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# INTERCULTURAL AND CROSS-CULTURAL AWARENESS IN INTERNATIONAL ENGLISH

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## Abstract

Intercultural and cross-cultural awareness becomes a crucial part of a speaker's communicative competence within International English as a vehicle for successful international business. The paper deals with theoretical background of several major concepts of cross-cultural dimensions and communication implications, and with its practical application. The research results elaborated by Hofstede and Trompenaars are being challenged by today's global world situation. The author contrasts the classical dimension theory overview with aspects related to current situation, both globally and locally, and opens space for reconsidering formats of cross-cultural communication patterns. To demonstrate hesitation over the classical findings, the author shows results of her current survey carried internationally among students and also a comparison of results between students and company professionals.

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**Keywords:** Intercultural communication, cross-cultural communication, situational context, pragmatics

## Introduction

As cultural differences manifest themselves in intercultural communication, the degree of mutual communication pattern likeness was surveyed among university students in six European countries to reveal probabilities with which one may expect certain communication trends in international encounters. The survey results indicated interesting trends in communication of university students in today's Europe. The results showed certain common tendencies as well as areas where there is likeliness to meet a different attitude and different communication patterns conveyed through today's lingua franca – International English.

Today's world has become an extremely interrelated place where cultures meet and merge not only through face-to-face encounters of individual speakers, negotiations of enterprises, mass media broadcast and public speeches of various natures, but also through virtual communication

channels including noticeably influential social media. All this cultural fusion impacts our communication and thus mutual understanding becomes at stake and does not always seem easy to maintain. The understanding phenomenon rests in comprehending not only all the purely linguistic aspects of communication itself, but rather understanding a message and its communication background. The place where communication is conveyed is always set in a certain cultural background and thus it gives an added value to communicated utterances besides their standard linguistic attributes of lexico-grammar and pronunciation, and this value may be seen as an influential player within linguistic pragmatics. The tendencies of cultures to communicate in a certain way or at least to manifest certain patterns in communication are predefined by numerous factors. Understanding these tendencies may significantly help to reveal what literal utterances meant in specific contexts.

### **Main Text**

Intercultural awareness is a pathway for understanding the differences and for establishing a helpful environment enabling speakers to explore their own identities as well as those of their counterparts. Such a pathway may lead to improved message decoding of culturally diverse speakers while preserving mutual respect and eliminating dangers of unpleasant surprise or clash.

In the narrow concept, the communication carried across borders is generally understood as cross-cultural communication; however, not only national borders should be considered. Cultures may be understood as defined by territories of countries, as well as by territories of communities or institutions. Cultures feature specific ways of communication given by agreed conventions, reasons for which are often subtle and may only be perceived through manifestation of certain phenomena to the outside world.

From this viewpoint conventions are rather useful, as they represent a safe journey through establishing relationships, rapport and solidarity, exchanging information within particular communication scenarios, arriving at compromises and satisfactory closures. They are, however, the most crucial during the very opening of communication, as the impression we give during first instances pre-sets the communication development itself. The fewer errors we make, the further the communication may flow. Providing the aim of international communication is a sustainable relationship between counterparts of different cultural backgrounds, the communication means are to reflect it. The choice of language and its appropriate use play a crucial role in this process. Various scientific fields attempted to reveal clues for better understanding across cultures not only in terms of communication for its

own sake but also e.g. for more efficient management and control in business spheres.

Intercultural awareness becomes more and more important with the use of “International English”. International English (IE) can be understood as a concept of English as a global means of communication in plentiful dialects, but also a movement towards coining an international standard for the language. Scholars tend to use several other concepts of global means of communication e.g. World English, English as a Lingua Franca (ELF), Global English etc., while popular media produce a term Globish. To avoid setting too blurred boundaries between them all, it seems worthwhile to provide basic differentiation between them.

Braj Kachru’s concept of World Englishes divides the use of English into three concentric circles: English of the Inner circle, of the Outer one, and of the Expanding circle. The first one is a traditional base of English, where the language was and is used as a native language. The territories comprise the UK and Ireland and the Anglophone populations of the former British colonies of the United States, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Canada, certain islands of the Caribbean, Indian and Pacific Oceans. The Outer circle is the one where English has official or historical importance and includes most of the countries of the Commonwealth of Nations, including India, Pakistan and Nigeria; and others, e.g. the Philippines, under the sphere of influence of native English-speaking countries. English is used there as a lingua franca between ethnic and language groups; and also a state performs its roles predominantly in English. The Expanding circle uses English for certain functions only, mainly in international business. Though English has no official role there, non-native English speakers using English outnumber native speakers by a factor of three and thus exercise a certain possession over the language, influencing it immensely.

The concept of English as a lingua franca resembles the third expanding Kachru’s circle. Certain scholars see it as an additionally acquired language system which serves as a common means of communication for speakers of different languages. According to Jenkins (2006) English as a lingua franca concept complies with the one of World Englishes in terms of non-judgmental approach to the language. Most speakers in both concepts are non-native speakers and all varieties, native and non-native are accepted, rather than evaluated against a native speakers’ benchmark. Interestingly, non-native varieties are perceived as different and not inferior. The paradigms explore the ways new Englishes develop in their own right as a means of expressing socio-cultural identities of their speakers instead of approximation to the norms of native speakers. Nevertheless, Dewey (2007) finds a clear difference between the two paradigms in their territorial aspect; while the World Englishes concept focuses on bounded varieties of English,

the English as a lingua franca reflects global processes and implies a focus on English as a fluid, flexible, contingent, hybrid and deeply intercultural means of communication. Pennycook (2007) attributes nationalism to certain merits of World Englishes whereas a notion of plurilithic Englishes is ascribed to the ELF concept.

International English is a concept close to English as a lingua franca and its users are often highly skilled communicators whose aim is not to master the language for its own sake, but rather to harness it and make the best of it in terms of reaching their specific functional targets. By an effective use of International English they can demonstrate willingness to be polite and establish rapport, maintain solidarity and project cultural identity. International English not being a culturally rooted language with all the historical connotations compressed in the linguistically compact system comprises two sides of the same coin in itself. On the one hand, it is a fluid, dynamic, effective, living communication vessel; on the other hand, naturally, it opens space for miscommunication based on its historical emptiness and lack of conventional communication agreements to which one may turn during a conversation as to valid safety guidelines usually developed by culturally homogeneous communities. This may lead potentially to risky situations, uncertainties, apprehensions or surprise when a message fails to get responded, though was seemingly conveyed and perceived.

Non –native speakers of English tend to acquire the language in the order that is visible to or audible for them. The hidden part of it is, however, embedded in a situational context, distinctive features of which are, on top of it, blurred by intercultural encounters themselves, and thus the non-native speakers often grasp this aspect last as it totally subjects to a context of the utterances.

Linguistic aspects can be carried out in the levels of lexis and lexicogrammar, pronunciation, and pragmatics and each of them influences a message conveyed. Bearing in mind the axiom incorporated in the above stated concept of International English, which suggests a tendency towards coining new English language standards, it calls for analysing most common mistakes manifested in non-native English speakers' utterances. Many researches worldwide underwent this effort, among the most influential ones being studies of Jenkins on ELF pronunciation (2000, 2002) and Firth (1996) and House (1999) focused on pragmatics.

In terms of phonology, many non-native English speakers replace some elements of standard pronunciation with “non-standard” when they feel relaxed in social communication. However, they do not replace them in contexts of business or academic communication when intelligibility is regarded highly important and may cause severe consequences. This may

result in non-native speakers' tendency to approximate native-speakers' English in high-stakes situations only. To view it from the other side, native speakers of English may influence International English by their accommodating pronunciation to be understood by non-native speakers. Deterding argues this will have repercussions as teaching and learning of accommodating skills is far more demanding than teaching Received Pronunciation or General American.

Similarly, the "high stake" situations are reflected in mastering lexis/lexico-grammar. The most common mistakes occur in students' omitting 3rd person singular "s" morpheme, although they tend to be less frequent in presence of a teacher. Other relatively frequent mistakes are observed in the use of prepositions, article system, collocations, generally in morphology and syntax, incorrect use of tag questions or backchannel, and overdoing explicitness. Another very distinctive area in mistake occurrence concerns idiomatic expressions. As Pitzl (2009) states idiomatic expressions occur very differently from English as a native language and she comes with an expression of re-metaphorization, according to which non-native speakers coin an idiomatic language themselves, sometimes enriching the original and developing it to wordplay – and, obviously it is not seen as inferior.

Pragmatics either adds to the whole meaning of utterances or may completely destroy them by neglecting the significance of their context side, where the most typical mistakes may rest in overgeneralization of language functions or insufficient insight into the register. However, Firth (1996) claims recent research into English as lingua franca pragmatics showed orientation towards mutual understanding regardless of correctness. This undeniable focus of pragmatics on resolving strategies for establishing and maintaining understanding rather than on narrow concepts of appropriate structure knowledge resulted in a fruitful effort to identify productive resolving techniques among which are repetition (Lichtkoppler 2007, Waterson 2008, Cogo 2009), clarification and self-repair (Mauranen 2006), paraphrasing (Kaur 2009), let it pass strategy, and topic change (Firth 1996). As Jenkins, Cogo and Dewey (2011) state, based on conclusions made by studies of Charles in 2007, Ehrenreich 2009, Pullin Stark in 2009, Erling in 2007, Smit in 2010, the communicators from domains of business, higher education and tourism seem to be rather skilled communicators and able of efficient use of pre-empting strategies to maintain understanding.

