locate medical needs and to account for consultative parties' assumptions which may explain alignments and misalignments in consultative encounters. For example, patients' hesitations may point to psychological issues, which, if pursued/tracked through request solicitations and other pragmatic devices, may help reveal critical information about the patient's condition. In addition, determining cultural expectations in hospitals is useful in demonstrating clinical alignments and misalignments. Thus, cross-cultural and intercultural pragmatics are resourceful in explaining the appropriacy or otherwise of discourse and linguistic choices in cross-ethnic/cross-national hospital interactions: politeness markers, culturally-sensitive speech acts and cross-culturally significant implicatures and interpretations.

What appears evident from what has been said above is how pragmatic features work to explain the institutional, social, cultural, ideological and interactive influences on medical consultations. These influences are elaborately realised in NHSD at two levels. First, they reflect the communicative choices and professional actions available in medicine which cut across all climes where Western medicine is practised. They thus represent the institutional perspective to medical practice. Second, the influences exhibit choices and actions that reflect the local communicative initiatives of Nigerian practitioners. The interface between the two levels is the reference to more or less the same conventional medical activities, procedures and developments in the global spread since medicine deals with only one human body system. Below, I demonstrate how the two levels get expressed in NHSD by discussing four context-informed themes in NHSD.

3. Themes in Nigerian hospital setting discourse

Four context-informed features of NHSD are generated from a conflation of features of medical discourse in general (including in particular those in Martin 2014), medical communication as institutional discourse (including, in particular those in Mayr 2008) and Nigerian hospital encounters. The four NHSD features (i) alignment with institutional prescriptions, (ii) co-existence of conventional and local lexical choices, (iii) socio-cultural, ideological and practice-setting impingements on clinical encounters and (iv) differential orientation to medical and social voices are discussed in turn below.

3.1 Alignment with institutional prescriptions

Institutional discourse, which occurs in a large organisation or an established system, which is grounded in specific domains or agendas such as religious, educational, professional, political, and medical, captures the use of language, the communicative processes and the talk types that distinguish the members of the group. Thus, institutions such as the hospital, school, church, media, government, the police and the army are guided by certain communicative principles that define the core essence of the institutions. Five of these principles are available in the literature: (1) hierarchical communication, (2) structured communication, (3) deroutinisation of everyday experiences, (4) communicative and strategic language use, and common linguistic choices (cf. Mayr 2008). With the exception of "common linguistic choices" which will be treated as a separate theme combined with another sub-theme (cf. 3.2), the features are established as indexes of medical discourse and exemplified from Nigerian doctor-patient encounters below.

3.1.1 *Hierarchical communication*

HSD often reflects asymmetry: the unequal power and/or knowledge relations between doctors and patients (even sometimes between doctors and other medical practitioners). To a very large extent in the teaching hospital context, with particular reference to the Nigerian situation, asymmetry is grounded in the relationship between doctors. Seniority in the medical college overrides current status and professional attainment.

In the doctor-patient context, the clinical and interactive power is vested with the doctor. He/she is in control of knowledge and skills; therefore, he/she controls the encounter. This is paternalistic medicine, the doctor-centred approach, and it is the practice in many hospital settings in spite of the current preference for humanistic medicine or the patient-centred approach in several clinical settings in the world as highlighted earlier. In a recent study, Olorunsogo (2020) dealing with politeness in medical interviews discovers that doctors in private-individual owned hospitals in Ibadan, Nigeria, deploy bald on-record devices and, occasionally, off-record strategies while addressing some older patients and positive politeness strategies in large measure while talking to children. The former situation represents directness which Olorunsogo notes is not available in patients' communication, which shows the deployment of positive and negative politeness strategies. These findings further demonstrate the question of power imbalance between doctors and patients, notwithstanding the former's socially inconsequential politeness to children.

Questions have been established as a tool for power wielding in clinical meetings (West 1984; Hein and Wodak 1987; Weijts 1993; Ainsworth-Vaughn 2005). Given that "to ask a question is to claim power over emerging talk", and given that "medical encounters often consist primarily of doctors asking questions and patients answering" (Ainsworth-Vaughn 2005: 462), it can be conveniently asserted that questions indexicate talk domi-

nance and interactive power for doctors. Ainsworth-Vaughn further identifies three ways in which questions assign power: questions specify the next speaker, they restrict the scope of the responses to be provided and they sometimes return the floor to the yielder. Of the two dimensions of clinical questions she notes, the power-claiming rather than a power-sharing type is dominant both in the scholarship and in clinical encounters. I have shown in some of my research (for example Odebunmi 2021a) that many patients in Nigerian hospitals are more interested in the object of their visit than in a power tug with doctors. Such persons, who constitute the majority of hospital visitors, consider clinical power in all forms (questions, straight directives and imperatives) doctors' prerogatives and only submit to their sway. While there are few exceptions to this tendency (see Odebunmi 2021c), the attitude has supported the festering of patriarchy in the clinics. Other publications such as Adams (2014), Shika (2015) and Adebayo (2021) have also devoted attention to the discourse of unequal clinical power between doctors and patients in Nigerian clinical encounters.

Knowledge asymmetry involves epistemic inequality between doctors and patients as connected to the following issues:

a. Doctors' training which equips them with medical skills and Aesculapian authority.
b. Doctors' clinical experience in medical college which makes them familiar with generic patient conditions.
c. Doctors' pre-meeting access to patients' cases which offers them the window to think through them ahead of patients' arrival in the consulting room.

These knowledge bases (and more) produce the epistemic asymmetry which passes the control of clinical interactions to doctors. This control gets activated in doctors' demonstration of a higher epistemic gradient (K+1), compared to patients' low epistemic gradient (K–1) (cf. Heritage 2012) through the questions they ask patients, the actions they demand, the "secret" they evoke and the instructions they issue. Because the doctor alone knows what is expected and how to reach the expected outcome, the patient often plays the role of a powerless subordinate; and only has to be in the sway of the doctor, sometimes, throughout the clinical encounter. This power disproportion often produces patriarchy or paternalism which licenses doctors' suppression of the life world voice of patients (Mishler 1984). Current medicine prefers humanism for a bit of interactive balance, but as Odebunmi (2021a) notes, good as this sounds, it cannot exist completely independently of paternalism as a successful medical encounter typically requires a dose of paternalism. For example, it is impossible for a doctor to conduct a consultative meeting only with the rapport building and option giving offers of humanistic medicine without claiming power and demonstrating authority through dominant information delivery, interrogatives and requested actions, which are resources of epistemic asymmetry and which often require the doctor to initiate the sequences.

The interaction below in a neonatal clinic exemplifies knowledge asymmetry.

Extract 2

1. Doc: º ((Prayer)) º --
2. Doc: You are eating well. (0.55). Your baby is getting heavy up. That is why you are feeling heavy. He's
3. growing now. So, what do we do for you now? Eh (0.4), what do we do for you? Are you still
4. taking your actefan?--
5. Pat: Un, no=
6. Doc: Why? That's what will help, all those heaviness will go. You have to be taking your actefan three
7. times; uhm=
8. Pat: I went to buy one drug CMG 70=
9. Doc: No! No! No! No! No! All those one, all those one are native drug. Buy your actefan; use your
10. Actefan if you want, if you want to get well; eh? (0.20). So, you want to buy here or you will buy
11. outside? =
12. Pat: I don't have money now, but when I get home (.)
13. Doc: I will give you this folic acid and ( ) =

Knowledge asymmetry is demonstrated in Extract 2 through the following epistemic formulations determined by the doctor's exclusive knowledge of medical science:

a. A positive assessment of the patient's health (line 2).
b. A scientific assessment of featal and mother health (lines 2–3).
c. An authoritative inquiry into patient adherence to treatment regimen (lines 3–4).
d. A demonstration of a higher epistemic status through patient epistemic repair (lines 6 and 9).
e. A scientific intervention in the patient's wrong initiative (lines 6, 7, 9 and 10).

The doctor's knowledge of what constitutes a sound expectant mother and featal health, which is not shared with the patient, controls the encounter through authority-laden information, interrogatives, instructions and corrections.

In predominant cases, Nigerian doctors do not permit patients' knowledge of medicine in the consultative process or decision making. Odebunmi (2003) reports a doctor's rejection of a Widal test for determining a typhoid fever diagnosis conducted on a patient's decision rather than by the doctor's instruction.

3.1.2 *Structured communication*

Institutional discourse is structured communication. This means that participants must follow a particular order in communicating. Several scholars have identified different stages of communication in medical interactions. Mishler (1984) identifies three stages in the history taking segment of the encounter: Symptom request (by the doctor), Response (by the patient) and Evaluation or Acknowledgement (by the doctor). For Heritage and Maynard (2006), the stages of clinical encounters centrally involve seeking patients' presentation or account, patients' narratives of discovery of symptoms, patients' proposals and physicians' responses, history taking, diagnostic communication, treatment deci-

sions, prescriptions and closing. Odebunmi (2013) identifies four stages in first consultative meetings in Southwestern Nigerian hospitals between doctors and patients: opening, diagnostic interaction, announcement and closing. He constructs a generic structure catalogue which shows that only diagnostic interaction is obligatory in the meetings. Although the stage classifications in the three studies appear different, the divergences are more in terms of linguistic formulations and details than in terms of conceptualisation and clinical realities, notwithstanding certain cultural peculiarities that account for certain features. First, all the classifications are able to place medical discourse in institutional discourse by establishing a strict interactive order. See also Frankel (1979), Shuy (1983), Ten Have (1989), Maynard (1989), Ferrara (1994) and Ainsworth-Vaughn (1992, 2005) on the debate about the conversational or interactional nature of medical encounters. At least two of the three efforts (Heritage and Maynard, and Odebunmi) show that the interactions are organised in terms of beginning, middle and end; only Mishler deals only with the middle stage, focusing on history taking. A quick look at two stages of Odebunmi's generic structure at once shows a closer link with Heritage and Maynard's and reveals cultural practices that distinguish institutional adaptations in Heritage and Maynard's Western hospitals and Odebunmi's Nigerian clinical settings. Ayeloja (2019), another study of Nigerian clinical meetings, identifies only three stages in the encounters: opening, diagnosis and closing.

The first two stages presented by Odebunmi are Opening and Diagnostic Interaction. Opening has the generic structure: [(Ins)] ^ (Iv) ^ (RI) ^ (Grt) ^ (RG) ^ (Pls), which specifies no obligatory element of all the stages: Instruction (Ins), Invitation/summoning (Iv) of the patient, Response to Invitation (RI), Greeting by the patient (Grt), Response to Greeting (GR) by the doctor, and Pleasantries (Pls). These are absent in Heritage and Maynard's classification because the activities are not all popular clinical occurrences in Western clinics, although a tiny number are found occasionally. That they are all optional elements explains why they do not constitute core activities in the medical institutional order and why they are not found elsewhere. Diagnostic Interaction has the following structure: [BR]^ (EI) ^ (Int) ^ {CI^ CR^ CI^ CR^...}^ (Pls^) (Ass). For effective comparison with Heritage and Maynard's stages, it is instructive to highlight the components of the generic structure here (cf. Odebunmi 2013):

a. BR (Broad Request): A general request made by the doctor about the state of the client's health: "What's the problem?".
b. EI (Echoic Information): A patient's response which merely repeats the contents of the doctor's BR: "There is really a problem".
c. Int (Interjection): An interactive insertion, usually by the doctor, that is not part of the main consultative line: "Sorry Baba" [elderly man].
d. CI (Condition-specific Information): A patient's response in which he/she specifies the actual problem/complaint: "It's malaria".

e. CR (Condition-specific Request): The doctor's request based on the specific condition mentioned by the client: "When did it start?".
f. Pls (Pleasantries/small talk): Situation-lightening utterances, usually jokes, by any of the parties, but typically by the doctor: "Your baby wants to eat maize".
g. Ass (Assurance): Confidence-giving utterances, always by the doctor: "There is no problem".

Five of Heritage and Maynard's consultative stages can be subsumed under all of Odebunmi's obligatory stages of [BR]^...{CI^ CR^ CI^ CR^...}: seeking patients' presentation or account, patients' narratives of discovery of symptoms, patients' proposals and physicians' responses, history taking and diagnostic communication. The other three stages: "treatment decisions", "prescriptions" and "closing" have a place in Odebunmi's third (Announcement) and fourth (Closing) stages. These parallels affirm the universality of the structure of the communication in the hospital which transcends the location of the practice.

Ainsworth-Vaughn (2005: 455) cites influences from praxis literature to discourse literature on consultative phases in medical discourse. Reference to Heath (1992), citing Bryne and Long's (1976) six phases: I: relating to the patient; II: discovering the reason for attendance; III: conducting a verbal or physical examination or both; IV: consideration of the patient's condition; V: detailing treatment or further investigation; and VI: terminating (Heath (1992: 237) assert the doctor dominance of the encounters. While she notes that Smith and Hoppe's (1991) structure provides a fairly acceptable patient-involved sequential model compared to Bryne and Long's which represents only the activities of doctors, she prefers the models by Ten Have (1989) and Shuy (1983) which, respectively, "brings together the phase, genre and speech dimensions of medical encounters" (Ainsworth-Vaughn 2005: 455) and demonstrates "the possibility that medical encounters can be conversational to a degree" (Ainsworth-Vaughn 2005: 456). Ten Have's six phases (with a lot in common conceptually with Shuy's: opening, complaint, examination or test, diagnosis, treatment or advice, and closing) are closely related to Odebunmi's (2013) structure, a relationship that clearly shows an alignment of the NHSD with institutional prescriptions.

3.1.3 *De-routinisation of everyday experiences*

Institutional discourse de-routinises everyday experiences. In other words, it changes the way we normally communicate with people including those we know very well. This is a reflection of its formal nature which foregrounds convention, hierarchy and business. De-routinisation is eminently a feature of HSD albeit with variation from setting to setting. While medicine is increasingly democratising with a lot of patient input and encouragement of rapport building, de-routinisation is not lost: the discourse of medicine still demonstrates communicative formalisation; take, for example, the way people

are addressed. In most hospitals of the world, titles are dropped from patients' names, even in a setting like Nigeria where titles are sacrosanct and where taking them off a person's name may generate displeasure.