Nevertheless, there still remains an extensive space for tensions. The one identified by Seidlehofer (2009) slightly overlaps with the lexico-grammatical aspect in terms of the use of idioms. The insecure territory of idiomatic language is a soil for an eternal dispute between ensuring intelligibility on the one hand and keeping signalling and constructing identity on the other. Drawing on the findings of Pitzl (2009) and according

to Seidlehofer (2009), non-native speakers of English do not avoid the use of idioms but rather creatively build on them and produce their own idioms which become markers of in-group membership.

To make it even more multilayer, the idiomatic language draws on both the culturally rooted English as a native language, and on contexts added by the location of its new usage, both in terms of the territory and the native language of the non-native speaker. As a consequence the International English is a melting pot, to borrow this expression from the description of culturally different learning styles by Manicutty (2007), in which all English varieties meet one another, react and response to one another and get melted in a new, though constantly fluid, means of communication. The key point, however, rests in a move away from a pure identification of linguistic aspects forming the means of communication towards a more holistic approach. Such a transfer is explained by Seidlehofer in Jenkins, Cogo and Dewey (2011) as a move from a surface description of particular features to an explanation of the underlying significance of the forms: to ask what work they do, what functions they are symptomatic of. Cogo and Dewey (2006) see that as an attention paid to the pragmatic motives and functional meanings involved in their use.

Speakers of International English often expect to be understood provided they resort to as much correct grammar and lexis as they can. The above mentioned mistakes occurring not only in the lexico-grammatical feature of the language, but rather more often in the pragmatic aspect of communication, may significantly impair their satisfaction in terms of conveying the intended message. Hesitations may arise in terms of compliance with the respective situation, appropriateness of reactions, ellipses in communication, code switching, and degree of shared knowledge.

To examine the ways by which the undesirable hindrances on the pathway of understanding can be eliminated as much as possible and a smoother and smarter surface can be obtained to allow for less anxiety about the intercultural communication processes, scholars tend to simplify the complex communication system and typify from many different perspectives. Probably most prominent work in terms of quantitative studies has been done by cross-cultural management gurus, G. Hofstede and F. Trompenaars, each of them looking at the system from a viewpoint of comparing communication of different nationalities. This makes it a distinctive feature in distinguishing cross-cultural communication from intercultural communication, which deals mostly with communication of individuals from different cultures, while the term cross-cultural communication is reserved for communication of cultures across borders.

Though results of their studies differ in certain dimensions, each of them even explores different dimensions or examines the same ones from

different angles; their results are of eminent value for conceptualizing the scope of research and opening space for different focuses on the subject. The strongest drawback of these surveys rests, however, in their historical limitations even though they attempted to be long-lasting in their conclusions. The pace of development of today's societies does not allow us to take into account data, though with a relatively high face-validity, without questioning them in terms of their origin, context, and other factors. When we consider these variables, we realize that the responses gathered cannot be valid forever; especially some data could not fully reflect the prominent changes on the European continent in 1990s, or before the outburst of economic crisis worldwide.

Both the authors use categorisations of cultures according to several dimensions and structure each cultural dimension from responses to sets of questions collected from thousands of respondents from multinational companies. They were critiqued by other experts in the field, as Schein, who tends to draw more on Hall's approach to individuality, thus more to an intercultural stories concept, and claims there is no point in measuring cultures through quantitative methods. Other critiques reproached rather a limited number of distributed questions in the surveys and picking only certain respondent groups while generalizing the conclusions.

To reveal tendencies in intercultural communication, it is beneficial to combine assets of both the mentioned types – intercultural and cross-cultural communication researches, work with relatively homogeneous groups while deliberately limiting the outcomes to the respective environments and period, and pay attention to the background information of the respondents. Given the role of higher education, university students are influential respondents in terms of their preferences in communication trends and their potential to implement them in intercultural encounters. The students are a typical group of pre-service language users and thus it seems interesting to see if there are any differences between them and in-service language users – business professionals. Comparing their responses may substantially help to reveal if the communication patterns manifest themselves in the same way within the same culture group, however, distinguished by age, experience and environment.

In 2011 and 2012 an international survey was carried among students of six European universities to explore their communication tendencies in IE, reveal similarities in approaches to controversial issues of university students in Europe or comparing discrepancies between groups of different cultural background. However, the survey and its results are not a finished and closed work; they are to be further examined and may be implemented in teaching/learning of International English in terms of implications for

language functions to be taught and their effective use in intercultural encounters.

The survey was responded by 141 students from the universities of Pardubice (Czech Republic), Leipzig (Germany), Zurich /ETH (Switzerland), Oulu (Finland), AUA Athens (Greece) and Marseille-Aix-en-Provence-Luminy (France), representing the following nationalities within their intercultural study environments: Czech (30), German (22), Swiss (21), Finnish (14), Greek (34), French (10), Polish (1) and other (9). For the purpose of this study only 6 nationalities were monitored, their background being science and technology, humanities, business.

As mentioned above, another examined aspect, was a potential difference in communication preferences between students and in-service professionals. Given the space of this research only one cultural group comprising Czech in-service and pre-service respondents was examined. The group of Czech in-service professionals consisted of 10 respondents; their counter-group were the above described 30 Czech students.

The construction of the questionnaire did not resort to one of the previously mentioned schools of dimensions, but rather drew on certain areas of cross-cultural management schools, extended them and added an area of politeness as well. The questionnaire consisted of 28 questions in English, dealing with seven areas of interest, which the author believes, may set implications for expecting tendencies in communication. The discussed areas were controlled emotions in communication, approach to time schedules, approach to rules, individual or team player approach, orientation to achievement, risk taking and degree of politeness or directness in social encounters.

The area of controlled emotions in communication dealt with the degree of openness in expressing important and controversial issues, usually important enough to be solved either for the sake of oneself or for the sake of a whole group the person belongs to, which distinguishes the area from the one of politeness/directness, where no controversy is necessarily involved. The aspect of controlled emotions in communication can be understood as a tendency to refrain from affective communication without logical reasoning by providing hard fact language, the opposite pole being either emotional outburst, including interjections or exclamations as language manifestations, or constipated or suppressed communication due to insulted emotions.

The approach to time schedules was examined in terms of prevailing conventions and expectations to be either time oriented or time relaxed in a short-term horizon only. Implications may lead to relevant language functions on either time punctuality or lenient attitude to keeping deadlines or time agreements in social and business contact.

The approach to rules complies with Trompenaars's concept of application of rules, which may be either universal for everyone or, on the other pole, exceptions are applied, if a particular interest of a respondent is involved, admitted and even expected. To define the concept of rules for the purpose of the questionnaire, the rule is understood as a principle given either by law or a binding agreement/contract, no matter whether concluded in writing or orally. The manifested approaches to application of rules may imply either leisurely communication or, at the other extreme, use of imperatives when communicating these language functions.

The individual or team-player approach was explored through revealing tendencies to sharing responsibility and personal space with others as well as enjoying other people's company. Implications may be drawn to communication patterns in terms of silences and speaking modes, as well as the use of metalanguage.

The aspect of orientation to achievement was examined in compliance with a specific situation of university students, which meant both the focus on success in studies and expected treatment in their future jobs. Potential implications may be derived for language functions used in communicating feedback on performance, including register used with companions in formal settings.

The risk taking area explored attitudes towards establishing new social contacts and operating in multinational working environments; both of them may be seen as undertaking challenges, which is the reason why this area was incorporated. It revealed willingness and readiness to enter uncertain territories in communication, such as addressing new people and opening conversations with strangers in non-native language.

The last area explored politeness and directness attitudes in communication. This area is as culture relative as much as the other ones; however, it reveals tendencies in communication when no profit is at stake, which distinguishes it from the area of emotions. The area of politeness dealt with situations where mere degree of willingness to please counterparts in social interactions by positive attitudes is involved, while the speaker does not risk losing any advantage of his role. The implications may be more general as to language functions are concerned, as this area covers most interactions in all conversations. It may affect rapport establishing functions, e.g. tag questions and backchannels, discourse markers to indicate solidarity with interlocutors, saving face devices, tact, generosity and praise devices, etc.

The statements of the same area of interest were dispersed in the questionnaire, each area being covered by four statements. The four statements were designed to offer options from both the perspectives (agreement/disagreement) of the examined issue, each side being covered by

two statements. The respondents could express their agreement or disagreement with the statements by using a scale starting from strongly agree, agree, neither agree/nor disagree, disagree, strongly disagree. For the interpretation phase it was necessary in each area of interest to group the two statements of either positive or negative value and match them with the two statements of the opposite value, so that the final score could be calculated. The respondents could use either paper questionnaires or on-line versions. The collected responses were calculated, both from the point of view of statements and cultural groups of respondents. The areas of interest were analysed as comparisons between cultural groups, which revealed some very interesting results. Further it will be examined from the point of view of general tendencies of university students.

### Controlled emotions in communication

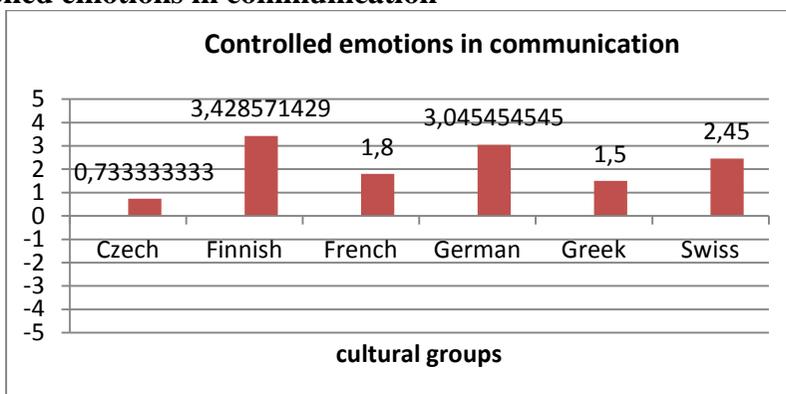


Fig. 1

As obvious from Fig. 1 the highest scores in terms of controlled emotions in communication and their ability to reason logically during expressing themselves can be ascribed to the Finnish group of students, while high scores are reached also by the German and Swiss groups. It probably correlates with stereotyped preconceptions, however, the interesting point shows, that the lowest score is reached by the Czech students, which, bearing in mind the Central European location, is slightly surprising. It may lead to presumptions that a more straightforward language could be used by them in stressful situations.