The strict, business-focused culture of medicine still holds true for its discourse. This, however, does not rule out small talk which serves transactional and interactional purposes within the allowances of medical interactional guidelines. As noted by D'hondt and Odebunmi (forthc.), while small talk is initiated in some climes by any of the consultative parties, its initiation is a preserve of doctors in many Nigerian hospitals. This means that non-business talk is regulated as routines are gate-kept by doctors. Below, I cite an interaction in which a doctor actively resists the attempt of an old woman to insert cultural routines into an interaction:

Extract 3

1. Doc: E kaaro (0.3)
   'Good morning'
2. Pat: ()
3. Doc: A dupe =
   'Thank you'
4. Pat: Omo mi nko? @@
   'How are my children?'
5. Doc: Da::da lo wa, da::da lawa.
   'He is fine, we are fine'
6. Pat: @@[@]
7. Doc: [E nle] Ma. Bawo lara yin? (0.2)
   'You are welcome, Old woman. How is your body?'
8. Pat: To::, a dupe lodo Oloun. ( ).
   'Well, we thank God)'
((Starts examining the patient))
   (0.24)
9. Doc: Uhm! Eleyi se daadaa.
   'This one is okay'
10. Pat: ( ) @@@
   (0.20)
11. Doc: E loo gbogun yin. E kaabo Ma.
   'Go and collect your drugs'
   (0.06)
12. Pat: ( ). E bami kawon omo mi @@
   'My regards to my children'
13. Doc: Won a gbo.
   'Okay'

The routine of Nigerian hospital interactions allows prefatory greetings which should terminate at Line 3 in Extract 3. Although some doctors occasionally permit intrusive greetings from familiar patients (Odebunmi 2021d), the doctor in this interaction does not desire such deroutinisation. Yet, the elderly patient attempts to deroutinise the encounter by introducing elaborate Yoruba cultural greetings that evoke the collectivist claim of other Yoruba persons' children as theirs (Line 4). The doctor, obviously intolerant of this dimension to the consultative business, only simply accommodates the patient's intrusive acts by his reformulative response at line 5 in which he implicates

having only one child rather than the many being asked after by the patient. His consecutive choices of "he" to refer to his child and "we" to refer to his entire family in response to the patient's asking after his assumed children index his inconvenience with the patient's amenities and by implication, his accommodation of the intrusive request. As a consequence, the doctor terminates the seemingly unending phatic communion of the patient, which she seems to desire to continue with the long laughter at line 6, by suddenly changing footing to medical business at line 7. Details on the patient's further post-business intrusive phatic communion as seen at lines 10–13 are contained in Odebunmi (2021d).

3.1.4 *Communicative and strategic language use*

Medical discourse, as an institutional discourse, is characterised by two types of language use: communicative and strategic (Habermas (1984, 1987). Communicative language defines communication that is made for the purpose of understanding. This requires the choice of appropriate linguistic forms situated within the affordances of the target of the communication. For example, communicating with patients, except when they are medical practitioners, routinely comes with plain and easily accessible vocabulary choices while doing so with fellow practitioners works on lexical epistemic equality; what Odebunmi (2006a) calls "shared language level belief". Extracts 4 and 5 below instantiate this point.

Extract 4

(…)
4. Doc: **Mama**, you:: saw us <about five days ago>(.). I gave you some drugs,
5. °one antibiotic °and another red drug (0.3).
6. Did you take them as I instructed↑
7. Pat: Well, I sto:pped after two days. (.) No IMPROVEMENT (0.2)
8. Doc: Okay **Mama**. You know I told you that it will take some time
9. Pat: ((Silence)) (0.6)
10. Doc: Well, no problem, **Mama**. Can you take injections↓ (0.06)
11. Pat: Un un↑. Sorry, <my son>. I cannot <remember °the last time° somebody gave me>. (0.02)

(…)

Extract 5

1. Doc: The ultrasonic scanning °revealed twelve weeks cyesis° (0.3)
2. Nurse: @@ How:: °would you tell the old man°? =
3. Doc: Senior Reg [Registrar] will do that (.)
4. Nurse: O::kay, then.

In both extracts, language use is communicative. In Extract 4, the doctor successfully reviews the female patient's condition and informs her of the treatment regimen through linguistic choices that are accessible to her. In Extract 5, the medical terms are not popularly accessible but are to the nurse. This allows for the effective communication between them as the choices are premised on linguistic co-presence (Clark 1996).

The strategic use of language refers to communication targeted mainly at *making people do things*. It is often designed carefully to achieve communicative success. It takes into consideration the goal of the speaker, the orientation of the hearer or co-interactant and the affordances of the local or global context. Several manifestations of strategic communication are available in the Nigerian hospital encounters. In constructing strategic communication, for example, the doctor sometimes reaches for linguistic choices that are not within the control of the patient (see Odebunmi 2006b), deploys concealment (see Odebunmi 2011) or exploits local positive or negative contextual cues.

That some Nigerian doctors prefer to communicate with choices outside the linguistic competence of patients is not in ignorance of the medical ethics that prescribes clarity but in synergy with the contextual demand to preserve life (which itself is consistent with the medical oath and ethics) or reduce tension in most cases. Below, in Extract 6 (from (Odebunmi 2011: 642), I cite the unwarranted death of a patient who was lost to the insensitive language of an expat doctor.

Extract 6

Background: A patient had oesophageal achalasia[3] from malignant metastasis. The surgeon (an expatriate) addressed the medical team directly before the commencement of the operation on the patient thinking the man did not understand English:

Doctor: This patient is having oesophageal achalasia, and he is gonna live for just eighteen months (.)
Patient: Myself, me::, me:::, doctor:::: ((the patient fainted and dropped dead)).

In this encounter, reported also by Odebunmi (2003, 2005 and 2011) and Mey (2021), the life of the patient was lost contra-prognostically at the verge of conducting a surgery on him because the expat surgeon did not orient to the ideology of concealment prevalent in the local hospital environment.

Extract 7 demonstrates how a Nigerian doctor temporarily keeps the knowledge of a patient's HIV/AIDS status from her.

Extract 7

Doctor: I suspect retroviral infection
Patient: Okay, sir.

If the patient knows that "retroviral infection" means HIV/AIDS, she obviously will react differently. The doctor has exploited her ignorance of the term to deliver his conjectured diagnosis as a temporary measure to get the patient's cooperation to conduct medical investigation for the proper determination of a diagnosis. As all doctors I contacted in my earlier research had said, what is temporarily kept from patients is the doctor's guess or suspicion; the diagnosis, even if hidden for a while, will still be disclosed somehow.

3. "Esophageal achalasia, often referred to simply as achalasia, is a failure of smooth muscle fibers to relax, which can cause the lower esophageal sphincter to remain closed. Without a modifier, "achalasia" usually refers to achalasia of the esophagus" (Google Arts and Culture 2001: unpaginated).

Goals play roles as well in doctors' concealment and exploitation of local contextual cues. The instance in Extract 7 provides an example of jargonisation which occurs as a result of the doctor's goal to veil the patient's true condition from her. Odebunmi (2011) identifies other concealment strategies, namely, veiling, forecasting, mitigating, stalling, normalisation, dysphemisation, euphemisation, and doublespeak, all of which are differently associated with four main strategic clinical goals: preventive, palliative, culture-compliant and confidential.

When local contextual cues[4] are exploited, Nigerian doctors sometimes contiguously overlay a medical scientific voice[5] with a medical institutional[6] voice (see Odebunmi 2021b) in an action that sychronises the latter with the local action (e.g. expression of worry or confusion), expectations (e.g. a desire for help or emotional support) and preferences (e.g. appropriate professional interventions) of patients. The extract below explicates these.

Extract 8

(…)
8. Doctor: You have ear infection (0.7). It's a minor problem=
9. Patient: Okay, thanks
(…)

After the doctor has clerked the patient, he announces his diagnosis at line 8. Earlier (in the portion of the conversation not shown here), the doctor has made a remark about the patient's sad look which she has attributed to the pain being suffered, the very object of her visit to the clinic. The medical scientific voice at line 8 is a representation of the true state of the patient's health. It harmonises with the patient's expression of worry consequent upon the pain she suffers, but it disaligns with her expectations and preferences. The doctor's 0.7 second pause is a deliberate interactive action to further connect the news with the patient's local action, surmised to be still a demonstration of a bad mood. That obviously invites the medical institutional voice – "It's a minor problem" – which is indicative of care and patient-centredness and which works to show the doctor's sensitivity to the patient's condition and his ability to bring relief to the patient. It is, thus, a strategic insertion to announce a positive prognosis and assure the patient of

4. Emergent uses of language which rely strictly on participants' local actions, expectations and preferences.

5. "…the enactment of a perspective that is reflective of hospital procedures and activities which do not necessarily come with scientific knowledge of disease. It contextualises agency, role objects and actions as medical-institutional and as a consequence demonstrates the institution's orientation to care, firmness, authority and responsibility" (Odebunmi 2021b: 45).

6. The medical scientific voice refers to the enactment of a perspective that articulates Medicine's systematic knowledge of disease. It illustrates the scientific resourcefulness that interacts with the medical institutional operations to produce the authoritativeness and reliability of medical practice within the (post)diagnostic and clinical assessment contexts; cf. Odebunmi (2021b: 49).

healing. The patient's response at line 9 confirms the doctor's satisfactory orientation to her expectation and preferences.

Another local contextual cue deployed by some doctors is deresponsibilisation[7] which strategically helps them to take reduced responsibility for patients' health condition. Vagueness, deflections and inexactitudes are popular in the list of resources used by doctors to deresponsibilise themselves, usually to tactfully explain away sensitive clinical situations. An instance is given in Extract 9.

Extract 9

1. Mother: What's the condition of my baby, °Doctor°? (0.3)
2. Doctor: He is receiving attention.

The baby under reference in Extract 9 had stomach distension and was in a critical state when the mother was asked to excuse the medical team for closer attention for the baby. The mother accosted the senior Registrar, who stepped out of the room where the baby was receiving intensive attention, with questions regarding the condition of her baby which was, at that time, quite worse than when the mother left off. The doctor was sure of the poor prognosis of the child's condition when asked by the mother but he opted to deresponsibilise himself by deploying a non-committal proposition, "He is receiving attention", which represented the true state of the activities of the medical team but which committed the doctor to no truth about the actual scientific state of the baby. It, thus, helped the doctor to keep the mother relatively peaceful and calm for a while until the baby's mortality was announced about 30 minutes after the deresponsibilisation. In a related study, Chukwu et al. (2021) perceives communication like this in a completely negative light. For them, forms such as these used by Nigerian doctors constitute linguistic ambivalence deployed in communicating doctors' health-damaging actions and as a consequence exonerating themselves from fatalities resulting from their incompetence and professional errors. While this conclusion is true in a few cases, dereponsibilisation is largely a successful practice among many doctors in Southwestern Nigeria and is sometimes a welcome act by some patients or their relations who sometimes could not face the extremely devastating news.

3.2 Co-existence of conventional and local linguistic choices

In addition to being structured communication, institutional discourse involves participants, usually insiders, who deploy common linguistic choices. This is a consequence of their orientation to related professional experiences. For example, medical practice in English has its communicative resources traced to English words and grammatical

7. The term, "deresponsibilisation", "*deresponsabilizzazione*" (Caffi 2002: 118) or "deresponsibilities" (Caffi 2007: 159), lexicalizes the avoidance of responsibility through the use of "bushes" (vagueness which reduces speakers' commitment to the certainty of their propositions).

structures that the practitioners learnt in medical school and those picked up in the course of their practice. This exposure helps them to cope with the professional demand to describe the universal human biology and pathology which invite more or less the same choices from doctors in any practice locations. Again, the nature of medical practice, for example, the need to seek information, give instructions, undertake a checklist on health conditions and describe situations in time-constrained circumstances receives similar linguistic output from doctors. However, because doctors deal with different local contexts, their linguistic choices are sometimes influenced by the impositions of the environment in which they operate, and they are consequently constrained to develop or coin local equivalents of conventional medical linguistic forms. These new ad hoc or permanent forms which are sometimes co-deployed alongside the conventional ones are evident in NHSD as shown presently.

Two aspects of the common (co-existing) linguistic choices are highlighted below: the use of medical (lexical) terminologies and grammatical choices.

3.2.1 *The use of medical terminologies*

English medical terminologies are universal and used the same way by all practitioners where English is the medium of communication. These terminologies cover in large measure the following thematic spectrum (cf. Odebunmi 2016):

a. Agency/actor: doctor/physician, patient, surgeon, specialist, ophthalmologist, oculist, nurse, etc.
b. Objects/parts: needle, syringe, fluid, musculocutaneous nerve, etc.
c. Space: surgery (the British English word for doctor's office), ward, theatre, etc.
d. Events/activities/experiences: consultation, cardiovascular accident, surgery, catarrh, gastric ulcer, febrile, hallucination, trypanophobia, etc.
e. Temporality: stat (immediately), nocte (at night), bid (two times), tid (three times), 4/7 (4 days), 1/7 (one day), 1/52 (one week); and
f. Action: operate, suture, clerk, nurse-care, set line, inject, transfuse with blood, etc.

Odebunmi (2003) identifies the following lexical and symbolic occurrences in hospital communication:

a. Plain words: Words with sub-technical sense that are used both in medicine and other areas of life. Examples: tertiary, termination, consciousness, etc.
b. Medical jargon: Strictly specialised vocabulary of medicine. Examples: hallucination, fever, schizophrenia, dysentery, etc.
c. Proper names: Names of medical experts who made important discoveries in the practice/discipline have been turned into the names of the diseases or processes. Examples: Hansen's disease (leprosy), Down's syndrome (mongolism), Koch's disease (tuberculosis).

d. Loan words: Terms borrowed into medical practice in English largely from classical languages. Examples: *stat* (Latin) 'immediately'; *postmortem* (Latin) *post* 'after', *mortis* 'death'. Most of these items are found in case notes; for example: "Give i.m cq 3cc stat", meaning: 'A [doctor instructed] another practitioner [a nurse] to give a patient an intramuscular chloroquine injection measuring 3 centimetres immediately' (Odebunmi 2003: 177).
e. Figures: Specific numbers used by physicians to describe certain occurrences of disease, medical processes or patients' experiences of illnesses. Examples: 1/7 'one day', 1/52 'one week', 1/12 'one month', etc. These figures are found almost exclusively in case notes. Some figures are combined with loan items in prescriptions. Examples: *I bd/bid* 'Take one tablet/injection twice a day'; *II tid* 'Take two tablets/injections three times a day'.
f. Medical symbols: pictorial sketches, marks or other visual items representing events or persons in medical interactions. Examples: + 'positive', – 'negative', ? 'not sure', # 'fracture', etc.
g. Medical code: a set of secret numbers or letters (or *abbronyms* – Odebunmi 1996) sometimes understood only by medical practitioners; a number of them however have now become popularly distributed. Examples: 50–50 'equal chance', PWA 'people living with AIDS', etc.

Some terms in these categories are locally coined by medical practitioners to do their bidding. Such items are known only in the hospitals where they have been invented. That means that new ones are learnt as mobile practitioners practise from hospital to hospital. Some of these are: *I-I* (local variant for 'I bid'); *333 positive* for 'HIV/AIDS', *pack/pirah* for 'dead', *social disease* for 'gonorrhea', *slims* (a borrowing from Kenya) for 'HIV/AIDS', *bad ulcer* for 'breast cancer' and *G.O* for 'dead'.