### Approach to time schedules

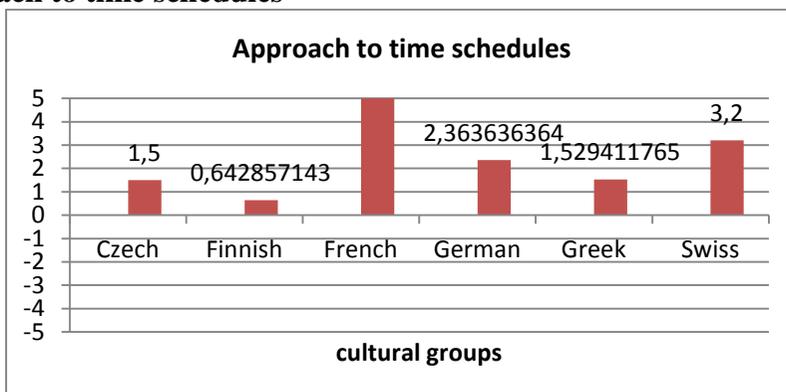


Fig.2.

As shown in Fig.2 the highest scores in terms of time orientation were achieved by the French group of students, which might contradict with the widespread pre-assumptions. The second and third most particular about keeping time schedules were Swiss and German students. The surprising result of the Finnish group calls for further examination. However, all the cultural groups revealed relatively strong commitment to keeping deadlines and respecting schedules. The respective language functions should reflect it in polite apologising or giving explanations for delays, polite structures for suggesting obligatory, however, not imperative assignments time-wise and reactions to them.

### Approach to rules

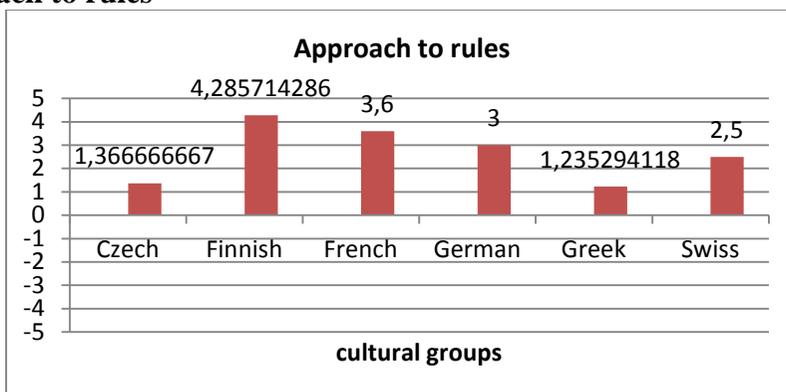


Fig.3.

According to the Fig.3 the results of respecting rules across cultural groups became obvious. The groups where rules tend to be least respected are the Czech and Greek groups, however, the prevailing rule-respecting attitude is similar across all of the groups. Rules tend to be respected, which

in International English might be reflected in using rather subtle emphasizing language in e.g. announcements, memos, notices, and directives. The results showed no need for explicit imperatives.

### Individual or team-player approach

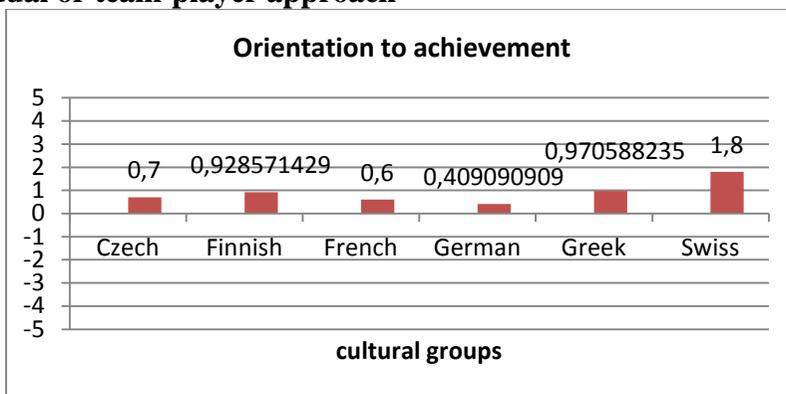


Fig.4.

As evident from the Fig. 4 the French and Greek students were the most individual groups, the other cultural groups tended to team-player approach, however, the results were very balanced. The results would not imply significant changes in silence and speaking modes, it rather leads to enhancing language structures as willingness to sharing, establishing and confirming rapport, politely agreeing or disagreeing, or on the other hand polite demarcation of one’s territory or admitting responsibility.

### Orientation to achievement

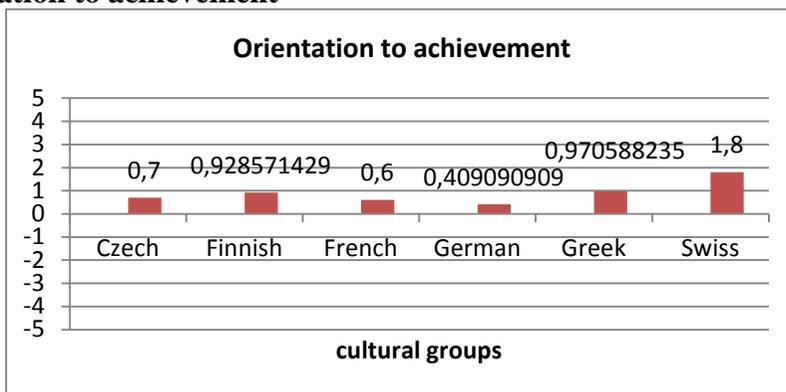


Fig. 5.

As seen from the Fig. 5 it was clear the cultural groups did not manifest significant differences. Such an outcome is safe for using self-

confident language structures in discussing work or study performance, ambitious language of evaluation and self-evaluation.

**Risk avoidance**

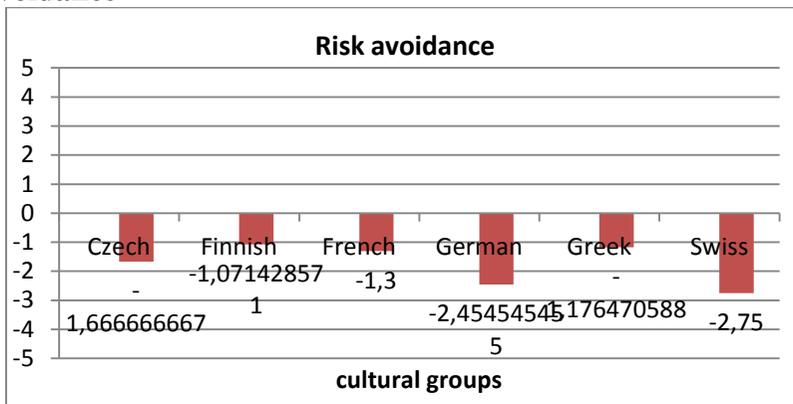


Fig. 6.

According to the Fig. 6 it was evident all the cultural groups tend to taking risk rather than avoiding it, which, bearing in mind the context of International English as a means of establishing new contacts in international environment is positive. The results were relatively balanced across cultures and it was obvious young people do not feel reluctant to talk, neither to approach challenges. International English may reflect it in language structures of starting new social contacts in both formal and informal register. As seen from the Fig. 6 the most daring are Swiss, German and Czech students, which might suggest a tendency to a more straightforward language.

**Approach to politeness**

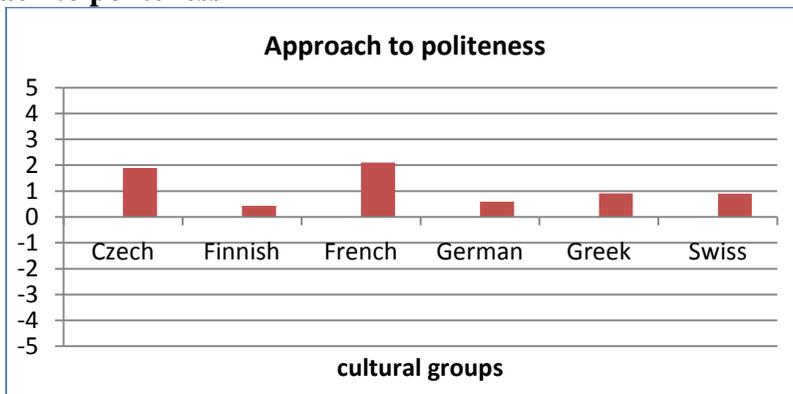


Fig 7.

As seen from the Fig. 7 all the groups prioritize more polite trends over directness. There are still some differences between the groups, as obvious, the Czech and French groups tend to more courteous communication, the least careful about directness are Finnish and German cultural groups. This area touches not only verbal, but also non-verbal communication as an integral part of the pragmatics paradigm.