3.2.2 *Grammatical choices*

Two grammatical forms have been identified to characterise the HSD; namely *short interrogatives* and *short (in)direct imperatives*.

Short interrogatives found largely in doctor-patient interaction are universal features of the settings necessitated by the limitedness of consultative time given the high number of patients to be seen by doctors. They are flexible grammatical choices adapted to doctors' bidding in all climes including Nigeria. While, universally, they more commonly occur in the clerking stage of consultative encounters, in Nigeria (as in some other places), they also occur occasionally in the opening, recommendation or closing stages. They are stretched over all the morpho-syntactic categories identified by Heritage (2012), namely (i) straight syntax, (ii) declarative syntax, and (iii) tag questions.

i. Straight syntax explores all wh-interrogative formats:
   – When did it start?
   – Where did it happen?
   – What did you use?
   – Who gave you the injection?

ii. Declarative syntax, where statements are contextually realised as interrogatives:
   – You took the medication?
   – It aches here?
   – Know the clinic?
   – You know his brother?
   – You want to say 'bye' to the matron?

iii. Tag questions, i.e. interrogatives converted from statements:
   – I gave chloramphenicol, didn't I?
   – It's hurting bad here, isn't it?
   – Mummy is not nice, is she?

Doctors commonly use *short (in)direct imperatives* or commands almost exclusively while conducting medical examinations and delivering recommendations. The commands very rarely come with honorifics and mitigations no matter the age difference between doctors and patients. The politeness marker "please" is a very scarce occurrence in the imperative sentences, too. The rarity of "please" might be because of its possible usage as a marker of persuasion which is capable of changing the footing of a turn in which it is used in doctor-patient interactions, but not in a doctor-doctor or doctor-other practitioner encounters where it affordably serves both politeness and persuasive purposes. However, in cases where old people, renowned politicians and other highly placed people in the Nigerian society are in the clinics, the imperatives come with politeness markers in the form of honorifics or social/professional title prefixing; for example, *sir, madam, Ma* (the Nigerian English variant of "Madam"), titles (e.g. *Chief* – for social title holders; *Professor, Architect* and *Justice* (for court judges) and *Baba* or *Mama* (father and mother in Yoruba, used as markers of politeness in a prefixing or vocative status). These labels, which demonstrate the reflection of the high context culture of the Nigerian society in clinical encounters, are rare or inexistent in Western hospital consultative settings. Examples of the different uses of imperatives are given below.

a. Professor Labatan; come in please.
b. Justice, kindly lie on the couch to the left.
c. Lie down; let me examine you.
d. Breathe in and out.
e. Baba, open your mouth and say 'ah'.

f. Take this to the lab.
g. Remove your clothe, Mama.
h. Give the patient i.m cq 3 cc stat.
i. Please, take the man's BP now.

3.3 Socio-cultural, ideological and practice-setting impingements on clinical encounters

Medicine as a practice reflects participants' orientation to group-based beliefs, medical-setting constraints and role-related behaviour. These ideological manifestations are confirmed in the implicit group-based motivation for language use in the hospital. At the macro level are the doctor versus the patient; all medical practitioners versus patients; doctors versus doctors; and medical practitioners versus medical practitioners. At the micro level we have the communication between doctors and sufferers of killer/stigmatizing disease; patients and non-patients; sufferers of stigmatizing/killer disease and sufferers of mild/non-stigmatising disease (e.g. HIV patients versus non-infected patients/persons; and cancer patients versus doctors/non-cancer patients/family members). Medical ethics prescribes the way a doctor and other practitioners should talk or relate with a patient. For example, the patient's privacy is sacrosanct and should not be divulged under any circumstance except by the patient's consent. Patients expect doctors to observe this etiquette and others that relate to protecting their face desires and security.

Sometimes, the shared beliefs, covering the mutual expectations and understanding of what to say or not to say, between doctors and patients cause doctors to speak in ways that are consistent with the local interactive context but somehow misaligned to medical ethics. In some countries, for example Japan and Italy, research has shown that cancer diagnosis is sometimes concealed from patients because doctors assume they already know and do not want to be told (Maynard 1996). In end-of-life cases, several Nigerian doctors disprefer the ethics that insists that the patient must have their true conditions announced to them, and opt for indirectness. This comes with the intention to preserve the life of patients for some time more. The scenario of the expat doctor whose seemingly insensitive language caused the death of the patient with esophageal achalazia, reported above, demonstrates a misalignment with the local ethics of communication in the setting.

Directness and indirectness are not neutral communicative resources in HSD; rather, they are setting-induced or culture-constrained properties. Either item depends on contexts, including the type of communication in process and medical ethics; although sometimes, directness is a strict requirement of medical practice. In doctor-patient interaction, medical ethics recommends direct communication of all issues no matter how sensitive, but as has been highlighted earlier and as will be shown in more

detail below, contexts, ethics and sometimes culture play a great role in the consideration for directness or indirectness by the doctor. In doctor-doctor or doctor-other practitioner communication in the presence of the patient and/or other non-medics, medical ethics suggests indirect communication of the professional errors committed by a co-doctor or practitioner. Odebunmi (2003: 118–119) notes:

> ...where procedural errors are committed, symbols which may be verbal or non-verbal may include stepping on [the practitioner's] toes, waving the hands vigorously without [the patient] noticing, shaking the head in the same manner etc. In a particular hospital in Oyo State [Nigeria], it is part of a matron's style to check a co-[practitioner's] error by the expression: "See me". Each time the utterance was made, the attending [practitioner] understood that (i) He/she was not required to abandon his/her duty to see [her] (ii) An error had been committed in respect of the present procedure (iii) He/she should correct the error immediately if he/she could or tactically consult another [practitioner] in attendance, if he/she could not, or perhaps yield the ground for the matron to intervene.

It is important to note that the choice of directness or indirectness is sometimes a national, local or continental communicative adoption. Peräkylä (1995), for example, observes the use of indirectness in AIDS counseling sessions in London. In the US, doctors in heamatology or oncology use "a direct style of questioning, [while] patients use mitigation, honorifics, hesitation phenomena, and ambiguity" (Ainsworth-Vaughn (1995). These are true, to a large extent, of the Nigerian clinical setting, too. Olorunsogo (2020) demonstrates some of these features. The utterances below exemplify Ainsworth-Vaughn's points:

a. When did the fever start? (direct questioning by a doctor)
b. My head is ringing bell (a severe headache) (mitigation by a Nigerian patient)
c. Doctor, will my daughter be fine? (honorific by a patient)
d. When? What? Okay::, Do:ctor, o::kay (hesitation by a patient)
e. Well, the infected lady is my woman (ambiguity referring to the mistress of a patient diagnosed with gonorrhea)

Depending on the sensitivity of the news and doctors' assessment of patients' ability to manage the news, Nigerian doctors communicate directly or indirectly with patients:

a. The pregnancy test is positive (to a couple) – direct.
b. The ultrasonic scanning revealed 12 weeks cyesis (to the father of a 17 year old pregnant girl who was assessed not to be able to successfully manage the news without developing health complications) – jargonic doublespeak; pragmatically indirect.
c. Your husband has a social disease (gonorrhea) – indirect.
d. Madam, the condition I suspect is retroviral INFECTION (harping on infection rather than retroviral HIV) – pragmatically indirect.

e. Look here. It is *I.M, I.M*, not injection. °It will not pain you°. Be a good girl (said to a child of three scared of injection) – pragmatically indirect.

Indirectness has been copiously documented as a strategic mode of communication in several hospital settings world over. For example, hinting has been reported as a means of putting forward a medical opinion in some Finnish hospitals (Kettunen et al. 2001). AIDS was called and described as 'slims' in Kenya (Chimombo and Roseberry 1998). Two pragmatic strategies attributed to Maynard (1996) – asserting the condition, and citing the evidence – used by Nigerian doctors when delivering a diagnosis are broadly similar to those used by American doctors; but Nigerian doctors, unlike American ones, mitigate serious news through veils and hedges (Odebunmi 2008). Non-Swedish and Swedish doctors working in Sweden use the same questioning style in consultation, but there are differences in the way the non-Swedish doctors use emotive pronouns and directness. For example, German doctors' directness conflicts with the expected Swedish indirectness; and this directness embarrasses patients (Lindström 2008). This kind of directness occasionally occurs among trainee-doctors in Nigerian hospitals, too. The utterance, "This Baba is on his way out" 'This old man will die soon', made by a medical practitioner in the presence of the patient and his relations almost caused the immediate death of the patient (see Odebunmi 2003).

The question of directness or indirectness plays a role in medical news disclosure. Maynard (1996, 2005, 2010) has worked extensively on the strategies deployed by doctors to announce bad and good news. Given that the former is more sensitive and has taken more attention in the literature, I focus on it in this section. I have identified three approaches to the disclosure of bad news based on Maynard's submissions, other scholars' perspectives and my own research findings: deliberate non-disclosure of news, delayed disclosure of news and phased disclosure of news.

Maynard (1996) notes that in oncology clinics, bad news is not disclosed by doctors when patients elect to have cancer diagnosis unannounced. Ong et al. (1995: 906) submit that the news is withheld "when doctors are convinced that total disclosure will cause strong negative reactions on the side of the patients" [or their relations]. In addition, Maynard (1996) observes that in Japan and Italy, non-disclosure occurs when physicians assume patients already know and only avoid being told, and when doctors want to "prevent depression and preserve hope" in cancer patients (Maynard 1996: 125; Good et al. 1990). Odebunmi (2003, 2011) reports that non-disclosure is preferred when the doctor him/herself is yet to ascertain a diagnosis. Disclosure is delayed when news disclosure has to wait until a contextually appropriate situation is obtained. Maynard (1996) notes that in Ethiopia, there is deliberate avoidance of sudden disclosure of cancer bad news, and the disclosure strategies are shifted to the family. There is phased news disclosure when the doctor exploits contextual factors of the local setting to provide the initial hint on which the formal news disclosure is built. This way, "the quality of social relationships

in which the informing occurs is maintained, and the realization occurs through other modes than verbal and cognitively logical ones" (Maynard 1996: 125; Good et al. 1990).

Corroborating aspects of Good et al.'s (1990), Ong et al.'s (1995), Maynard's (1996) and Odebunmi's (2011) findings, Ogundiran and Adebamowo (2012: 238), investigating surgeon-patient information disclosure practices from clinicians' perspectives, report as follows:

> A third, i.e. 35 (34.3%), of the surgeons did not routinely engage patients in discussions about disease diagnosis, management and prognosis. Most, i.e. 73 (71.6%), would rather disclose worsening disease progression to the patient's spouse. Others would disclose such information to the patient's children, family members or clergy. This was presumably to shield the patient from psychological distress. Only 22 (21.6%) of them routinely disclose operative findings to patients or their families. Thirty (29.4%) of them had been involved in disclosing medical errors to their patients in the past while 63 (61.8%) respondents did not know if surgical errors with potentially negative consequences should be disclosed.

Their conclusion that Southwestern Nigerian doctors do not pass on detailed information to patients routinely about their cancer illness "even in the presence of worsening disease progression and prognosis" (p. 238) confirms aspects of Chukwu and Chinedu-Oko's (2021) submissions on ambivalent discourse in Nigerian medical practice.

Martin (2014) notices several effects of cross-cultural communication features on medical encounters. He observes, for example, that non-native patients (or doctors) and patients who do not speak the standard variety of a language (English in the current case) encounter difficulties in handling consultation. Robert et al. (2005) identify four areas of cross-cultural difficulties:

a. Pronunciation and word stress. When English words are wrongly pronounced or stress is wrongly placed, the doctor has difficulty understanding he patient's complaint or vice-versa; for example, "hat" rather than 'heart" in Nigerian hospitals.
b. Intonation and speech delivery. When the falling rather than the rising tune is used, the doctor misconstrues the patient's request or vice-versa; or the patient misconstrues the doctor's directive. For example: "You mean that is good↓" rather than "You mean that is good↑".
c. Grammar and vocabulary: A patient's or a doctor's bad grammar can be distractive; and their wrong vocabulary choices can be misleading. For example: "I seeing my outside head swelled this morning" (said by a half-literate mechanic of Yoruba extraction in communication with a doctor of Igbo extraction)[8] rather than "I saw that my forehead was swollen this morning"/"I noticed that I had a swollen forehead this morning".

d. Style of self-presentation: A doctor's wrong way of ordering/presenting recommendations or encouraging participation may be confusing. For example: "Take paracetamol, take Septrin; before then, take Valium 5".

More often than not, these difficulties result in wrong or inaccurate (pragmatic) interpretations and may affect consultative processes and outcomes. To achieve effective communication and ensure facile consultation, Valero-Garces (2002) notes that doctors use the following resources:

a. Reformulations: Doctors re-state the patients' points for joint clarity and co-constructed meaning; cf. Extract 10.

Extract 10

Pat: My sponsor <had a journey from which> he will not re:turn (0.4)
Doc: You mean, YOUR SPONSOR DIED ↑

b. Interruptions: When doctors perceive misconstruance of their expressions, they interrupt patients and make repairs, sometimes reformulating their points; cf. Extract 11.

Extract 11

Doc: Your °heart has an issue° =
Pat: >Which hat?< [I can't]
Doc: [No, no no] I said you have a small problem with your organ, hear::t]

c. Commissives: Doctors negotiate medical processes with patients, using commissives, to achieve clarity; cf. Extract 12.

Extract 12

Pat: You said "examine"? (0.3)
Doc: I WILL examine you again; °okay°?

d. Directives: Doctors address cross-cultural difficulties by deploying straight directives to resolve patients' unclear presentations or actions; cf. Extract 13.

Extract 13

Pat: I am eh::eh::=
Doc: >Tell me what you are< thinking about.

Two strategies used by doctors to check or ensure understanding in the cross-cultural context have been identified in the literature: code-switching and response solicitation (Riedel 2002; Watermeyer and Penn (2009).

a. Code switching: In most cross-cultural encounters, both doctors and patients are in control of more than one linguistic code. In South-western Nigeria, doctors switch between either Nigerian Pidgin or Yoruba and English to check patients' understanding where necessary:

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8. In this clinical encounter, the only language available for communication between the two parties was English.

Extract 14

Doctor switches to Pidgin.

Pat: I <didn't used drug> that one which I give, °you give me° (0.6)
I did not use the drug that I brought; I used the one you gave me
Doc: *OKAY, BABA; how una co::me use the me:lesine wey I give una?*
'Okay, elderly man; how did you use the medications which I recommended to you?'

b. Response solicitations: Doctors seek responses from patients to ensure uptake and collaboration

Extract 15

Pat: Yes, Doctor, I have a sudden high BP (0.3)
Doc: Can you explain briefly <please> how it started?