## Conclusion

The carried survey revealed prevailing likeliness in communication trends of the university students, however, certain areas showed either slightly surprising results in terms of preconceptions or implied for a closer look at them being potentially controversial or requiring caution. The important aspect of the survey was the questionnaire language – English. This fact enhanced authenticity of reactions, as the primary aim was to reveal communication trends in IE. Students thus did not focus on the mental content only but were expected to react to the form while applying their language comprehension. A likeness can be generally expected in communication in IE among university students in control of emotions in communication in favour of a more explicit message at high stake situations. However, it does not imply the message can be conveyed in abrupt language. It calls for more attention to be paid to the use of conditionals, subtle language structures, and hedging etc. especially with Czech students, who otherwise tend to be very polite; nevertheless, in stressful situations conveyed in IE they might not fully distinguish the language register of IE. In terms of approach to time schedules the groups are alike oriented, the time particularity of the French group should be further examined. The respective language functions in setting deadlines should involve polite IE structures not to sound imperative. The approach to rules also revealed similar attitudes, which might again be reflected in using subtle language in e.g. announcing rules and obligations. The individual or team player approach aspect showed certain differences in trends among the groups, with both trends present. The differences suggest this area might be a touchy territory and the respective language functions for expressing willingness to sharing or polite demarking personal territory need utmost attention. Orientation to achievement aspect showed the cultural groups likeness attitude towards achievement with the Swiss group reaching the highest scores. The derived language structures should reflect the self-confident approach and count on ambitious reactions. The risk avoidance area revealed all cultural groups tend to taking sound risks in establishing new social contacts, no explicit apprehensions or risk avoidance was obvious in any group, which means no real hindrances stand in the way of IE communication in both formal and

informal register. The area of politeness or directness displayed all the groups tend to the same – polite – pole; however, within this trend they showed differences in the degree or concept of politeness. Implications may be drawn both for verbal and non-verbal communication patterns in IE and focus should be put on the conventions of the audience/interlocutors.

The survey showed IE being a real vessel of international communication intakes, processes and finally manifests cultural communication patterns which should be paid utmost attention in terms of pragmatic aspects and revealing motives of speakers. This way IE may both provide and be provided with a more holistic understanding to spoken utterances.

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# IDEOLOGICAL BASIS FOR REJECTING BEN? THE EUGENIC LEAD IN DORIS LESSING'S THE FIFTH CHILD

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## Abstract

It is the wager of this essay that the behavior and perspective of the Lovatt family in Doris Lessing's The Fifth Child could reveal an ideological basis related to the now anachronistic discipline of Eugenics, which proposed the existence of higher and lower races and specimens of humanity, relying on physical and mental traits to differentiate the one from the other. This notion will be explored by delving into the text and analyzing the manner in which Ben Lovatt's relatives treat and refer to him, and how such instances connect with existing literature on the aforementioned (pseudo) science.

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**Keywords:** Eugenics, unfit, race, evil.

## Introduction

The first time I read Doris Lessing's novel The Fifth Child was a memorable one. For years afterwards I would think, from time to time, about the story of a clearly unwanted, presumably monstrous child accused of wrecking the lives of his family members. The disturbing visual images and the problematic mother-child relationship stayed with me. So did what I perceived as the double standards of the story with regard to evil, on the one hand, explicitly ascribed to Ben Lovatt, the family scourge, and, on the other, manifested by his relatives, eager to eradicate the misfit.

The "greater-good argument" used by the Lovatt family to justify its murderous impulses towards Ben, whom his relatives thought an evil member of another "kind" (112), also intrigued me. It betrayed the presence of strong ideological elements involving thoughts of racial superiority hidden behind the defense of family values, thoughts reminiscent of the pseudo-science of Eugenics.

This essay will attempt to trace and expose these controversial ideas.

## Analysis

In order to detect the eugenic ideas potentially guiding the Lovatts' attitudes and actions, it would first be advisable to go over some fundamental theoretical concepts which are crucially connected with the eugenic ideology<sup>1</sup>. These are the notions of *people*, *kind*, *race* and *species*.

While *a people* is a "group of human beings of common descent living together in some sort of association, however loosely structured" (Appiah, "Race" 274-75), the word *kind* seems to be a synonym for *people* (274). In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the expression *a people* began to be identified, in the Western world, with the terms *nation*, namely, a group of human beings of common descent with the same language and culture, and *race*, meaning a group of individuals who share "certain fundamental, biologically heritable, moral and intellectual characteristics with each other that they [do] not share with members of any other [group]" (276). The characteristics of a race were thought to be its *essence* (Ibid).

It would seem, then, that *a race* was considered *a subdivision of the human race* or *species* that shared the aforementioned traits. The 19<sup>th</sup> century interest in dividing humans into races with allegedly inherited physical, moral and intellectual peculiarities is known as *racialism* (Appiah, "Race" 276). Thus described, racialism qualifies as a type of Eugenics.

The definition of race given above, which gave way to racialism, is still common today at the popular level, although dated from a scientific viewpoint: "There is [at present] a fairly widespread consensus in the sciences of biology and anthropology that the word 'race,' at least as it is used in most unscientific discussions [in a eugenic manner, i.e. attributing social and personality traits, such as criminality or laziness, to certain races], refers to nothing science should recognize as real" (277). In spite of this, the fact remains that the word *is* used and the ideas *do* exist: "in this respect, races are like witches: however unreal witches are, *belief* in witches, like belief in races, has had—and in many communities continues to have—profound consequences for human social life" (Ibid).

The concept of *race*, together with the notions of *people*, *kind* and *species*—meaning a group of "related organisms that [...] are capable of interbreeding [...]" (Britannica Online)—are relevant for the analysis of the eugenic component in The Fifth Child, since Harriet Lovatt, Ben's mother, often relates his features and personality to those of a prehistoric stock. More

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<sup>1</sup> It should be remembered that an *ideology* is a type of social representation or belief shared by a group of individuals (Van Dijk 12) and manifested "in polarized thought, opinions, action or discourse," dividing people into "Us and Them" and promoting identification with a certain group (13-14).

than that, she thinks Ben is a member, not of a subdivision of the human species, but of a whole separate one: “Neanderthal baby” (48) (direct speech from Harriet) “‘Perhaps he thinks there’s more of his kind somewhere.’ / ‘Perhaps he does.’ / ‘Provided it’s not a female of the species!’” (105) (Harriet to her own mother). Consequently, when Harriet and the other relatives talk about the fifth child’s “kind,” “people,” or “race,” they would ultimately refer to a different *species*, making all the words interchangeable.

The focus on *race*, in Appiah’s sense of the word, shown by the Lovatts is typical of Eugenics, the pseudo-science founded by Charles Darwin’s cousin, Francis Galton, in 1883 and originally aimed at fostering the multiplication of the “best races” or “blood strains,” so that these would prevail over “lesser ones” ([Britannica Online](#)). As Galton conceived it, Eugenics consisted in “breeding the best of humanity to constantly improve the quality of succeeding generations” (Carlson 9), fostering, in particular, “intelligence, cultural talents, and physical strength and dexterity” (Ibid). This type of Eugenics was later to be known as *positive Eugenics* and was popular among the upper-classes and British intellectuals of the time. Its goal was to promote the education of “the ablest and the brightest,” encouraging these to have a more numerous offspring than less promising specimens (Ibid). The manner in which the word *Eugenics* was coined may give further clues as to the initial spirit of the field:

That is, with questions bearing on what is termed in Greek *eugenes*, namely, good in stock, hereditarily endowed with noble qualities. This, and the allied words, *eugeneia*, etc., are equally applicable to men, brutes, and plants. We greatly want a brief word to express the science of improving the stock, which is by no means confined to questions of judicious mating, but which, especially in the case of man, takes cognisance of all influences that tend in however remote a degree to give to the more suitable races or strains of blood a better chance of prevailing speedily over the less suitable than they otherwise would have had. The word *eugenics* would sufficiently express the idea; it is at least a neater word and a more generalized one than *viriculture*, which I once ventured to use. (Galton qtd. in Carlson 10)

Therefore, the main concern of this pseudo-science was to improve the quality of a race by fostering the procreation of its “best specimens.” This, however, does not seem to be the type of Eugenics influencing the fifth child’s family, since, at the point in the story in which Harriet and David (her

husband), two healthy Anglo-Saxon specimens<sup>2</sup>, already have four children, their relatives do not encourage them to go on having more, but rather urge them, at first, to “give it a rest” (22), and, then, when they realize the couple earnestly plans to enlarge their family, they appear to wish the pair would simply stop having children altogether.

The relatives reject the idea of Harriet and David having more children for various reasons. Firstly, they realize that, even though Harriet’s mother helps her with the house and the children, Harriet is already too tired and irritable to look after more offspring. Secondly, the young Lovatts have no money of their own to support such a large household and, as a consequence, rely heavily on David’s father for financial assistance. Thirdly, at the time period in which this part of the story is set, i.e. during the 1960s’ cultural revolution, many people were no longer in the habit of having large families.

So, if the relatives are not influenced by positive Eugenics, what kind are they influenced by? In view of their intention to eliminate the fifth child, it would seem that by *negative Eugenics*. Highly popular in the United States of the late-19<sup>th</sup> and early- to mid-20<sup>th</sup> centuries, it consisted in “[preserving what was thought to be] the basic goodness of its people by trying to prevent those deemed unfit from breeding with each other or with essentially decent people” (Carlson 10). This was achieved by, for instance, sterilizing and even killing *the unfit*, i.e. persons believed to be weak, both mentally and physically, and regarded as “society’s failures”: “paupers, criminals, psychotics, the mentally retarded, vagrants, prostitutes, and beggars” (9).

The term *the unfit* was popularly used in the United States from the 1880s to the 1940s (Ibid). It was also used in Great Britain, as evinced by a 1908 recommendation of the Royal Commission “On the Care and Control of the Feeble-Minded<sup>3</sup>,” in which it is advised that the mentally “inadequate”

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<sup>2</sup> David comes from an upper-class English family, is an attractive young man with “a round, candid face and soft brown hair” (2) and Harriet is described as a middle-class, “healthy young woman” (Ibid).

<sup>3</sup> Eugenics was often promoted by the government. In England, for instance, the “Feeble-Minded [Control] Bill [...] extended the principles of the old Lunacy Laws [...] to persons without a trace of lunacy” (Chesterton 17) and aimed at implementing “negative Eugenics” (19). Based on this Bill, supported by such prominent government figures like Winston Churchill, a person whom a doctor thought “feeble-minded” would have been institutionalized in an asylum. The main problem with this was that the Bill’s definition of “feeble-minded” was dubious and had the potential of being applied to a large and diverse portion of the population: “persons who though capable of earning their living under favorable circumstances [...] are nevertheless incapable of managing their affairs with proper prudence” (20). Due to the generality of the definition, “weak-mindedness” became a matter of (medical) opinion, and, needless to say, opinions may differ (39). Although the Feeble-Minded Control Bill was later withdrawn, as stated in Martin Gilbert’s article “Churchill and Eugenics,” it set the mood for the Mental Deficiency Bill, introduced on 10

be detained and the “unfit” sterilized (cf Martin Gilbert’s article “Churchill and Eugenics”).

From a eugenic perspective, Ben would qualify as "an unfit" because he is a reportedly unattractive, unintelligent child whom the family pronounces *essentially* evil. However, by disowning Ben, the relatives evade any responsibility for the "defective" specimen, which belongs, surely, to another “kind,” “people,” “race,” or “species.” Of course, this is a fantastic explanation of Ben’s birth, since, from a rational standpoint, the fifth child is Harriet and David’s biological son.

The Lovatts’ attempt to eliminate the family’s violent “unfit” by sending him to a certain death at an Institution for unwanted children echoes the efforts of those involved with negative Eugenics, who tried to protect the different races they belonged to (most notoriously, races deriving from the Germanic stock) from the allegedly noxious presence of “weaker” specimens and blood strains. The methods chosen to achieve this were confinement, sterilization and, sometimes, death.

In the novel, the relatives appear to see their attempt to murder Ben as an act of self-defense, somewhat like US eugenicists must have regarded the sterilization of the “feeble-minded” and the neglect of “defective” babies, who would die from being purposely unattended<sup>4</sup>. Their deaths, like Ben’s, were desirable, in order to protect society from “defective” specimens.

Following this mentality, and in the words of Cesare Lombroso, the notorious Italian doctor quoted in the American Heritage article "Race Cleansing in America," Ben would be just another member of "the group of criminals, born for evil, against whom all social cures break as against a rock—a fact which compels us to eliminate them completely, even by death." From this viewpoint, the fifth child’s annihilation would benefit both the Lovatts and the entire English nation.

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June of that same year. This Bill, also supported by Churchill, was passed in 1913. It failed to include the sterilization of mentally “defective” individuals, but authorized their confinement. This type of Eugenics-based legislation was in force until 1959, when the Mental Health Act put an end to it.

<sup>4</sup> According to the article “Race Cleansing in America,” from American Heritage, in 1915, Harry Haiselden, a surgeon from Chicago, admitted he did not treat “defective” newborns on purpose, to have them die. He argued theirs were “lives of no value” and added that the country “[had] been invaded” and “[the] streets [had been] infested with an Army of the Unfit—a dangerous, vicious army of death and dread.” He appears to have seen himself as somewhat of a public servant, doing society a duty and a favor by getting rid of the “horrid semi-humans” of the future while they were still in the cradle.

Yet Ben is not the only "unfit" in the family whose elimination would be, eugenically-speaking, "beneficial" for society. The other "weak link" in the Lovatt circle is Amy, Ben's cousin. However, she is not condemned to death at the Institution, as Ben is. This striking difference between the fates of these two "defectives" needs further analysis.

A Down-syndrome child, the narrator explains that "everyone adored [Amy]" (60). But how much truth is in this statement? Isn't she also rejected and patronized? Is she loved, or is she simply pitied? The following passage may provide an answer to these questions:

Amy [...] was the center of everything. Her head was too big, her body too squat, but she was full of love and kisses and everyone adored her. Helen, who had longed to make a pet of Ben, was now able to love Amy. Ben watched all this, silent, and Harriet could not read the look in those cold yellow-green eyes [...]. Amy, who expected everyone to love her, would go up to Ben, chuckling, laughing, her arms out. Twice his age, but apparently half his age, this afflicted infant, who was radiant with affection, suddenly became silent; her face was woeful, and she backed away, staring at him. Just like Mr. McGregor, the poor cat. Then she began to cry whenever she saw him. Ben's eyes were never off her, this other afflicted one, adored by everyone (60)

After reading this fragment carefully, the façade of love starts to peel off. Perhaps the most conspicuous aspect of the passage is that the child appears to be viewed in terms of an animal—a cat or a dog. She seems to be liked as "a pet" (60) would be. Moreover, there is a hint at the fact that her physical appearance causes rejection, but the amount of love she gives to the relatives compensates for this off-putting characteristic: "Her head was too big, her body too squat, *but* she was full of love and kisses and everyone adored her" (60) (emphasis added). Finally, her intellect is clearly undermined, although there is no mention of a doctor having established her level of intelligence, which would mean any comments on that point represent Harriet's assessment of the child, given that hers is the predominant perspective in the story.

Although the latter passage clearly reveals Amy is perceived as "inadequate," much like Ben, the feeling that Amy is rejected by the family starts building up long before that, from the first time she is mentioned in the novel: "The cloud on family happiness that was Sarah and William's discord disappeared, for it was absorbed in worse. Sarah's new baby was Down's syndrome [...]." (18). Amy is, therefore, from the first, a "bigger cloud" in her relatives' happiness than her parents' troubled marriage is. Her grandmother Dorothy, on her part, considers Amy's birth to be a cause of suffering for Sarah, "who was [now] afflicted" (Ibid).

Sarah herself believes Amy is a token of her "bad luck." Harriet shares the feeling that the little child is decidedly a misfortune but, also, a sort of punishment to her parents: "Harriet said to David, privately, that she did not believe it was bad luck [Sarah had had]: Sarah and William's unhappiness, their quarreling, had probably attracted the mongol child<sup>5</sup> – yes, yes, of course she knew one shouldn't call them mongol. But the little girl did look a bit like Genghis Khan, didn't she? A baby Genghis Khan with her squashed little face and her slitty eyes?" (18). Besides Harriet's "fatalism" (Ibid) and superstition, which bothers David and surfaces once again after Ben's birth ("We are being punished [with Ben], that's all" (108)), the latter fragment suggests a dislike of other *races*, in the eugenic sense of the word, i.e. of other groups of human beings with different and presumably inherited mental, attitudinal and physical characteristics. The passage also highlights the importance of physical appearance in perceiving other races as Other—a point Kwame Anthony Appiah makes in his essay "Race" (274)—and prefigures Harriet's negative reaction towards Ben, who is physically different from her; so dissimilar, in fact, that she conjectures he belongs to another "kind," "people," "race," "species."

But if both Amy and Ben are rejected by the relatives, why send Ben to die but tolerate Amy? A possible explanation may relate to the fifth child's strength. Even though Ben and Amy are each regarded as "a bad hand" (59) (conversation between Sarah, Harriet's sister, and Harriet) and an "afflicted one" (60) (Harriet through the narrator), Amy is perceived as loving and essentially harmless; Ben, however, is unfriendly and incredibly strong, which makes the relatives fear him, since they believe he may pose a threat to their safety.

Moreover, and perhaps more importantly, the Lovatts cannot label Ben, they do not know what he is—*What was he?* (60) (Harriet through the narrator). Conversely, they already know what Amy is: she is a Down-syndrome child. The plethora of names the family applies to Ben—*dwarf, troll, goblin, hobgoblin, Neanderthal baby, changeling*, etc.—betrays their cluelessness as to the fifth child's identity. Thus, the relatives' fear seems to be a fear of the unknown.

But there are other reasons why the family dislikes Ben, and these also account for their negative concept of Amy, since they relate to the figure of the "unfit." This label implied more than being a criminal prone to evil: the term also comprehended persons lacking in beauty and intelligence.

Thus, Ben's ugliness would have made him undesirable to a eugenicist, because lack of beauty was thought to be a trait of the "inferior" stocks. In

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<sup>5</sup> The source of the punishment is unclear. Fate? The gods? God? Except for very few ambiguous references like this one, there is no suggestion as to the Lovatts being religious.

fact, beauty was so dear to eugenists that, according to the previously-quoted American Heritage article, “‘beautiful baby’ contests [were] held at state fairs and amusement parks [in the United States]”—the type of contest baby Ben, who “was not a pretty baby” (Lessing 43) (Harriet through the narrator), would never have won.

As regards intelligence, it was an attribute particularly appreciated by Francis Galton, the father of the pseudo-science (Carlson 9). Ben’s lack of intelligence would, therefore, be another mark of “unfitness” from the eugenic standpoint. Significantly, in the novel, Ben’s limited intelligence is frequently emphasized: Harriet claims “he [cannot] learn” (89); Mrs. Graves, his headmistress, explains his teacher “has to put more effort into him than all the rest put together” (92), but also remarks that he is, according to the teacher, “a rewarding little boy because he does try” (Ibid); finally, Dr. Gilly, one of Ben’s pediatricians, mentions “He is not very good at school” (96) and implicitly labels him as *slow* with her comment that “often slow children catch up later” (Ibid).

Because of Ben’s limited intelligence, a eugenic mind would place him within the “feeble-minded” category, thus branding him as inadequate for procreation (Chesterton 20-21) and, even, for life. Consequently, eugenically-speaking, having him die at the Institution would be “the right thing to do” for the family and society.