3.4 Differential orientation to medical and social voices

Martin's (2014) theme of misalignment in medical encounters is obtainable in doctor-patient interaction in Nigeria. Misalignment captures the tension between the institutional world of medicine and the lay world of the patient. Said more aptly, it reflects the conflict between the voice of medicine and the voice of the life world (the biography/narrative account of the patient; cf. Mishler 1984). The voice of medicine resides in the biomedical authority evoked or used by the doctor which emerges from their expert knowledge (as highlighted earlier). Odebunmi (2021b) notes three possible manifestations of this voice: the doctor's conjectural voice, the medical scientific voice and the medical institutional voice. Odebunmi (2021b: 43–44) remarks:

> The doctor's conjectural voice is his/her own pre-scientific perspective which may or may not stand after medical scientific processes have been observed or conducted. It is a product of doctors' technical and experiential knowledge which is often expressed as a preliminary proposal to explain patients' conditions prior to examinations and tests. It may or may not terminate at the conjectural stage. The former happens when the outcome of examinations and tests do not synchronise with the preliminary perspectives; the latter occurs when a sync occurs and the conjectural voice interlaces with medical institutional and scientific voices.

As noted earlier, the medical scientific voice represents the scientific/systematic knowledge on which medicine thrives while the institutional voice which, at some points, overlaps with the medical scientific voice "contextualises agency, role, objects and actions as medical-institutional and as a consequence demonstrates the institution's orientation to care, firmness, authority and responsibility" (Odebunmi 2021b: 45).

The voice of medicine, from the above polyphonic perspectives, represents the authoritative clout in which doctors operate which sometimes comes with (an almost excessive) claim of knowledge of the patient, an assumption that may not be accurate in the light of the fact that "medicine is not a precise science" (Odebunmi 2016: 10).

This claim, in certain respects, brings doctors into misalignments with patients. The parties sometimes have different expectations regarding content and organisation of the encounter (Mishler 1984; Todd 1984). These range from cultural to clinical factors.

Clinical misalignments between doctors and patients occur either because the former fail to attend to the request of the latter or because they have different expectations (cf. Martin 2014). The failure to attend to the request or explanation of patients has two dimensions: the doctor chooses to ignore the patient's request or explanation, or the doctor does not understand the request/explanation. In either context, the voice of medicine often comes with the power that suppresses the life world voice of the patient. The extracts below instantiate these issues.

Extract 16

(…)
12. Patient: I also like to have drugs for the leg (0.5)
13. Doc: (does not respond)
Okay then, Mr A::yo. Thank you (0.3)
14. Patient: I me:an [the leg]
15. Doctor: [Yes]
16. Patient: THANK YOU sir.

Extract 17

(…)
10. Patient: <I may need more:: drugs> than you have given. °You know I have 3 extra days°=
11. Doc: You will be fi::ne (0.6)
12. Patient: °I lost some drugs°. <I told you, Doctor> (.)
13. Doc: You said so:. No need. >You will be fine<.

After the doctor has completed the history-taking and examination phases of the encounter in Extract 16, he starts writing his recommendations in the patient's case note. In the course of this, the patient inserts the sequence at line 12 in which he indicates his preference for a medication for the leg pain he secondarily complained about during clerking. The doctor's "Okay then, Mr A::yo. Thank you", with the elongation of the patient's name and the insertion of the male gender marker/title, "Mr", indicative of a deliberate action, closes the meeting rather than attends to the request of the patient which he (the patient) increments at line 15. The doctor's response at line 16, confirming the deliberateness of his earlier response (Line 13), shows that he had taken the patient's request into consideration but had only chosen to ignore him. This constitutes a misalignment between the parties as the patient's expectation is demonstrably not met in the doctor's power-laden action. The doctor's power resident in the ignoring of the patient's request and non-admittance of wrong can only unfortunately be indirectly challenged by the patient who, in spite of not being wrong, has to express appreciation implicative of a "favour" received from the doctor. This demonstrates the patient's Southwestern Nigerian cultural orientation in a superior/surbordinate or an elderly/younger person relationship.

In Extract 17, the patient requests for more medications from the consulting doctor who refuses to grant the request, but who rather assures the patient of getting well. The misalignment in the interaction stems more from the question of clinical entitlement than the ignoring of the patient's request. In the earlier bit of the interaction, the patient had complained that he lost some of his drugs, and that accounts for the request for additional medications. The patient's choice of modality (*may*), elongation of *more* and softness (Line 10) which show his personal judgment and spiritedness seem to suggest epistemic entitlement. The doctor, possibly considering these power features, perceives the request as an encroachment into his institutional entitlement: He reserves the right and power to determine adequacy of the medications. "You will be fine" (Line 10) is an expression of this epistemic perspective which implicates the doctor's institutional power. The patient's repeated softness and strategic slowness at line 12 retain his power claim. The patient's request rationale resident in this turn (Line 12) receives an incremental response from the doctor which sustains the entitlement thesis in a tone that is reflective of medical institutional and medical scientific voices with a strong power-finality.

Another ground on which misalignment occurs in Nigerian clinical encounters is the parties' differential orientations to medical outcomes. In most cases, the doctor's epistemic control of medical processes runs contrary to the patient's preference. One common area of such disagreement is where the doctor's K+1 epistemic status (cf. Heritage 2012) prescribes an injection and the patient disprefers it, or vice-versa. The example below illustrates the latter.

Extract 18

(…)
75. Doc: Okay (0.14). Okay. I'm going to give you these drugs (.) Then (.) try to use them (0.1)
76. Pat: Sir, can't I take injection↓
77. Doc: You prefer injection↓ (.) WHY↑=
78. Pat: °Yes°

Extract 18 shows an encounter in which the patient disagrees with the doctor's prescription of a tablet-medication and asks for an injection. The doctor's contribution at line 76 indicates a surprise at the patient's dispreference of his recommendation, which has implications for his institutional power. This accounts for his loud straight interrogative at line 77 by which he seeks the patient's justification for her preference, a way of challenging the patient's epistemic status. The patient's low voice at line 78 only attends to the preference question and not the justification one. Fuller analysis of this interaction in Odebunmi (2021a) shows how this question of injection preference develops into a serious clinical tension between the duo. Stivers (2002, 2005) has equally reported resistance to antibiotic prescriptions in pediatric clinics.

4. Conclusion

In the foregoing, I have panoramically developed the concept of medical discourse, in the narrowed garb of hospital setting discourse, given its broad nature, with a focus on its conceptualization, its shared borders with discourse in general and pragmatics in particular and the recurring themes in Nigerian hospital setting discourse. Focusing more on doctor-patient interaction, and drawing most illustrations from my previous research and new data (and the works of several Western and (other) Nigerian scholars on institutional and medical discourse), I have foregrounded the linguistic, communicative, ethical and ideological properties of the discourse. I have, in particular, shown that NHSD (like HSDs in other climes) is at once an institutional and a multidimensional (extra-institutional) genre, tentackling influences from medicine's universal/conventional nature and the impositions of the local setting in which medicine is adopted.

The institutional dimension to medical discourse comes with medical practitioners' control of the conventional lexicon of medicine, practice-oriented syntactic structures and ethics-pervasive communicative constraints. Professional competence is measured by how much of these items is mastered and deployed in tandem with ongoing medical activities and expectations of patients. Much of the extra-institutional dimension is experiential and strictly context-dependent. Its manifestations somewhat negate, on the surface, the objective and scientific nature of medicine, but they practically sustain and complement its institutional structure and goals. While the medical scientific, institutional and doctoral conjectural voices index the fine-grained epistemics of medicine, the local initiatives of participants and the life world, cultural voice of both the patient and the doctor are integral to HSD and the practice of medicine in several places of the world. These influences tinker somewhat with the universality of medicine but they are almost inevitable in the increasingly globalised and multicultural world.

I report as follows in Odebunmi (2006b: 37):

> When one of the doctors was asked if local lexical and discoursal innovations would not undermine the universality of medicine, he expressed a view that even though universal meanings might be hindered, yet the development made medicine more interesting.

This view, strengthened by local influences such as those from Germany, Finland, Sweden, Japan, Italy, Ethiopia and the United States, as earlier reported, re-affirms the relevance of pragmatics to the discourse and practice of medicine. Harnessing lexical, local interactive, cultural and ideological resources of language "[p]ragmatics can help to inform [healthcare providers' formal training in communication skills obtained through observation of their senior colleagues], making providers more sensitive to their own communicative behaviour and that of their interlocutor/s" (Martin 2014: 515) while it continues to help to address "what goes wrong in doctor-patient communication, and the role of language in it" (Haberland and Mey 1981: 105).

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Obscenity, slurs, and taboo

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Hayduke, under the hair and sunburned hide, appeared to be blushing. His grin was awkward. "Well, shit," he said. "Fuck, I don't know, I guess … well, shit, if I can't swear I can't talk." A pause. "Can't hardly *think* if I can't swear."
"That's exactly what I thought," said Bonnie. "You're a verbal cripple. You use obscenities as a crutch. Obscenity is a crutch for crippled minds." (Abbey 1975: 153f)

1. The concepts

Obscenity is the use of an abominated and/or repugnant and/or depraved offensively indecent, lewd expression. *Taboo* refers to a proscription of behaviour for a specifiable community of one or more persons at a specifiable time in specifiable contexts. A *slur* is an expression of disparagement that discredits, slights, smears, stains, besmirches or sullies what it is applied to. As a rule of thumb, obscenities and slurs are taboo because they are proscribed in polite discourse and, consequently, they proliferate in impolite discourse.[1]

There are, of course, widely differing views on obscenity, slurring, and taboo. This short article makes no claim to be comprehensive but focuses on the linguistics of the pragmatic dynamics involved, without investigating the important issues of power, politics, race, and gender which can better be approached from an anthropological and ethnographic point of view. The latter perspective would bring in more widely comparative cross-cultural data, which remain mostly in the background in this contribution.

2. The social dynamics

Primarily, obscenity is ascribed to terms for the body parts and effluvia associated with sex organs and practices, micturition, and defecation (examples: *arseholes, bollocks, cunts, pricks, tits; cum, piss, shit; fucking, having a crap, peeing, wanking*). Although the

1. I am grateful for comments from the editors and a couple of reviewers that led to clarifications and other improvements. Remaining faults are mine.

https://doi.org/10.1075/hop.24.obs1

language expressions themselves are regarded as obscene, this judgment arises directly from uncleanliness taboos on the objects and topics the words denote – though that is not the full story: the connotations of these expressions also play a large part. Uncleanliness derives from physical or moral corruption – whether actually perceived or attributed through prejudice. Death and disease are also subject to uncleanliness taboos, but talking about them in English doesn't normally count as obscene. Yet the following acts recommended in the Bible are judged obscene by some people because they invoke military behaviour that today would be tabooed and might lead to a war crimes trial. Numbers 25: 8 approves human sacrifice in the murder of an Israelite and a Midianitish woman 'so [that] the plague was stayed from the children of Israel'. God told Moses to 'vex … and smite them [the Midianites]' (Numbers 25: 17), 'And [so the Israelites] warred against the Midianites as the Lord commanded Moses; and they slew all the males', burned their cities, and looted their cattle and chattels (Numbers 31: 7–11). Then Moses sent the Israelites back to complete the Lord's work by killing all male children and women of child-bearing age, keeping other females 'for yourselves' (Numbers 31: 17–18). God's work or not, this is despicable behaviour and arguably obscene for that reason.

Swearing is the strongly emotive use of obscene terms. There are four functions for swearing which often overlap: expletive, insult,[2] solidarity/camaraderie, and vividness (spicing up what is being said to make it more vivid and memorable than if orthophemism were used instead).

i. Shit, I've burnt the fucking meat. [Expletives]
ii. 'Don't phone me yet as I am having both my ears transplanted to my nuts so I can listen to you talk through your arse.' (ACE S05 873) [Abuse, insult, vividness]
iii. 'S1: pray to baby Jesus open up your heart let god's love come pouring in let god's love shine down on you like it has me and Miss Suzanne over here. / S2: oh fuck off' (ICE-NZ S1A) [Social solidarity]
iv. 'Welfare, my arsehole' (ACE F10 1953) [Vividness][3]

Many languages invoke disfiguring, deadly diseases in maledictions. Current English no longer does so, though *A pox on/of you!* (principally smallpox) was used in early modern English, cf. Falstaff's

2. What constitutes insult? (A) The agent has the perlocutionary intention in uttering ε (the expression under consideration) to assail the target with offensively dishonouring or contemptuous speech or action and/or to treat the target with scornful abuse or offensive disrespect. (B) The agent's uttering ε has the perlocutionary effect (perhaps realising the agent's perlocutionary intention) of demeaning someone and/or of affronting or outraging them by manifest arrogance, scorn, contempt, or insolence.

3. ACE = Australian Corpus of English comprising written texts from 1986; ICE-NZ = International Corpus of English, New Zealand, collected in the years 1990 to 1998.

> A pox of this gout! or, a gout of this pox! for the one or the other plays the rogue with my great toe. (Shakespeare *Henry IV Pt.2*, I.ii.246)

With his usual aplomb, Shakespeare puns: the first 'pox' is "smallpox", the latter "venereal disease". There is also Shakespeare's *a plague o' both your houses* (*Romeo and Juliet* III.i.92) – invoking bubonic plague with its blotchy red sores, pneumonic problems, and death. In other languages we find cholera invoked, e.g. in the Polish expletive *Cholera!* which is roughly comparable in function to English *Shit!* Dutch also uses disease terms in insults, e.g. *Krijg de klere/pest/tyfus!* "Get cholera/the plague/typhus!"; *Pleur op!* "pleurisy off" = fuck off; *kankerlaptop* "cancer laptop" = shitty laptop; *teringherrie* "tuberculosis noise" = dreadful noise, *klerebuurt* "cholera neighbourhood" = shitty neighbourhood; *Pim lazerde van het podium* "Pim lepered off the podium" = fell off; (see Hoeksema 2019).

Slurs are tabooed and although most people would probably not class slurs per se as 'obscene'. Uncleanliness slurs like *slut, cunt, bitch* and *whore* are more readily classed as 'obscene' than are racial slurs like *kike, slope,* and *nigger*. Since the 1980s, in several English-speaking countries, obscene language charges have been dismissed, with courts ruling that words such as *fuck, shit* and *cunt* are no longer offensive in law. There are two reasons why such words have lost their former power: one, terms of abuse lose their sting with frequent use; two, sex and bodily functions are no longer tabooed as they were in the 19th and early 20th centuries. While some people still complain about hearing words for such things spoken in the public arena, what is today perceived as truly objectionable are racial and ethnic slurs, use of which may activate legal consequences. For instance, when in 1995 an Australian footballer was disciplined for calling Aboriginal player Michael Long a 'black cunt' during a match, the reports and re-reports of the incident made no reference to the use of *cunt*; it was the racial abuse that triggered the uproar and the incident gave rise to a new code of conduct against racial vilification both on and off the sporting oval.

3. Historical change

From earliest times, themes such as private parts, bodily functions, sex, lust, anger, notions of social status, hate, dishonesty, drunkenness, madness, disease, death, dangerous animals, fear, and God have inspired taboos and inhibitions. However, notions about what is forbidden vary across cultures and across time. In the last half century, speakers in western countries have shown a growing apprehensiveness of how to talk to and about 'women and minorities'. There has been a gradual establishment of legally recognised sanctions against the new taboos which render sexist, racist, ageist, religiousist, etc. language not only contextually dysphemistic, but also legally so. Such –IST taboos (Allan

and Burridge 1991) have surpassed in significance irreligious profanity, blasphemy, and sexual obscenity, against which laws, following community attitudes, have been relaxed. Individual societies will also differ with respect to the degree of tolerance for taboo-defying behaviour, depending on their values and belief systems at the particular time in history. It was not so long ago that transgressions against some western taboos were very severely punished; for instance, in Britain up until the end of the 17th century, blasphemy was punishable by burning. There are still people who would take literally such biblical commandments as

> He that blasphemeth the name of the LORD, he shall surely be put to death, and all the congregation shall certainly stone him: as well the stranger, as he that is born in the land, and when he blasphemeth the name of the LORD, shall be put to death. (*Leviticus* 24: 16)

In several Islamic societies, blasphemy is a capital crime today.

4. Connotation and emotional response

Why are orthophemistic expressions such as *vagina* and *excrement* less obscene than their (normally dysphemistic) synonyms *cunt* and *shit*? The obscenity lies in what the latter words connote – and not in what they denote. The connotations of a language expression are pragmatic effects that arise from encyclopaedic knowledge about its denotation (or reference) and also from experiences, beliefs, and prejudices about the contexts in which the expression is typically used (Allan 2007). This is why taboo words are often described as unpleasant or ugly-sounding and why they are miscalled *dirty words*. Their connotations give rise to a feeling that they are intrinsically nasty, and that makes them disturbing. The ability of obscene words to 'chill the blood and raise gooseflesh' (Wyld 1936: 387) is scientifically confirmed; physiological studies confirm that they elicit far stronger skin conductance responses than any other kinds of words.

> Obscenities [...] are fighting words, gross words, dirty words, words charged with power; they are hurled like insults, heaped up to contaminate and defile, to incite or inflame, or just to let off steam. They leap out before we can stop them. They draw attention, they get us into trouble. The emotion and the obscenity proceed together, as if fused, overriding cortical inhibitions in a quick, involuntary burst. (Morris 2000: 174)

We might confidently claim that taboo language is provocative.

> The ordinary reaction to a display of filth and vulgarity should be a neutral one or else disgust; but the reaction to certain words connected with excrement and sex is neither of these, but a titillating thrill of scandalized perturbation. (Read 1977 [1935]: 9)

Osgood, Suci & Tannenbaum 1957 discovered a general tendency for any derogatory or unfavourable denotation or connotation within a language expression to dominate the interpretation of its immediate context. In the same vein, MacWhinney, Keenan & Reinke 1982: 315 found that

> sentences with profane and sexually suggestive language elicited responses quite different from those [without. ...] Sentences with off-color language possess a memorability that is quite independent of their role in conversation.

Instantiating these observations is a true story emailed to me[4] in 1989: 'The highest award in boy scouting is, or was in the sixties, The Silver Beaver. It was the cause of endless (suppressed) merriment when Grandfather received this coveted award.' What makes dysphemisms like *bitch, cunt,* and *nigger* cognitively prominent is their affective force: they typically evoke stronger emotional response than most other vocabulary because of their combined connotation and denotation. There is no better description of this than Allen Read's 'titillating thrill of scandalized perturbation'. But there is an additional factor that makes them more marked than other vocabulary: they are stored differently in the brain from other vocabulary. Thus, people with certain kinds of dementia and/or aphasia can curse profusely, producing what sound like exclamatory interjections as an emotional reaction; however, when called upon to repeat the performance, they are unable to do so because they have lost the capacity to construct ordinary language. The fact that dirty words, abusive words, and slurs pour forth in these particular mental disorders and from people with Tourette syndrome is only possible because they are stored separately (or at least accessed differently) from other language (Allan and Burridge 2006, Finkelstein 2018, Jay 2000, Valenstein & Heilman 1979: 431). As I have said, this is a contributory factor to their cognitive salience, but the latter arises principally from the emotional impact evoked by their combined denotation and connotation.

There is plenty of linguistic evidence for the emotional quality of obscene expressions. Even across languages they can contaminate other words, bringing down innocent expressions that just happen to sound similar. Reportedly, bilingual Thais may get apprehensive about using the Thai words *fâg* "sheath", *fág* "to hatch", and *fuk* "gourd, pumpkin" in the hearing of other Thais likely to know English *fuck*. *Fuk* is used for the name of the main character in the award-winning Thai novel *Kham Phi Phaksa* (*The Judgement*) by Chart Kobjitti 1983, and there was much speculation about how the name would be transliterated when the novel was translated into English; the translator chose 'Fak'. Thai English-teachers experience some embarrassment, and their students some amusement, with the English word *yet* which is the equivalent of "to fuck" in colloquial Thai. Farb 1974: 82 reports something similar: 'In the Nootka Indian language of Vancouver Island, British Columbia, the English word *such* so closely resembles the Nootka word meaning

4. By Cynthia R.

"cunt" that teachers find it very difficult to convince their students to utter the English word in class.' Similar reports of cross-language effects have been reported elsewhere. Moreover, taboo senses seem to have a saliency that will dominate and suppress other senses of a language expression.

5. Homonyms, ambiguity, avoidance, and persistence

Throughout the centuries, if a language expression is ambiguous between a taboo sense and a non-taboo sense its meaning will narrow to the taboo sense alone. Cicero pointed out that *ruta* "rue" and *menta* "mint" could be used without impropriety; the same was true for the diminutive of *ruta, rutula* but not of *menta*, because the resulting *mentula* meant "penis" (*Epistulae Ad Familiares* IX, xxi, Cicero 1959). In late 18th century England, *ass* was gradually replaced by *donkey*. The motivation was exactly what Bloomfield 1927: 228 noted for the same change in American: *ass* was being confused with *arse* and has replaced it in American (meaning "arse or cunt"). Until the late 19th century, *coney* (rhymes with *honey*) was the word for "rabbit"; it dropped out of use because of the taboo homonym meaning "cunt". The British still use *cock* to mean "rooster"; but, because of the taboo homonym meaning "penis", this sense of *cock* started to die out in American in the early 19th century; it is nowadays very rare in Australian. There has also been an effect on words containing *cock*: former Mayor Ed *Koch* of New York City gives his surname a spelling-pronunciation /kɑč/; the family of Louisa May *Alcott* (author of *Little Women*) changed their name from *Alcox; cockroach* is often foreclipped to *roach* in American; but on the other hand, *cockpit* and above all *cocktail* show no sign of being avoided; the same is true for those plumbing terms *ballcock* and *stopcock*. And although there were other factors at work too, the use of *haystack* in place of *haycock*, and the use of *weather-vane* as an alternative to *weather-cock*, were probably influenced by taboo avoidance. Among South Africans for whom *kaffir*, pronounced [ˈkafər], "black person" is a dysphemistic slur, the same two syllables in *kaffir lime leaves* are euphemized with different stress and corresponding vowel difference to [kaˈfir] – a nice example of dissimilation as a form of self-censorship to avoid taboo.[5]

There are two reasons why languages abandon homonyms of taboo terms: one, the relative salience of taboo terms compared with co-text; two, a speaker will not risk appearing to use a dysphemism when none was intended. For example, the Danish King of England from 1016–35 was originally called *Cnut* (the English *C* in place of the Norse *K*); but because the letters are as readily transposed as those of today's clothing manufac-

5. Thanks to Ana Deumert for this example.

turer FCUK,[6] *Cnut* came to be spelled *Canute*. There are a few (older) English speakers who, if they catch themselves using the adjective *gay* in its former sense of "bright, full of fun" will, with mild embarrassment, explicitly draw attention to this intended meaning. Their 19th century forbears, fearful of seeming impropriety, avoided the (then) obscene terms *leg* and *breast* even when speaking of a cooked fowl, referring instead to *dark* or *red meat* and *white meat*. Grose and others 1811 list *thingstable* used in place of *constable* commenting 'a ludicrous affectation of delicacy in avoiding the pronunciation of the first syllable in the title of that officer, which in sound has some similarity to an indecent monosyllable.' The United States chief of Naval Operations is the *CNO*; the Department of Defense is the *DOD*; however, the Secretary of Defense is not the *SOD*, but the *SecDef*.

Sometimes where there is little likelihood of being misunderstood, the homonyms of a taboo term will persist in the language. This is the case for instance with *queen* "regina" which is under no threat from the homonym meaning "gay male, male transvestite" simply because one denotatum is necessarily female, the other is necessarily male; the converse holds for the end-clipped American epithet *mother* "motherfucker". Similarly, some do not censor themselves saying *It's queer* but we generally avoid saying *He's queer* if we mean "He's peculiar" preferring *He's eccentric* or *He's a bit odd*. More subtly, *bull* meaning "bullshit" is dissimilated from *bull* "male, typically bovine, animal" because it heads an uncountable noun phrase instead of a countable one.

Nonetheless, dissimilarity does not always safeguard the innocent language expression. For instance, *regina* makes some people feel uncomfortable because of its phonetic similarity to the tabooed and therefore salient *vagina*; it is quite usual for speakers to avoid expressions which are phonetically similar to taboo terms. The word *niggardly* "stingy" is currently avoided in North America because it is, incorrectly, linked with *nigger*; in fact, it is most probably from Old Norse *hnoggr* (see Burridge 2005: 55). The linguistic infelicities of non-native speakers and the similarity of some foreign language item to a taboo term can have embarrassing effects that may result in amusement or censoring – as Shakespeare has French Princess Katherine tell us

> **Katherine:** Ainsi dis-je d'elbow, de nick, et de sin [chin]. Comment appelez-vous le pied et la robe?
>
> **Alice:** De foot, madame; et de coun.
>
> **Katherine:** De foot et de coun! O Seigneur Dieu! ce sont mots de son mauvais, corruptible, gros, et impudique, et non pour les dames d'honneur d'user: je ne voudrais prononcer ces mots devant les seigneurs de France pour tout le monde. Foh! le foot et le coun!
>
> (Shakespeare *Henry V* III.iv. 46–53)

6. French Connection United Kingdom.

Katherine asks what you call a foot and a gown in English. In response to Alice telling her she says 'Oh Lord God, these words sound bad, corrupting, gross and impure, and not to be used by women of honour. I wouldn't like to utter these words in front of French gentlemen for all the world.' The reason for this outburst is that *foot* sounds to her like *foutre* "fuck" and *coun* (i.e. *gown*) like *con*, which is etymologically linked to "cunnie" and "cunt" (however, "pussy" is probably a better translation). There is a possibly apocryphal (certainly racist) tale of a poster in Japanese English in 1952 that read in part: *we play for MacArthur's erection* (MacArthur later withdrew from the US Presidential race). A true tale is of a seminar presentation by a non-native male graduate student in which he several times used the phrase 'my testees' to refer to "those subjected to a test": the neologism provoked a good deal of barely suppressed mirth in the audience. I conclude with a letter written in 1943 from war torn Moscow (source https://lettersofnote.com/2009/10/28/we-all-feel-like-that-now-and-then). Back then the racism in the final sentence would have been dysphemistic to a Turk; today it is dysphemistic to a much wider public.

H.M. EMBASSY
MOSCOW

Lord Pembroke
The Foreign Office
LONDON 6th April 1943

My dear Reggie,

In these dark days man tends to look for little shafts of light that spill from Heaven. My days are probably darker than yours, and I need, my God I do, all the light I can get. But I am a decent fellow, and I do not want to be mean and selfish about what little brightness is shed upon me from time to time. So I proposed to share with you a tiny flash that has illuminated my sombre life and tell you that God has given me a new Turkish colleague whose card tells me that he is called Mustapha Kunt.

We all feel that Reggie, now and then, especially when Spring is upon us, but few of us would care to put it on our cards. It takes a Turk to do that.

[Signed]
Sir Archibald Clerk Kerr,
H.M. Ambassador

6. Abuse and reclamation

The implicit racism of Kerr's letter leads me to the topic of reclamation of slurs, some of which almost universally count as obscenities. The words *bitch, cunt,* and *nigger* are, when applied to humans, typically deprecated because they are used as insults. But like many such slurs they are sometimes adopted by people who are potentially targeted in the insult and subverted to become markers of ingroup solidarity. Consequently, their representation in a lexicon must be able to predict the probable intended sense according to the context of use (see Allan 2020).

Within many minorities and oppressed groups, a term of abuse used by outsiders is often reclaimed to wear as a badge of honour to mark identification with and camaraderie within the in-group. This is normally because the speaker identifies as a person who has attracted or might attract the slur: in other words s/he trades on the hurtful, contemptuous connotation and subverts it (see Hornsby 2001; Cepollaro and Zeman 2020). For instance, used as an in-group term of address, *nigger* has much in common with the British and Australian address term *mate* (see Rendle-Short 2009) or American *bud*(*dy*) – though *bud*(*dy*) and *mate* do not have the negative connotations of *nigger*. To this end, many (mostly male) African Americans have adopted the term *nigger*, often respelled *nigga* (which for most speakers remains homophonous), to use to or about their fellows. There is an example of this in President Obama's autobiography when, in an exchange of banter,[7] his friend Ray addresses him as 'nigger', see Obama 2004: 73. Another example.

> So, Mr. President, if I'm going to keep it 100: Yo, Barry, you did it, my nigger. You did it. (Larry Wilmore to President Barack (= Barry) Obama at the 2016 White House Correspondents' Dinner, cited by black journalist Jonathan Capehart in the *Washington Post*, May 2, 2016, 'Why Larry Wilmore is not 'my n- – - – –')[8]

Larry Wilmore's attribution was controversial. His use of 'nigger' was mostly referred to in the media as 'the N word' and otherwise written 'n––' or 'nigga'. Jonathan Capehart disapproved not because an African American was addressed as *nigger* by another African American, but because the addressee was the President of the United States whom Capehart believes should not be treated so familiarly on a public occasion. But it is clear that Wilmore was intending to be colloquial and familiar, witness 'keep it 100'

7. Banter is a form of competitive verbal play and upmanship in which the agent needles a sparring partner with critical observations on their physical appearance, mental ability, character, behaviour, beliefs, and/or familial and social relations in circumstances where it is mutually understood that there is no serious attempt to wound or belittle the interlocutor.