However, this “logic” disregards Ben’s actual capacity to learn: “he did know a lot of things that made him into a part-social being. He knew facts. ‘Traffic lights green – go. Traffic lights red – stop.’ [...]. He would singsong these truths, imparted to him presumably by John [his grownup friend], looking at Harriet for confirmation” (89). Ironically, it is the narrator who, focalizing this part of the narrative through Harriet, makes the latter concession about Ben in the very same paragraph in which readers are told “She had given up trying to read to him, play with him, teach him anything [because] he could not learn” (Ibid). Naturally, a eugenic interpretation of the previous fragments would argue that whatever knowledge Ben may appear to have would be, in reality, parrot-like repetition by a “slow” individual. Therefore, a person may “know” facts and still be “feeble-minded.” Harriet’s assessment of Ben’s intelligence appears to be along these lines.

Harriet dismisses the fact that there *are* people who manage to teach him things, like John and Ben’s teachers (even though teaching Ben is, admittedly, a difficult task). He *can* learn; he just needs a lot of attention and patience to help him along. But Harriet has made up her mind that he *cannot*: “She had given up trying to read to him, play with him, teach him anything: he could not learn” (89). It may be that part of Ben’s “problem” is, actually, a lack of stimulation from his mother and family circle, or, in Dr. Gilly’s

words: "The problem is not with Ben, but with you [Harriet]. You don't like him very much" (95).

Harriet's idea that Ben cannot improve his mind appears to mirror the eugenic belief that undesirable hereditary characteristics could not be "corrected," the eugenists' motto being, in Franz Boas's words, "Nature not nurture" (472). However, this eugenic notion was soon critiqued. Those against it argued that traits which may seem hereditary could be, in truth, partly or entirely due to environmental and social factors (such would be the case with lack of intelligence and criminality), as both G.K. Chesterton and Franz Boas pointed out, respectively, in their works Eugenics and Other Evils and "Eugenics."

Following this last theory, if Harriet had treated Ben better or taken greater pains with his education, his capacity to learn would perhaps have been greater and his personality gentler. Instead, she quickly labels Ben as "naturally and incorrigibly stupid," predisposing herself to give up on him too soon. She thinks Ben hopeless.

The rest of Ben's family also appears to regard him as a hopeless case. Perceiving his limited intelligence and other undesirable traits like his alleged ugliness and criminal tendencies, they encourage David and Harriet to commit him to an Institution for unwanted children, where he is to die. His institutionalization is arranged by David's mother and stepfather, who belong to the English intellectual and upper classes. This detail also warrants reading their negative attitude towards Ben as possibly influenced by Eugenics, considering the pseudo-science was particularly popular, in Great Britain, within these classes.

Ludicrous though it may seem from a non-eugenic vantage point, for eugenists, sending Ben to his death "would be the 'honorable' thing to do" (Chesterton 7), because they would be saving future generations from a "defective" specimen. This mode of thought may account for the Lovatts' sense of relief at Ben disappearing from their lives and their despondency at his return, for which Harriet is blamed (she rescues him from the Institution, out of remorse).

Be that as it may, from a non-eugenic viewpoint, the family's attempted murder of Ben *is* a criminal act, which is paradoxical, since early eugenists thought crime to be hereditary. But a eugenicist would not believe that Ben inherited *his* own evil and criminality from the family, because he or she would not deem the relatives' conduct as criminal. Therefore, the family's claim that Ben is not actually related to them would be sustained by his "criminal tendencies" and the relatives' "honorable decision" to send him to his death.

Notably, Dr. Brett, Ben's original pediatrician, is never consulted about the idea of institutionalizing the fifth child, because he would not

allow it (he does not consider Ben abnormal). In fact, neither Dr. Brett, nor, later on in the story, Dr. Gilly, pronounce Ben in any way inadequate; on the contrary, they declare him, respectively, “physically normal” (57) and “within the range of normality,” although “not very good at school” (96). The absence of a negative medical diagnosis of Ben clearly separates him from the figure of “the unfit,” given that this was a label officially bestowed by doctors, who were among the staunchest supporters of Eugenics.

Another aspect separating Ben from the prototype of the “inferior” specimen is his strength, a quality which the founder of Eugenics considered desirable (Carlson 9). In the story, Ben’s strength is greatly feared and, paradoxically, Harriet uses a eugenic explanation to account for its origin. She regards it as a characteristic he must have inherited from “his own kind” (122): “Ben again banged the tray with his stone, in a frenzy of exulting accomplishment. It looked as if he believed he was hammering metal, forging something: one could easily imagine him, in the mines deep under the earth, with his kind...” (63) (the narrator, from Harriet’s perspective).

In that particular fragment, the fifth child’s mother seems to be conjuring up a popular notion of *dwarves*, derived from the Germanic mythical figure taken up, for example, by J.R.R. Tolkien in The Lord of the Rings: “diminutive [beings], bearded, stout of stature, miners of ores and gems,” living out of human sight, under the earth, “especially in mines and caves,” where they smith and forge metal skillfully (Drout 134). Ben’s shortness and strength (“short powerful Ben” (Lessing 100)) effectively remind his mother of a dwarf: “How do we know what kinds of people – races, I mean – creatures different from us, have lived on this planet? How do we know that dwarves or goblins or hobgoblins, that kind of thing, didn’t really live here?” (97) (Harriet to Dr. Gilly).

Harriet’s portrayals of Ben and his “people” (120) may also derive from motion pictures like One Million Years B.C. (1966) and Planet of the Apes (1968)<sup>6</sup>. In this type of movies, prehistoric humans are shown crouching round fires, in caves, or outdoors, hunting or fighting animals, activities Harriet believes Ben’s “kind” (105) could have engaged in: “Did Ben’s people live in caves underground while the ice age ground overhead, eating fish from dark subterranean rivers, or sneaking up into the bitter snow to snare a bear, or a bird?” (120); “Harriet [...] tried to imagine him among a group of his own kind, squatting in the mouth of a cave around roaring

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<sup>6</sup> It must be said that what Harriet seems to be taking from this type of movies is the prehistoric settings and situations. As regards the appearance of “primitive” peoples, Harriet probably believes them to have been ugly, as Ben is reported to be, whereas in many cavemen pictures the actors and actresses playing prehistoric individuals are good-looking for box-office purposes.

flames. Or a settlement of huts in a thick forest?” (112). Yet when Ben’s mother talks about “primitive peoples,” she does not really mean “early human beings,” but rather “prehistoric humanoids,” species resembling humans who probably co-existed with her own human “forebears” (120).

Ironically, Harriet first entertains the idea that her fifth child is from a different species while he is still in her womb. In a great amount of pain from her pregnancy, she compares the fetus with a monster resulting from the combination of different dog breeds or animal species:

Her time [of pregnancy] was endurance, containing pain. Phantoms and Chimeras inhabited her brain. When scientists make experiments, welding two kinds of animal together, of different sizes, then I suppose this is what the poor mother feels. She imagined pathetic botched creatures, horribly real to her, the products of a Great Dane or a borzoi with a little spaniel; a lion and a dog; a great cart horse and a little donkey; a tiger and a goat. (37)

This graphic description of Harriet’s “chimeras” seems to betray a eugenic disgust at the mixing of stocks. The same aversion may be detected in her conjecture that “Ben’s people” could have raped “the females of humanity’s forebears [...]”. Thus making new races, which had flourished and departed, but perhaps had left their seeds in the human matrix, here and there, to appear again, as Ben had” (120). The latter fragment not only reflects a eugenic concern with inheritance; it also helps Harriet disengage herself from the fifth child, whom she disowns with this Eugenics-inspired pseudo-explanation.

Harriet shows the same horror at the mixing of stocks and prejudice at “inferior” peoples when, in a conversation with her mother, Dorothy, she insinuates that, if adolescent Ben had sexual relations with a “normal” teenage girl, these would not be consensual:

- Presumably those people of his had something like an adolescence?
- How do we know? Perhaps they weren’t as sexual as we are. Someone said we’re oversexed– who? Yes, it was Bernard Shaw<sup>7</sup>.

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<sup>7</sup> In George Bernard Shaw’s Man and Superman, a play which discusses and parodies subject matters such as the nature of romantic interactions between men and women, capitalism and Nietzsche’s concept of the *superman* or *higher man*, a character remarks that “Vitality is as common as humanity; but, like humanity, it sometimes rises to genius; and Ann is one of the vital geniuses. Not at all, if you please, an oversexed person: that is a vital defect, not a true excess. She is a perfectly respectable, perfectly self-controlled woman, and looks it; though her pose is fashionably frank and impulsive.” It is to this quote that Dorothy seems to be referring, albeit possibly inadvertently, in this fragment of The Fifth Child.

- *All the same, the thought of Ben sexual scares me.*
- *He hasn't hurt anyone for a long time.* (104) (emphasis added)

Dorothy and Harriet's concern that Ben may soon become sexually active could also be connected with the possibility of him fathering an offspring, either with a human girl or with "a female of [his] species" (105). This preoccupation would echo the eugenic concern with the multiplication of "the unfit," who had to be prevented from "breeding with each other or with essentially decent people" (Carlson 10).

The apprehensiveness Harriet and Dorothy show at the prospect of Ben having a sexual partner and, presumably, descendants, Harriet's belief that he is an ugly child who is unable to learn, as well as the whole family's rejection of the fifth child for his alleged criminal tendencies, appear to point to Eugenics as a major ideological influence affecting the family's notion and treatment of the fifth child.

Even though Ben is not the only member of the family who would be regarded as "defective" from a eugenic standpoint, because his strength makes him a potential threat to the family's safety, he is sent to die at an Institution for unwanted children, while his cousin Amy, a Down-syndrome child, is spared this somber fate, perhaps because the relatives consider her harmless and have, therefore, taken her for "a pet" (60).

In spite of treating them differently, the relatives seem to view both Amy and Ben as "inferior" specimens, a sentiment which brings to mind the eugenic division of human beings into "inferior" and "superior" stocks. For Ben, this has dire consequences: commitment to an Institution in which he is expected to die. The family has taken the eugenicist's "higher road": it has condemned evil Ben to a just death.