8. https://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/post-partisan/wp/2016/05/02/why-larry-wilmore-is-not-my-n/. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1IDFt3BL7FA ('my nigger' occurs at 22: 04 minutes).

and 'Yo, Barry'. It certainly didn't appear that Obama was offended. All these comments are tempered by the context in which *nigger/nigga* occurs and is spoken or written of. We have a classic example of polysemy and so, although one cannot say *Ordell is a nigger$_1$ and so is Beaumont* [*a nigger$_2$*] because it violates the Q-principle of both Horn 1984 and Levinson 2000, it is perfectly possible for one African American to say to another *That honkey called me a nigger$_2$, nigger$_1$* (assuming *nigger$_2$* is the slur and *nigger$_1$* is not).

The same kind of argument goes when women or gay men address each other as *bitch* in amity. There is a meme widely distributed over the internet: 'My best friend can't stop being my best friend. The bitch knows too much.' Tongue in cheek it may be, but it clearly maintains the banter of camaraderie. Note the stance in Jo Freeman's *Bitch Manifesto* of 1970:

> Bitches seek their identity strictly thru themselves and what they do. They are subjects, not objects. [...] It is a popular derogation to put down uppity women that was created by man and adopted by women. Like the term "nigger," "bitch" serves the social function of isolating and discrediting a class of people who do not conform to the socially accepted patterns of behavior. (http://www.jofreeman.com/joreen/bitch.htm)

7. Insulting slurs

There follow instances of *bitch* and also *cunt* used as insults:

> [H]e called me a slut, cunt, worthless bitch, I slapped him at some point, then he followed me to the porch, where I'd gone to cry, to tell me how I spread my legs for anyone who walks by, and how I have no respect for myself because no one taught me to respect my body when I was a teenager. [...] This is not the first time he's called me a slut/whore/cunt/bitch/etc. He accused me of cheating 2 weeks ago (I'm not, nor will I ever because of family history with cheating) with a coworker. [...] I put a hand out and said "If you lay one finger on me, I will scream and call the police." This is when he proceeded to call me a f*cking cunt, bitch, and a piece of shit (he'd called me worthless earlier in the week, again not for the first time).
>
> (http://forums.thenest.com/discussion/12002898/husband-called-me-a-c-t-b-ch-sl-t, September 2013)[9]

The author slapped her husband because she was upset by the fact that he was insulting her: it was not only the perlocutionary effect of his words but, there can be no doubt from the wife's report and our own onlooker observation, it was the illocutionary intention of the husband to insult. Obscenities like 'slut/whore/cunt/bitch/etc' reveal that the

9. No longer available online, though thenest.com still exists.

wife was being accused of sexual promiscuity, which she properly regards as insulting slurs.

Below is a report mentioning a slur by Barbara Bush, wife of Republican 41st US President George H. Bush, on the 1984 Democrat Vice Presidential candidate Geraldine Ferraro. Note that the topic of the article is the Bush pooch Millie (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Millie_%28dog%29).

> To borrow words Barbara Bush once used to describe Geraldine Ferraro, Millie Kerr Bush is something that rhymes with rich. (*Time Australia*, March 6, 1989: 62)

The original report of the slur reads, in part:

> But if some people were surprised to hear white-haired, gentle-looking Barbara Bush calling Mrs. Ferraro a "four million dollar – I can't say it, but it rhymes with rich," some others were not so shocked. (Joyce 1984)

This is understood to mean that Barbara Bush called her husband's political opponent a bitch, thus slurring Ferraro. Obviously, the *Time Australia* reporter understood her to mean "bitch", otherwise it would make no sense to apply Bush's words to a female dog. However, Bush used a euphemistic dysphemism, because it would have reflected badly on her had she explicitly spelled out the slur. Joyce 1984 writes: 'Mrs. Bush later apologized for the remark'. Such an apology does not indicate that Barbara Bush revised her opinion of Geraldine Ferraro, only that she later regretted making the insult public, thereby staining her own character.

It is widely acknowledged that *cunt* is the most tabooed word in English. Interestingly, the same is not true of its cognates in closely related languages: French *con* and Spanish *coño* have the same origin – Latin *cunnus* "cunt, promiscuous woman" – but their extended uses are much less dysphemistic. For instance, French *Vieux con* (literally, "old cunt") is more likely to be jocular than insulting – comparable with British *old bugger*. (On Spanish *coño* see Allan and Burridge 2006). As with the other terms I have been discussing, *cunt* can be used orthophemistically in, for instance, academic essays like this one. And, of course, *cunt* may be used as an expression of bantering camaraderie – as can *silly, ass, idiot, bastard,* and *fucker*, as in '[laughs] you're a gross cunt [laughs]' (Wellington Corpus of Spoken New Zealand English J 2) and the following, from the novel *Trainspotting* (using the Leith dialect of Edinburgh, Scotland).

– Granty … ye didnae hear? … Coke looked straight at Lenny.
– Naw. Wha …
– Deid. Potted heid.
– Yir jokin! Eh? Gies a fuckin brek ya cunt …
– Gen up. Last night, likes.
– Whit the fuck happened …

– Ticker. Boom. Coke snapped his fingers. – Dodgy hert, apparently. Nae cunt kent aboot it. Perr Granty wis workin wi Pete Gilleghan, oan the side likesay. It wis aboot five, n Granty wis helpin Pete tidy up, ready to shoot the craw n that likes, whin he jist hauds his chist n cowps ower. Gilly gits an ambulance, n they take the perr cunt tae the hospital, but he dies a couple of ooirs later. Perr Granty. Good cunt n aw. You play cairds wi the guy, eh?
– Eh … aye … one ay the nicest cunts ye could hope tae meet. That's gutted us, that hus. (Welsh 2001: 129)[10]

A newspaper report of Phil Grant's fatal heart attack, even if equally sympathetic to the 'perr cunt', would – as a matter of social appropriateness – necessarily use very different language.

8. Conclusion: Dysphemistic euphemism

The phenomenon of subversion of slurs is not so strange when we compare it with the existence of contronyms[11] in the vocabulary, e.g. *bound* "fastened to a spot" vs "heading for somewhere"; *cleave* "adhere to" vs "separate"; *consult* "offer advice" vs "seek advice"; *dust* "remove fine particles" vs "cover with fine particles"; *fast* "moving quickly" vs "fixed, unable to move"; *give out* "provide, supply" vs "stop for lack of supply"; *hold up* "support" vs "impede"; *overlook* "supervise" vs "neglect"; *sanction* "approve" vs "boycott"; *trim* "decorate" vs "remove excess from"; etc. There are many more, including some that are controversial, for instance *infer* is used to mean both "imply by saying" and "understand from what is said"; *rent* and *let*[12] can be ambiguous between "allow the use of something in return for being paid" and "use something in return for payment to the owner". What contronyms show is that speakers and writers and their audiences can happily operate using a word or phrase with contrary meanings relying on context to disambiguate –

10. A translation for those who need it. 'Granty [Phil Grant] … did you not hear?' Coke looked straight at Lenny. 'No. What?' 'Dead. Stone dead. [*Potted head* is rhyming slang for "dead", its literal meaning is "brawn"] 'You're joking! Eh? Give us a fucking break, you cunt …' 'Honestly. Last night.' ['Likes' = *like I say* approximately "I'm telling you".] 'What the fuck happened?' 'Ticker [heart]. Boom.' Coke snapped his fingers. 'Dodgy heart, apparently. No cunt knew about it. Poor Granty was working with Pete Gilleghan on the side [illegally]. It was about five and Granty was helping Pete tidy up, ready to go [*shoot the craw/crow* is rhyming slang for "go"] and that, when he just holds his chest and keels over. Gilly [Gilleghan] gets an ambulance, and they take the poor cunt to hospital, but he dies a couple of hours later. Poor Granty. Good cunt and all. You play[ed] cards with guy, didn't you?' 'Eh … Yes …One of the nicest cunts you could hope to meet. That's gutted me, that has.'

11. Also called *contranyms* and *autoantonyms*, among other things.

12. There are also the verb *let* "allow" as in *Let me pay* and the noun *let* "hindrance" as in tennis (when during service a ball is hindered by the net cord).

which is exactly what normally applies with terms of abuse and their contronymic subversions.

All of *bitch, cunt*, and *nigger* are slurs: they are saliently dysphemistic even though each of them can be used in the spirit of camaraderie. What might motivate the choice of one rather than another where, say, black woman X has the potential to be labelled by any one of them? The principal difference is that *bitch* focuses on the target being female whereas *cunt* focuses on the target being a reviled object. If X were addressed by the insult *nigger*, it would most likely be because the focus is on her skin colour.

In this essay I have discussed taboos on obscenities and slurs used dysphemistically as insults and also offered reasons for them being reclaimed for use as dysphemistic euphemisms when they are markers of in-group solidarity and bantering. The differences are to be interpreted with reference to the particular context of use (see Allan 2018).

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Susan Ervin-Tripp

Context, social interaction and pragmatics

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1. Introduction

Pioneer psycholinguist and child language scholar Susan Moore Ervin-Tripp passed away on November 13, 2018 at the age of 91. She was Professor Emerita of Psychology at the University of California at Berkeley. She had served as Professor of Psychology at Berkeley from 1975 to 1999, and as Professor in the Department of Speech (now Rhetoric) before that (1959–1975). Her intellectual inquisitiveness led her to have a central role in the establishment of three academic fields, psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics, and child language. She also made major contributions to the fields of bilingualism, second language acquisition, and gender and language. [1, 2]

This handbook entry concerns Ervin-Tripp's contribution to pragmatics and her continued impact on scholars in the field. Why honor Sue Ervin-Tripp with a tribute in the *Handbook of Pragmatics*? For one thing, among many honors and distinctions that she received in her career, Ervin-Tripp was President of the International Pragmatics Association from 2000 to 2005. However, there is a more important reason. If pragmatics is the branch of linguistics dealing with language in use, and the contexts in which it is used, there is no better representative of this endeavor than Ervin-Tripp. She herself,

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1. A collection of the early papers of Susan M. Ervin-Tripp can be found in a 1972 book edited by Anwar S. Dil and titled *Language Acquisition and Communicative Choice: Essays by Susan M. Ervin-Tripp* (Dil 1972). A complete bibliography of Susan Ervin-Tripp's work can be found in the online Supporting Information alongside a prior obituary written for her (Kyratzis 2019). An earlier bibliography of her work can be found in a Festschrift published in her honor (Slobin et al. 1996). Many of the publications of Susan Ervin-Tripp, and citations for them, can be found on the website https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Susan_Ervin-Tripp.

2. For Professor Ervin-Tripp's own account and reflections on her career, please see an oral history and interview that she gave to Shanna Farrell, with a foreword from Professor Dan Slobin, archived at the Oral History Center, Bancroft Library, University of California at Berkeley (Ervin-Tripp 2017) https://update.lib.berkeley.edu/2017/03/06/susan-ervin-tripp/
https://digitalassets.lib.berkeley.edu/roho/ucb/text/ervin-tripp_susan_2017.pdf

https://doi.org/10.1075/hop.24.erv1

in the introduction to the Festschrift that was published I her honor in 1996, wrote the following:

> context permeates language, … contextual assumptions influence how we understand language, and … contexts of speech have to be better understood to develop realistic theories of language and language learning. (Ervin-Tripp 1996: 21)

Third, Ervin-Tripp taught for many years at the University of California, Berkeley, which was the site of the emergence of, and many notable developments in, several of the sub-areas of the field we call pragmatics today, including child language, ethnography of communication, and interactional sociolinguistics. As I[3] follow the unfolding of Ervin-Tripp's academic career and the different areas of her work, I will be mentioning some of the developments in these intersecting fields. Finally, Ervin-Tripp was a member among several other Berkeley faculty, including Dan Slobin (Psychology), John Gumperz (Anthropology), Charles Fillmore (Linguistics), and John Searle (Philosophy), of the Cognitive Science group at Berkeley, a source of inspiration at the basis of the International Pragmatics Association.

2. Bilingualism

One of the contexts of use that first caught Ervin-Tripp's interest was a bilingual's two languages as a context. Ervin-Tripp became drawn to the study of bilingualism through the experiences of French bilingual friends who reported a dramatic sense of double identity and dual personality. For her dissertation in Social Psychology at the University of Michigan, she showed French–English bilinguals, women born in France who had lived in the United States for some time, sentence completion tasks from the Thematic Apperception Test on two occasions, and asked them to compose brief stories for them. When responding in French, the women would emphasize particular interpersonal themes – autonomy and aggression to peers – but when responding in English, those same participants would emphasize different themes, those of achievement (Ervin 1964a). In work with Japanese-American bilinguals that followed (Ervin-Tripp 1967), when responding in Japanese, participants emphasized themes similar to those elicited from Japanese monolinguals, and when responding in English, emphasized themes similar to those elicited from American monolinguals. In a pilot study for this research reported in Ervin-Tripp (1996), American-born Nisei graduate students who had grown

3. I was a postdoc of Professor Ervin-Tripp's in the early 1990s, working with her on the influence of children's social interaction on their grammar development. Ervin-Tripp was role model and a true academic mother to several students and young scholars, playing an integral role in the development of several, including myself.

up on the West coast but had relocated to Japan during World War II, when responding in Japanese, talked more about their families and family obligation, and when responding in English, talked more about studying and self-fulfillment.

For example, for the sentence beginning "If the work is too hard for me" one participant's Japanese ending was "he says 'well, this is merely…' and as if whipping himself, he works all the harder." In contrast, the American ending was "I'll just quit" (Ervin-Tripp 1996: 27).

This work paved the way for how studies of bilingualism and "double-self" are approached today, and also emphasized the role that the discourse context plays in accessing a bilingual's different ways of thinking and feeling. It also paved the way for an important sociolinguistics paper that Ervin-Tripp would publish titled "An analysis of the interaction of language, topic, and listener" (Ervin-Tripp 1964b), in a special issue of the *American Anthropologist* edited by John Gumperz, where she laid out how the language of the interview, ethnicity of the interviewer, and topic influenced selection of a way of speaking, or a "code", by the Japanese-American bilinguals, and once a code was established, how these features influenced breaks from the code. With John Gumperz, she was one of the first to write about code-selection and code-switching. But before her sociolinguistics work came her work on child language; I will discuss this next.