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Nietzsche's ideal of the *superman* or *higher man*, one of the notions Shaw's play parodies, involves a person who does not follow traditional morality, particularly Christian morality, is solitary, reverences him or herself, pursues a life-project which guides and unifies his or her existence, welcomes suffering as a means to achieve profundity of vision and artistic greatness, appreciates the life he or she leads, disappointments and all, and would live it again if that were possible (further information on this concept may be found in [The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy](#), on the University's Web site). This "higher man" notion has been taken up and vulgarized by various ideologies, such as Eugenics. In England, academics like Oscar Levy used the Nitzschean disdain towards "lesser" human beings as philosophical justification for this pseudo-science (Stone 14).

It is striking that, of all of Shaw's works, it is [Man and Superman](#) that is quoted in [The Fifth Child](#). Given that the contention of this essay is that, in Mrs. Lessing's story, the view Ben's relatives have of him is influenced by Eugenics, it would be interesting to explore the possible significance of the reference. This task, however, will not be undertaken at this time due to length limitations. Nevertheless, it should make a fertile subject for future research.

## Conclusion

Doris Lessing's horror story The Fifth Child has inspired manifold interpretations ever since its publication in 1988, as Mrs. Lessing herself complainingly remarked in the New York Times interview "The Painful Nurturing of Doris Lessing's Fifth Child": "God knows how many things they've said this book is really supposed to be about. There are lists of them, each one laid down with total authority."

Let it be noted that it is not the intention of this essay to claim an ultimate or irrefutable interpretation of the story, but merely to offer an alternative reading, which could explain the reaction of the Lovatt family to the infamous fifth child.

Instrumental to this reading have been the various discriminatory references and innuendos put forward by the relatives, which are found plainly throughout the narrative. They seem to signal a common frame of mind that can be easily associated with the 19<sup>th</sup> century (pseudo) science of Eugenics, whose advocates were intent on ridding humankind of "unwanted specimens," individuals much like the character of Ben Lovatt.

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## PRAGMATIC APPROACH ON ADVERTISING DISCOURSE

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### Abstract

The present paper is focused on analysing certain aspects concerning the advertising discourse viewed from the pragmatics point of view. We have chosen this approach because of several reasons.

Firstly, because pragmatics is that linguistic discipline interested in considering the everyday talk for which absolutely nothing could be viewed as "grammatically incorrect" (while traditional linguistics conceives discourse in terms of the dichotomy "grammatically correct – incorrect"). Many of us have uttered sequences of incorrect talk on purpose, in order to ironize certain persons or facts. It means that it is the communicative intention that really matters, and not the message uttered as such.

Secondly, because advertising is one of the most obvious samples of everyday talk, so it could be nicely and easily viewed from a pragmatic point of view.

Thirdly, because such an approach has not been done so far, and we consider it proper as it can reveal more interesting means of building the message. Such an approach could also turn the advertising discourse into a more efficient one (both for the advertiser who can sell the promoted product faster, and for the consumer, as well, who can be more satisfied with the products around him).

The present article comprises four parts: the first part is the literature review on the researched topic, the second part includes the research methodology, the third part presents the case study and the fourth part presents the results and the conclusions.

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**Keywords:** Situation of communication, deictic elements, theories of advertising

## Introduction

It is a fact that advertising surrounds us everywhere we go, whatever we do: in the mountains, in the countryside, when we watch our favorite movie or listen to our radio programme, when we simply read a newspaper, or when we use our laptop.

It is also a fact that we do not pay much attention to the commercials or advertisements we bump into as we have got too familiar with them, so that they might be considered as a part of the contemporary landscape. The image of a town with no banners in its streets is unbelievable and it could remind us of the imaginary – so that, unreal- town in `Inception`, the movie which enriched once more the fame of Leo di Caprio , as well as of Chris Nollan, the producer. The town above mentioned, designed by Ariadne – the name has not been chosen at random, I think, as it has deep mythological roots- was a surreal projection of the human mind tormented by nightmares. That very town is the single urban place with no advertising banners in its streets.

We all know that nowadays almost all the products are not simply promoted for what they actually bring (example: a shampoo will wash your hair, a motor-car will bring comfort and speed for you to face your life and business better, etc.); but they are promoted together with an extra-advantage you will get, suppose you purchase the respective product. Most often, that extra-advantage implies an improvement of the personal look.

We should also remember the experiment David Ogilvy made years ago: he asked his students to taste a glass of water telling them: `Here you have still water. How does it taste?' all of them agreed it tasted normally, namely good, the usual taste we all know: still water. Ten he gave them a second glass with water in it, telling them it was tape-water and asked them to taste it. They all felt something unpleasant in its taste. Moreover, there were students who declared that the water smelled badly, too. In fact, they had tasted the same still water, and the strange taste was due to a psychological factor: they had been told that they would be given to drink something worse. That is, the students had not actually tasted the water for the second time, they had tasted the image.(Ogilvy, 1999)

This is what a brand brings about: the image of a superior, stylish, special way of life, envied by everyone. The advertiser activates the psychological mechanism of persuading the target, inducing (the target) the impression of getting a better life by means of using (if purchasing) the promoted product.

What brands sell, is not only a specific category of products, but a style of life. Consumers usually buy in order to fulfil their needs and to impress the people around them too (Sutherland, 2011). They are induced needs which do not actually correspond to their life – we have just mentioned one

of the weak aspects of advertising, aspect for which it has been often criticized.

### Literature review

Specialists have been always interested in analysing the way the advertising discourse could be created. Ogilvy was considering advertising discourse such a serious matter that he was convinced that it was even easier to write ten lousy sonnets than one good and efficient advertisement (Ogilvy, 1999).

The advertising discourse is the result of the lucky meeting of the iconic message with the textual one, so that image and text may go together and touch the soul of the consumer making him decide to buy the respective promoted product or service. The concept of **discourse cohesion** assures the compatibility between image and text within an advertisement (White, 2000).

Specialists have revealed that the advertising language should be accessible for every single consumer to be able to properly understand the message in order to react properly (namely, go and purchase the promoted product). The message should be also short: whether it is transmitted via TV or radio, it should not last more than 30 seconds (Condry, 2010). The **slogan** is supposed to have no more than 12 words, while the **body text** is necessary only under certain conditions: whether the promoted product belongs to the category of products for which the public shows a high degree of involvement (Goddard, 2002; Bonnange, Thomas, 2004).

The art of writing an efficient advertising discourse may be decisive for the consumer when he is about to choose among more similar products.

Thus, in point of technology, more producing companies follow the same steps, fact that could imply that their products are almost similar. Yet the consumer is supposed to make a choice and this choice was found to be based on psychological reasons: on that extra-advantage obtained after using the promoted product. For example, any shampoo will wash your hair (the main, basic advantage), but the trade-marks have to be different from one another. This is why the consumer is told that trade-mark X could make her/his hair cashmere smooth, while trade-mark Y will make it diamond shine. And there is also trade-mark Z which will make the consumer irresistible for her/his lover/husband. This is the extra-advantage, the so-called "feather" which will turn the balance towards one certain product, according to the inner wish of the consumer (Sutherland, Sylvester, 2010).

This is why the advertising discourse belongs sometimes to a fairy tale realm- in order to induce the sense of long-lasting happiness and welfare (Popescu, 2005). The advertisement may turn into a short fairy tale meant to induce a calm and optimistic spirit.

Therefore we should perceive the advertising discourse more like a challenge than like an absolute true statement (and not punish it in case the promoted shampoo does not make you look like a Hollywood star). Advertising discourse should be viewed like a game where we willingly enter.

This is the reason why it presents a female guarantee who is always beautiful, young, desirable, sexy and available, and in a good mood, no matter the promoted product. Actually, the female guarantee has been noticed to be used for promoting most of the products and services. (Miroiu, 1995).

We may ask ourselves why the feminine guarantee is preferred to the masculine one. Psychological research studies have revealed that woman influences the course of purchases in a couple/family more than a man does. A female guarantee will be watched both by women (as a comparison term to their own look) and by men, too (who have been always attracted by the feminine beauty) (Todoran, 2004). Situation changes when the same product (let us say, feminine cosmetics) is promoted within a market animated by certain moral norms. The female guarantee can be the same pretty, young lady, but differently dressed (namely, more decently), suppose the product is promoted within the Oriental market (White, 2000).

As far as we see, the advertising discourse, in order to be an efficient one (namely, to sell the product) should take into consideration:

- The type of target it addresses to;
- The age of the promoted product;
- The specific cultural features of the community who will get the promoted product.

Under all circumstances, the advertising discourse should try to fulfil the AIDA principle (attention, intention, desire, action), namely to draw **the attention** of the public, to raise its **interest** in finding out more details about the promoted product/service, to make the public **desire** the respective product and finally to determine the consumer to take **action** (to purchase the product, Salavastru, 2003).

Actually, a good advertisement is not necessarily an artistically written one, with a sophisticated textual message and an exquisite iconic one, but that very advert which will sell the promoted product. Reason for which it has to „speak” the language of the target, to address to those specific needs of the consumer which need to be fulfilled.

In point of needs, we should note there are several levels established so far (Maslow, 1970), and every single product/service is supposed to address to a certain level. But in order to face successfully the fierce competition nowadays, advertisers try and succeed in situating the promoted product within a higher level than the one it should actually belong to. For instance,

although the product is meant to satisfy need (thirst, let us say), the advertiser will associate the product with the necessity of being surrounded by friends, of communicating with the fellows around, of socializing. It is the strategy some soft drinks producers have successfully applied (FANTA soft drink is one example of this kind).

The advertising discourse raises the promoted product to the nobility of a lofty feeling (e.g. friendship), and thus places it within a level of superior needs.