3. Child language: First and second language acquisition

After receiving her doctorate in Social Psychology from the University of Michigan in 1955, Ervin taught courses on child language at the Harvard School of Education. She was influenced by scholars there such as Roger Brown. Ervin became impressed by Chomsky's 1957 book, *Syntactic Structures*. When Ervin moved to Berkeley and the University of California in 1958, where she taught English as a Second Language in the Department of Speech (now Rhetoric), she received a grant with linguist Wick Miller to study the child's acquisition of the coherent system of rules described by Chomsky (1957). She and Miller began one of the first modern studies of child speech *in context,* making use of the new technology of portable tape recorders to record the speech of five preschool-aged children in their homes and collect monthly systematic test data from several additional children. The design followed by Ervin and Miller was innovative in being naturalistic and longitudinal, while also making use of repeated elicitation techniques to tap the children's growing morphological and syntactic competence. One paper that came out of this study, "Imitation and structural change in children's language" (Ervin 1964c), is widely cited in the child language literature. Through the longitudinal design and comparing children's imitations and spontaneously produced constructions, Ervin-Tripp documented three stages that children go through in acquiring plural and past tense morphology in English, including the significant intermediate period of overregularization.

For example, she documented that children's imitation was selective. When children figured out the rule for words ending in sibilants, like *horse–horses*, they overgeneralized the rule to words ending in non-sibilants, *foot-footses,* even if they had earlier produced *feet* correctly.

She put forth a process-oriented approach that viewed children as actively constructing the adult grammar through three strategies – comprehension, *selective* imitation of prior talk, and analogic extension to new instances. The idea that children use these processes, especially analogic extension, to actively *construct* the rules of the adult grammar, rather than passively reflecting grammar rules innately specified in the brain or available in the input, placed Ervin-Tripp among the earliest scholars viewing children as active agents of their own grammar acquisition and use.

In the 1970s and 1980s, Ervin-Tripp also began to work on the second-language acquisition of English-speaking children in French Switzerland. She documented similarities in first and second language acquisition – for example, how children form ideas about speech events (e.g. phone conversations, soccer games) as organized contexts and use their predictable structures to participate in conversation and learn language (Ervin-Tripp 1986, 1991). She documented how one of her own children when very young (18 months) used the predictable structure of phone conversations to hold the phone to his ear and enact the outline of a phone conversation, saying only "Hi, fine, bye". Below is another example, in which two immigrant children enact a play phone conversation. Child A has been in the U.S. a longer, and Child B a shorter length of time. Child A in each turn can both reply to B as well as initiate a new idea commensurate with the part of the phone conversation the children are in. Child B responds to and repeats what Child A says. The example illustrates how the phone conversation provides a predictable talk schema consisting of greeting, introductory exchange, core, pre-parting and farewell, to support the children in the framing of utterances with which to participate in the talk. It also illustrates how repetition of the more proficient speaker also plays a role in language learning.

(1) **A:** Hello, what ya doin? [greeting, intro, ex.]
B: Got two people here. [intro, ex.]
A: Fine. My mommy told me to go to school. [core]
B: Me too.
A: Okay, bye. I'll call you back tomorrow. [pre-part.]
B: Okay, bye. [farewell]
(Ervin-Tripp 1991: 90)

In another example in Ervin-Tripp's second language acquisition work (Ervin-Tripp 1991: 89), an American English-speaking child was playing a game with repeated turn cycles with a French-speaking peer. The French-speaking peer said *Tu commences* ('you

begin') as she set out the materials for next game round. Although the French learner made a puzzled expression at the exact meaning, when his turn ended and he was setting out materials for the peer's turn, he repeated the same thing, *Tu commences*. Although it is not clear whether the novice French speaker believed the phrase meant 'your turn' or 'you begin', Ervin-Tripp argued that through knowing the structure of games like this, novice learners can use contextual inference and guess the meaning of new phrases. Novice learners can also rely on repeating the constructions of their peers with stronger competencies in the language, as these peers model how the constructions are to be used in context.

These ideas are widely drawn on in early childhood curriculum frameworks today, informing educators how to use routines, predictable activity structures, and free play settings providing opportunity for children to build on one another's prior turns in supporting their first and second language learning.

4. Sociolinguistics

In 1963, another new field was emerging, influenced by the work of John Gumperz, Dell Hymes, and Erving Goffman on the ethnography of communication. The Social Science Research Council set up a Sociolinguistics Committee; Ervin was appointed and served on it from 1966 to 1970. In 1967, Ervin-Tripp and colleague Dan Slobin in the Psychology Department at the University of California at Berkeley received a grant from the Committee and the National Science Foundation to conduct a large cross-cultural study of child language development which brought psycholinguistics and sociolinguistics together. Together with Gumperz and Slobin and a group of students in psychology, anthropology, and linguistics, Ervin-Tripp took part in developing *A Field Manual for Cross-Cultural Study of the Acquisition of Communicative Competence* (edited by Slobin 1967). The students went off to field sites around the world, collecting ethnographic dissertation data guided by the field manual. Influential findings about children's semantic, grammatical, and phonological development and their development of social practices and rules surrounding language use, across a variety of cultural settings, came out of this study. Many of the students, for example, Elinor Ochs and Bambi Schieffelin, went on to become productive scholars in the intersecting fields.

In the late 1960s and 1970s, believing that the social phenomena underlying language choices were as orderly and rule-governed as Chomsky's syntactic rules, Ervin-Tripp focused on requests and address terminology. Ervin-Tripp published the influential sociolinguistics paper in the special issue of the *American Anthropologist* mentioned earlier, titled "An Analysis of the Interaction of Language, Topic, and Listener" (1964b). A version of this was later published in Dell Hymes and John Gumperz' edited volume, *Directions in Sociolinguistics: The Ethnography of Communication* (Ervin-Tripp 1972b, 1986).

In this paper, she singled out two types of rules. Alternation rules were concerned with the selection of forms within the speaker's repertoire based on speech acts, topics, and social factors of familiarity, rank, and gender (i.e. situational variation). Co-occurrence rules were concerned with the stylistic coherence of linguistic features (and style-shifting, as in shifting in and out of Baby-talk register, or a child shifting in and out of use of features of African American English).

(2) "What's your name, boy?"
"Dr. Poussaint. I'm a physician."
"What's your first name, boy?"
"Alvin." (Ervin-Tripp 1972b, 1986: 223)

For example (see (2)), Ervin-Tripp analyzed an incident described by Black physician Dr. Alvin Poussaint in a 1967 New York Times editorial (20 August 1967), in which, as an adult, he had been addressed as "boy" and ordered for his first – rather than last – name and title by a Southern white police officer in the 1950s. Ervin-Tripp viewed this as due to the Southern police officer accessing an address system which specifies that adults in high status roles should be addressed with title and last name, but which contained a selector for racial categorization and enabled condescension and the stripping of the deference the physician deserved based on his age and rank (1986: 223). Through awareness of these rule systems and contextual patternings, Ervin-Tripp (1996) argued, meaning could be shared across speakers, and societal systems of power could be challenged.

Ervin-Tripp also became interested in *children's* sociolinguistic competence, their associations for, and ability to switch among, social varieties of their language and the implications of this for education. In her article, "Children's sociolinguistic competence and dialect diversity" (Ervin-Tripp 1972a), she was among the first to call educators' attention to the need to: (1) be aware of the identity-marking function of Black children's use of features of African American English (AAE); (2) incorporate speech events and grammatical structures of AAE and children's repertoires in designing teaching materials and reading assessments for the classroom; and (3) train teachers in the features of the language varieties used by their children so that they can be "brought to recognize their systematic character … and how they convey meaning". In general, she believed that "sociolinguistic research gives hope of finding communicative, task, language and scoring criteria that are fully compatible with the experiences of the tested children" (1972a: 283).

5. Directives in social context

Most central to the field of pragmatics, or the use of language to accomplish something in a social context, are directives or requests to get someone to do something. Ervin-

Tripp noted the great variability of directive forms (e.g., *Is Sybil there?* vs. *Can you go get Sybil?*) and pointed to how this variability is systematically related to social features. In 1976, Ervin-Tripp published a seminal paper analyzing data that she and her students had collected observing adults in a range of social and institutional settings such as living rooms, shops, hospitals, and workplaces, and noting their spontaneously produced requests (Ervin-Tripp 1976). Here, Ervin-Tripp pointed to the systematicity of the social rules underlying choice of request form according to rank, familiarity, whether a duty is normally expected and the likelihood of noncompliance. The higher the rank of the addressee or the cost of the request, the less imposing the request form and the more possibility it provided for noncompliance. In (3), from a medical laboratory, a technician, J.J., indexes familiarity when he is alone with the doctor he worked with, but shifted to a style which indexed the doctor's higher status when outsiders were present (Ervin-Tripp 1976: 32).

(3) **Technician to Doctor:** Hey, Len, shoot the chart to me, willya?

Technician to Doctor (outsider present): Shall I take it now, Doctor?

(Ervin-Tripp 1976: 32)

All kinds of social variables, including existence and direction of a status differential between speaker and addressee, formality of the situation, imposition on the addressee, and many others, influenced the form of the directive.

Ervin-Tripp also began to be interested in whether and how the social variable of gender influenced the form of the request. In another influential study, one which analyzed power within the family as seen in *children's* requests, Ervin-Tripp found that children were sensitive to gendered roles within the family, using more deference markers with fathers than with mothers (Ervin-Tripp, O'Connor and Rosenberg 1984). However, summarizing across several of her studies, including Ervin-Tripp (1976) and Ervin-Tripp et al. (1984), in a seminal paper published in *The Journal of Sociology* in 1978, "What Women Sociolinguists Want", Ervin-Tripp concluded that "[l]inguistic realizations of rank contrasts – such as politeness in directives" were associated with many features in addition to sex of speaker, including "pressure of task, solidarity, age, perceived cost of goods or services"; in other words, "sex of speakers did not appear a strong variable" (Ervin-Tripp 1978: 23).

Based on these findings – and also influenced by colleague Claudia Mitchell-Kernan's (1971) work showing that speakers could "monitor black", that is, use with greater frequency features of Black English "for personal or political purposes" (Ervin-Tripp 1978: 23), Ervin-Tripp began to articulate a nuanced view of gender identity that invokes ideas of "monitoring" and "marking" gender. In a ground-breaking paper, she argued that: "[s]ome social settings may emphasize gender and others do not", and she went on to say:

> Are there some kinds of social systems which foster identity marking and others that do not? … as the reference group shifts, we can expect that individual speakers may "monitor male" or masculinize speech, or "monitor female" or feminize speech … What I am proposing here is the examination of situational effects upon styles within the individual's repertoire. (Ervin-Tripp 1978: 24)

Ervin-Tripp was to put this nuanced view of gender and language to the test much later in examining the humorous discourse produced by college-aged students (see Section 7 below), and to reflect on work on children's interactional and conflict management strategies (Ervin-Tripp 2001). But before that, her work took another turn.

6. Developmental pragmatics

Ervin-Tripp's interest in the 1970s–1990s also turned to *developmental* pragmatics, how *children* acquired and applied the social rules for formulating requests and participating in speech events that she was describing for adults. When video recording equipment became available, she set out to record family interactions in children's homes, now with full contextual information, and created a second data archive at Berkeley. A central theme in her work on requests and social interaction was children's awareness of factors of power and social control, as realized in relationships of unequal status in families and classrooms. In her papers "Structures of control" (Ervin-Tripp 1982), "Language and power in the family" (Ervin-Tripp, O'Connor & Rosenberg 1984), and "Politeness and persuasion in children's control acts" (Ervin-Tripp, Guo & Lampert 1990), Ervin-Tripp and her colleagues argued that, in deciding the indirectness of the form to choose for the request and the deference markers needed, children learn to consider the relative rank of the person to whom the request is made, the rights and power of the speaker making the request, and the cost of the request. Ervin-Tripp created a coding scheme that took into account these converging factors (Lampert & Ervin-Tripp 1993).

Ervin-Tripp's work on children's requests was underscoring how learning to use language was not just a matter of grammatical knowledge, but involved social knowledge as well, what Hymes (1962) described as "communicative competence." With a set of scholars studying children's discourse in a variety of cultural settings, Ervin-Tripp and Mitchell-Kernan published the first book on child discourse (Ervin-Tripp & Mitchell-Kernan 1977). By turning to a discourse-centered approach, the researchers in *Child Discourse* developed a paradigm shift counter to traditional language acquisition studies, which made judgments of the child's ability to approximate the adult norm based on direct elicitation in quasi-experimental settings.

Instead, the focus in *Child Discourse* was on the child's communicative competence, the knowledge of socially appropriate speech needed to participate with peers and adults in naturally occurring, everyday speech events, including pretend play, peer instruc-

tion and persuasion, story-telling, joking and teasing, insult exchanges, and arguments. Examples would be a child participating in pretend play through using the discourse features of social roles other than those he would normally occupy (e.g. Child Doctor: *uh, well I think you have a *hernia*), or using aspects of the pretend frame to negotiate for entry. Ervin-Tripp was also interested in how this knowledge developed in children as a consequence of their development of social understanding (Ervin-Tripp & Gordon 1986). For example, children younger than four years were found not to use persuasion (reasons) in formulating requests of peers, and could not take the perspective of the peer in formulating reasons until 8 years. Children were also quite literal in their understanding of requests made by others, having difficulty understanding Nonconventional Instrumental Moves (NCIs), for example, responding with an explanation rather than the implied action to a parent's directive like "Why are you in the garden with your socks on?" (Ervin-Tripp 1977). For the same reason, young children had difficulty understanding conversational dares on a picture narrative task. Seeing a picture of a child throwing food and the mother saying "Beautiful, go right ahead!", the mother was seen by 3-year-olds as lying rather than using a directive in the form of an NCI (Ervin-Tripp & Gordon 1986). *Child Discourse*, followed shortly thereafter by *Developmental Pragmatics* (Ochs & Schieffelin 1979), began a movement towards situationally embedded activities as a central focus of child language studies.

Most notable along this line was Ervin-Tripp's work on social register. As she herself noted, "Children's subtle observation of the background features of adult speech is never revealed so fully as in their role play" (1996: 33). In Example (4) below from play with doll figures, a four-year-old speaks differently when he is in the role of the director or stage manager of the play, but speaks in lower pitch, when speaking in the role of the doctor.

(4) **Director:** Uh now *pretend he doesn't have a broken *arm
Doctor: {[lower pitch] *well, we were *wrong about the broken *arm}
(Kyratzis 1993, cited in Ervin-Tripp 1996)

The *well* in the Doctor enactment is a way of marking authority and being in charge; children use turn transition markers like *well, okay*, and *now* in speaking as doctors, fathers, and teachers. They use *uh* on the other hand, when enacting students (Ervin-Tripp 1996: 34; Anderson 1990).

7. More pragmatics and discourse: Conversational narratives, humorous talk, and style-shifting

Through the 1990s and after she retired from Berkeley, Ervin-Tripp continued to examine children's and young people's discourse and their communicative competence in

naturally occurring speech events during talk with peers, focusing on conversational narratives and humorous talk. (e.g. Ervin-Tripp & Küntay 1997; Ervin-Tripp & Lampert 1992; Ervin-Tripp, Lampert, Escalera & Reyes 2005; Lampert & Ervin-Tripp 2006). Her research dealt with the functions of young adults' spontaneous conversational narratives (e.g. earthquake stories after the Loma Prieta quake) and gender differences in the construction of humorous talk (Ervin-Tripp & Lampert 1992), and in a study with Aylin Küntay, how the occasioning or embedding contexts of conversational stories alter their internal structure (Ervin-Tripp & Küntay 1997).

Ervin-Tripp focused on the communicative competence entailed in adult humor, identifying four features found in adult conversational humor. She viewed the development of humor as a window into "the conversational component of pragmatic development" (Ervin-Tripp, Lampert, Escalera, & Reyes 2005: 2). She wrote that in "adult humorous turns in conversation one can see how a conversationalist accomplishes placement of humor in the conversation, addresses shared perspectives and issues, picks a target every ally in the audience can share, uses code switches effectively, deploys style features either to mimic someone or to allude to social features or values" (2005: 2). She also noted how "adults sometimes take risks to self-presentation or to social relationships in their joking, by giving vocal signals that they are not serious, or by making sure the key of the conversation clearly implies irrealis when they begin to joke about themselves or the listener" (Ervin-Tripp, Lampert, Escalera, & Reyes 2005: 2). She and her co-authors went on to describe the features found in adult spontaneous conversational humor. These included:

> shared put-down targets
> risking social relations by teasing
> risking self-presentation by humor about the self
> variation of language style to mark perspective shifts
>
> (Ervin-Tripp, Lampert, Escalera, & Reyes 2005: 2)

Ervin-Tripp and her colleagues analyzed how Dick Gregory used historical themes and the fourth of these features, variation in language style, in his comedy routines (Ervin-Tripp, Lampert, Escalera, & Reyes 2005). Dick Gregory was a well-known African American stage comedian who grew up in extreme poverty in St. Louis, and was involved in the civil rights marches of the sixties. His memorable performances are available as phonograph recordings. His major political themes were poverty and civil rights. Part of his stage routine to a college audience in 1969 (Gregory 1969) is shown in Example (5).

(5)
1. [lo, slow] in the *early days, when the british *was the *PO:lice,
2. a *white boy, by the name of *Paul *Revere
3. rode through the *white *community and said
4. "git a *gun, white folks, the *PO:lice is comin/"
5. [audience laughter, applause]
6. you can understand the *white *panthas,=

7. can't you,
8. but the *black *panthas make you forgit about your *history,
9. don't they/,

(Ervin-Tripp, Lampert, Escalera & Reyes 2005: 2; see also Ervin-Tripp 2001b)

Ervin-Tripp and her co-authors pointed out how Gregory used features of African American English to draw an analogy between black protesters of the 1960s and the American colonists' resistance to the British in the 1700s (lines 4–7), a similarity that, as Gregory points out (line 8), went unrecognized by white community members, who feared the Black Panthers. In general in his speeches "he used linguistic features as allusions, to make the point that we don't look at black violence the same way as white violence in American history" (Ervin-Tripp, Lampert, Escalera & Reyes 2005: 2).

In her work on humorous talk, Ervin-Tripp also examined gender politics and gender monitoring in the humorous talk produced in informal conversations of college-aged friends collected by undergraduates in naturalistic situations (Ervin-Tripp & Lampert 1992). She reported that men and women in gender homogenous groups showed differences in self-directed humour, with women preferring this feature and men preferring out-group teasing. In gender-mixed groups, men's self-directed humour increased while women's decreased, which could be seen as a way of accommodating one another's styles and counterbalancing traditional power asymmetries in mixed-sex groups (Lampert & Ervin-Tripp 2006).

In Example (6) below, college student Peter, participating in a conversation with both male and female peers, uses self-directed humor, making fun of himself in lines 33–34 saying "the only reading I've done in the last six to eight months is those little placards on the Muni bus". Based on Ervin-Tripp and Lampert's findings of contextual differences, he would be expected to prefer outgroup teasing were he in an all-male group of friends.

(6) Male Self As Target in Mixed-Sex Group: reading
Graduate students: Peter and Art are white males; Diane, Leah and Sara are white females
Topic: article in *Harper's*

25 >Art: *we've been actually discussing empiriocriticism.
26 : we've been going through some…ah…we were *earlier discussing some of
27 : Locke's *moral,
28 >Pet: =*fascinating. That tends to be an interest of mine/
29 * Dia: [laugh]
30 Lea: oh *really? = ( ) =
31 Pet: =although I *have to say to be honest I've been *so
32 Dia: =[laugh]=
33 Pet: busy =lately = that the only reading I've done in the last six to
34 : eight months or so is those little *placards on the Muni
35 : buses/ y'know, the little *poetry,
36 All: [laughter]
36 [Excerpt continues]

(Extracted from longer excerpt in Ervin-Tripp & Lampert 1992: 113)

Finally during this period, Ervin-Tripp returned to sociolinguistics, looking at variation in speech style and focusing on its use by speakers for identity and ideology marking, and for meaning-making. In her chapter in Eckert and Rickford's edited volume *Style and sociolinguistic variation* (2001b), she examined the style-shifting of two African-American college educated leaders of the civil rights movements of the 1960s, Stokely Carmichael, chair of the Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee, and Dick Gregory, political activist and comedian. She documented how they used contrasts between features of African American English and Standard English to make direct appeals and strong political messages to a black audience, to mark contrasts between politically-minded, up-to-date young black protesters and their less political parents, to parody politicians' (e.g., George Wallace's, 1960s governor of Alabama) white racist views of blacks, and to draw analogies between white protesters during the American Revolution and black protestors of the current time (Ervin-Tripp 2001b). She concluded that "Political comedy is a linguistic representation of ideology" (2001b: 55). What could be seen in the style-shifting of the humor of Dick Gregory

> is a deft use of identity features at critical junctures to represent both the ideological message of white culture in the constitution and its interpretation by African American citizens as indicated by AAVE features. (Ervin-Tripp 2001b: 55)

With Iliana Reyes, Ervin-Tripp also returned to code-switching, examining how children used it in multiple ways: as dictated by the social situation, to mark their belonging in a social network, as well as for various conversational "discourse-related" purposes, where "it is a change itself that does the marking, just as in monolingual speech lexical and prosodic discourse markers do their work by signaling change" (Ervin-Tripp & Reyes 2005: 89). Overall, Ervin-Tripp's later work examined communicative competence in a range of discursive contexts, and how social and social justice meaning could be effectively communicated in these contexts.

8. From pragmatics to syntax and grammar acquisition

Ervin-Tripp also returned in the 1990s to syntactic development, looking at the influence of larger discourse contexts like directives and planning talk during play, on children's acquisition of complex grammatical constructions (e.g. Kyratzis, Guo & Ervin-Tripp 1990; Ervin-Tripp 2012). In her work on children's development of temporal clauses, Ervin-Tripp reported that, counter to many researchers' emphasis on narrative, the earliest uses of temporal clauses were in planning of future activity or in nested or chained control acts during peer negotiations of play, as in the examples below.

(7) I'm going to make a garbage can, when I'm all through with the train lid. (HS 3:0)

(8) Can I have your worm when you get finished? (SM 3:1)

(9) You put this in there, then you throw it, and make something out of it, see? (HS 3.1)
(Ervin-Tripp 2012: 91)

In light of her view that children develop contrasts in form (grammar) to mark contrasts in pragmatic meaning that are salient to them (Ervin-Tripp 1994), she put forward a "facilitation hypothesis" regarding the relationship of pragmatics and the grammar of temporal constructions, arguing that pragmatics may facilitate, perhaps *provoke*, the creation of new syntactic forms. For example, planning and directives may facilitate the creation and use of subordinate and coordinate constructions because these speech acts are salient for young children, and details of place and time, necessary for their execution, can be conveyed through such constructions (Ervin-Tripp 2012: 97). In 1990, influenced by her work on temporal clauses and her students' and postdocs' work on other grammatical constructions, Ervin-Tripp applied for and received a large grant from the National Science Foundation to examine the pragmatic basis of syntax acquisition, and she and her students generated several papers.

9. Conclusions

To conclude, Ervin-Tripp had many influences on pragmatics. Her work on the influence of social context and social dimensions on language choice influenced all kinds of work in sociolinguistics and pragmatics, from work on code-switching in bilingualism (e.g., Ervin-Tripp & Reyes 2005; Wong Fillmore 1996) to work on formal and informal registers (Grimshaw 1996), to work on discourse markers and other language features in social registers and speech styles (Andersen 1990; Kyratzis 2007).

Ervin-Tripp's research on directives set the stage for a wealth of studies on children's and adults' directives which followed (e.g., de León 2017; M. H. Goodwin 1990, 2006; Goodwin & Cekaite 2018; Kyratzis, Marx & Wade 2001). These studies examine how directives are shaped by the social context, as well as how they shape the social context and different kinds of social relationships.

Ervin-Tripp & Mitchell-Kernan's (1977) book *Child Discourse* launched a paradigm shift in child language study towards a discourse-centered approach which went beyond linguistic competence to the child's acquisition of communicative competence, the knowledge that underlies socially and culturally appropriate speech. In it, the authors claimed that "many of the speech events in which children engage typically occur among children apart from adults, and they are explicitly taught, in many cases, by children" (1977: 7), and launched a wealth of studies of children's peer talk in a variety of speech events and naturalistic settings, including conflict talk, directives, narratives, humorous exchanges, and emotion talk, beginning with Ochs & Schieffelin's (1979)

edited volume *Developmental Pragmatics* and many other publications which followed (e.g. Cook-Gumperz, Corsaro, & Streeck 1986; Cekaite, Blum-Kulka, Grover, & Teubal 2014; Goodwin 1990; Goodwin & Kyratzis 2007, 2011, 2014; Kyratzis & de León 2019). Peer communicative competence continues as a research focus today but has expanded recently to include looking at how children make use of embodied practices, multiparty participation frameworks, and sequential organization as communicative resources (e.g., Goodwin 2006).

The developmental pragmatics work also set the stage for another major paradigm shift which followed shortly thereafter, language socialization theory (Schieffelin & Ochs 1986). By situating children as novice members of communities having to learn the cultural and social structures – belief-systems, identities and ideologies – necessary to become members, language socialization theory attempted to account for how children came to exhibit the communicative competence highlighted in developmental pragmatics work.

Ervin-Tripp's work on the interface between pragmatics and child grammar acquisition was also very influential, and she and her students and postdocs contributed a large number of studies. This included Budwig's work on very young children's anaphoric pronoun contrast *me-my* vs. *I* (Budwig 1995), Kyratzis, Guo, and Ervin-Tripp's work on causal constructions (Kyratzis, Guo, & Ervin-Tripp 1990; Kyratzis & Ervin-Tripp 1999), Kyratzis' (2009) work on transitive vs. intransive verb constructions used by toddlers; Pak, Sprott and Escalera's (Pak et al. 1996) work on discourse markers, Guo's (1995) work on modal constructions, Gerhardt & Savasir's (1986) work on young children's use of the simple present, and Bamberg's work on tense-aspect marking in narratives (Bamberg 1987). These studies all documented how children develop grammatical forms and contrasts to mark contrasts in discourse that are salient to them. The research of Ervin-Tripp, her students, and collaborators all underscore children's agency in constructing the grammar of their language, a point Ervin-Tripp noted long ago, and the role of pragmatics and discourse in the process (Ervin-Tripp 2012).

Finally and perhaps most important, Ervin-Tripp's work revealed subtle social rule systems that underlie power dynamics in education, the family, the workplace, and society, revealing some of the ways in which inequalities can be reflected in, commented on, and constituted through language. Language and pragmatics research can and should have social implications, and Ervin-Tripp' work had strong implications for social justice work. Ervin-Tripp was a role model in this regard. Moved by some of her own experiences (such as not being allowed to march at graduation at Harvard, being excluded from "The Great Hall" of the Men's Faculty Club at Berkeley), Ervin-Tripp became an activist for issues affecting professional opportunities for women at the university, contributing to a report on the status of women at Berkeley which resulted in a Civil Rights Complaint to Caspar Weinberger, then Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare in Washington and led to a committee being formed in the Academic Senate at the Univer-

sity of California, Berkeley to deal with issues confronting women and ethnic minorities. After she retired from the University of California, Berkeley, Ervin-Tripp also undertook a large scale study of letters of recommendation written for applicants to university faculty positions, examining the effects of the gender of both letter writer and candidate on the form and content of letters, titled *Conquering Discrimination Against Women in Academia*.[4]

In addition to serving as President of the International Pragmatics Association 2000–2005, throughout her career, Susan Ervin-Tripp received many awards and honors, including a Guggenheim Fellowship in 1974 and a Cattell Fellowship in 1985. She was chosen to be one of the two annual Faculty Research Lecturers at the University of California at Berkeley, and presented an overview of her life's work to the campus community in her lecture entitled *Context and Language*. This was later published as Ervin-Tripp (1996) in a Festschrift that was put together in her honor (Slobin, Gerhardt, Kyratzis & Guo 1996). The range and number of chapters from students and colleagues, many of whom were contributors at IPrA meetings and publications over the years, attest to the great influence that Ervin-Tripp had on so many fields, including sociolinguistics and pragmatics more broadly, as well as on so many scholars and students. She will be greatly missed.

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This account builds on an earlier obituary honoring Susan M. Ervin-Tripp (Kyratzis 2019) as well as an earlier account of the influence of her work on the field of gender and language research (Kyratzis 2021).

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4. Although Ervin-Tripp did not have opportunity to publish results from this project before her passing, she refers to the letters and her work for the equity of women in her Oral History (Ervin-Tripp 2017).

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Cumulative index

This index refers to the whole of the *Handbook of Pragmatics*, its **Manual** as well as the 24 installments (the present one included), and it lists:

i. all labels used as entry headings in some part of the Handbook, with an indication of the part in which the entry is to be found, and with cross-references to other relevant entries;
ii. labels for traditions, methods, and topics for which separate entries have not (yet) been provided, indicating the entry-labels under which information can be found and the part of the Handbook where this is to be found.

The following abbreviations are used:

(MT) the Traditions section of the Manual
(MM) the Methods section of the Manual
(MN) the Notational Systems section of the Manual
(H) the thematic main body of the loose-leaf Handbook or (from the 21st installment onwards) of the specific annual installment (marked as H21, H22, etc.)
(T) the Traditions update/addenda of the printed Handbook (further specified for the bound volumes as T21, T22, etc.)
(M) the Methods update/addenda of the printed Handbook (further specified for the bound volumes as M21, M22, etc.)
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"**Label** label(s)" — for labels which do not (yet) occur as article headings, but which stand for topics dealt with under the label(s) indicated
"**Label** → label(s)" — for labels that are considered, for the time being and for the purposes of the Handbook, as (near)equivalents of the label(s) following the arrow; a further search must start from the label(s) following the arrow

M

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