As far as we see, the advertising discourse has been viewed from many perspectives: a social, a psychological or a marketing one. Specialists have been preoccupied by finding out the best way of making it more efficient, in the sense that an advertisement should sell at once both the product and the image of the producing company.

The present study intends to enlarge the ways of making an advertising discourse more efficient by exploring the discourse secrets offered by **pragmatics**. We considered it proper to embark upon such an investigation because such an analyses has not been accomplished so far, and because pragmatics is very suitable to the advertising discourse (which comprises both the iconic message and the textual one).

### **Research Methodology**

We analysed mainly the textual advertising message and we investigated it from pragmatic perspective. Many pragmatic aspects are to be taken into consideration when we speak about the efficiency of the advertising discourse: **the pragmatic act** (namely, the message hidden behind the uttered words), **the context** or **the situational context of the dialogue**, the **discourse register** (which indicates the technical aspects of the information), **the type of verbal acts** (which may indicate the **illocutionary component of the message**), **the type of verbal interaction** (which highlights the relationship established between the interlocutors, namely the advertiser and his consumer) , **the levels of building a conversation**, **the discourse vectors**, **the principles of communication** (whether they are kept or broken and why) (Reboul, Moeschler, 2001).

Sometimes, **the interrogative discourse** may offer interesting interpretations whether we analyse it with pragmatic tools. "Would you like your hair diamond shine?" here is one of the hundreds of interrogative advertising statements meant not to be questions (because the emitter, namely the advertiser, does not need any answer back), but a pretext for presenting the promoted product and for raising the interest of the consumer for the respective product (White, 2000). The "answer" is given on the spot: "Buy this new shampoo!"

The sequence of conversation may be initiated by various „speakers”:

- **By the guarantee** (who stands for the target) **and speaks with someone else** about the advantages of the promoted product. It is the testimonial which allures the consumer;
- **By the guarantee** (who stands for the target) **and confesses a personal dilemma**: he/she does not know what to do to get rid of an unpleasant aspect of life (e.g. dirt in the bathroom, a good occasion for promoting cleaning products);
- **By the advertiser himself** who is ready to satisfy a dream of his interlocutor (the consumer).

All these means contribute to a stronger persuasion of the consumer, because they may create the impression of authenticity in communication.

Because of the reduced dimensions of the present paper, we analysed only two aspects: **the situation of communication** and **the deictic elements**.

**The situation of communication** represents that specific type of relationship which is established owing to certain work conditions. That is the relationship between doctor and his patient (Ruxandoiu, Chitoran, 1975), between the shop-assistant and client, teacher – student, and so on. In everyday life, the situation of communication implies a certain distance between the two persons and a formal context of developing their communication (Reboul, Moeschler, 2001).

Advertising has brought an element of novelty in building the situation of communication. **The formal context** has been changed into **an informal one**, and the protagonists are no longer separated by the distance of age or of their socio-professional position, but they are real friends (e.g. the bank clerk turn into a close friend with his customer as he knows before - hand the needs and dreams of his client).

The change was necessary because the advertiser felt that his public had been bored with the old type of the situation of communication. No one was really interested any longer in finding out pieces of information about banking services as long as they were supposed to be presented in the old manner : a smiling but stiff and official bank clerk shaking hands with a satisfied client. A change was needed. The present paper will deal with specific types of situations of communication in the case study.

**The deictic elements** offer a huge diversity of message building strategies. We will focus our attention on two types of deictic elements: the deictic elements of **time** and of **space**.

In everyday talk, each of the two categories mentioned above comprise other two sub-categories, in their turn: objective and subjective deictic elements (of time and of space).

The sequences of dialogue: "Go home!" and "Go to hell!" stand for the objective/subjective perspective upon space.

In advertising, no matter how real the space might be, how familiar and well-known could it seem to the consumer, it is always expressed by means of a **subjective deictic element of space** because it will always render an ideal image of that space.

Advertising is meant to induce the consumer a sense of welfare and happiness and comfort which can be attained only by purchasing the promoted product.

The case study of our research will emphasize interesting aspects of the Romanian advertising discourse of nowadays.

We were also interested in seeing the way the **theories of advertising** may help the advertiser build an efficient message. There are three levels of accessing the target:

- **Learn level** (which offers only information to the public, because only information is needed);
- **Like level** ( which makes the public affectively consider the product as there are many similar products in the market and his choice depends on a subjective "feather");
- **Do level** (Which makes the public purchase the promoted product).

The order the levels mentioned above are combined represents the key of the theories of advertising (Bonnange, Thomas, 2010). We will focus our attention only on two such theories: **the cognitive dissonance theory** and **the theory of childish impulse** as they were more relevant for the advertisements we took into consideration.

Interesting things could be said about **the deictic elements of time**, too, regarding the way they are built inside the advertising discourse.

In everyday talk, there is a clear distinction between **the objective** deictic elements of time (example: "I have been waiting for you for *half an hour*. Where have you been?") and **the subjective** ones (example: I have not seen Mary *for centuries*.) The advertising discourse contains only subjective deictic elements of time because the advertiser presents his subjective point of view. Even when the message contains a deictic element of time which in everyday talk is considered to be **objective**, because all the people have the same perception upon it (example: *14 days*), the advertising discourse will give it a **subjective** connotation. For example: *Your teeth will be whiter in 14 days with X toothpaste*. The truth is that the teeth will not be whiter in 14 days, but the consumer will be convinced of this fact and he will use the recommended toothpaste and hope for a better result.

We have noticed, in our case study, that many cosmetics and food staff products make use of the subjective deictic elements of time.

### **Case Study**

Interesting changes have happened in Romanian advertising discourse nowadays (we analysed quite a short span of time: 2009-2013).

We noticed that **the situation of communication** is totally modified, but for the better. Many producers chose to promote their products in this non-conformist manner as they felt they could touch more easily the heart of the target this way.

Thus, we found a changed situation of communication both for products which ask for a high degree of consumer involvement (e.g. banking services), and also for cheap products, for which the consumer will not involve himself too much (a tooth paste, a cleaning product, a bottle of juice).

In 2009, **Transylvania Bank** introduced a type of banking services guarantee totally different from what had been created in the market until that time: the fat bank clerk dressed in an office suit, but with a crown on his head, holding a magic wand in his hand and wearing a fairy like skirt. The contrast between his funny look and the serious institution and services he stands for is obvious. This apparently odd iconic image corresponds to the communicative intention of the advertiser (the emitter of the message). The bank clerk is no longer the person the client should be afraid of as he may be busy and nervous almost all the time, but a fairy-tale character, who is able to make your dreams come true. The consumer will feel comfortable and encouraged to go to such a „friendly” bank.

In 2010, **Colgate Company** created another new type of situation of communication. The relationship dentist – patient improved in the sense that the patient was made not to be afraid to go to the dentist any longer. The traditional image of the dentist cabinet was replaced, and something new was put instead: the dentist was consulting his patients in a supermarket, where everyone is willing to go.

Under such circumstances, the new informal situation of communication (doctor – patient) is based on changing **the context** (the formal, official and cold one is replaced by an informal, friendly, cosy one).

Another type of situation of communication viewed by the present paper is that one built between the producing company and the consumer. Many such companies have chosen to come closer to their clients by means of a friendly situation of communication. We have chosen an advertising campaign of promoting cleaning products in order to illustrate this aspect.

### **Iconic message**

A group of old people is having a party. Suddenly, the phone rings and the hostess, while speaking on the phone, turns sad. Her children come back home and she feels afraid they might find all that mess in the house.

She is also ashamed of letting her children know that she spent her time with her friends as if the gesture were a shameful one.

### Textual message

”Do not worry! **Pronto** will help you out in no time! Your house will be shining clean again.” The promoted product becomes a hero able to save the consumer whenever he/she is in need. The same product was presented on the background of another story: two young girls are having a party at home with their friends while their parents are away. The cleaning product turns into a saviour and helps the person in need out of the trouble (Cronin, 2004)

An affective relationship is created between the client and the producing company. When going shopping, the client will choose this product involved in an emotional story because he (the client) empathizes with the guarantee in the story.

In terms of deictic elements, we have found out that the advertising discourse is much different from everyday talk.

Advertising can create ideal, perfect spaces even where they cannot be so. We all know that an office is a place of work (and stress, and communicative tension sometimes). So that, everybody would like to finish quicker his/her work and go home, the place of comfort and good-mood.

Yet **Danone Company** turned the formal office into a new pleasant place (an ideal one, of course) by means of its product: the yoghurt. Once someone has eaten this yoghurt, he/she will not feel the stress of work any longer, and will feel like home. So, the **office** which is an obvious deictic element of space turned into a subjective one in advertising. We have to mention one more thing: the iconic message is responsible for this interesting construction of the deictic element of space.

If we move on to the **deictic elements of time**, we notice the same thing: the most obvious objective deictic elements turned into subjective ones in advertising.

Anti-ageing products have adopted this method. They all say that in a certain number of days, the look of the consumer will be improved (e.g. ”in 14 days your wrinkles will disappear”) the construction „14 days” is no doubt an objective deictic element of time as it will have the same meaning for all the speakers as we all measure time in the same way. Things are differently perceived in advertising where „14 days” does not mean the span of time of 14 days, but a hook able to capture the attention of the consumer and to make her buy the product. It does not matter whether after the 14 promised days she (the consumer) would not notice the disappearance of her wrinkles. She will keep on using the product with the hope of getting the desired advantage.

In point of the **theories of advertising** we have noticed a preference for the **theory of cognitive dissonance** and the **theory of childish impulse** concerning the products for which the consumer does not involve himself too much (cheap products).

**Dove Company** broke the ice with a non-conformist strategy of building the advertising message: contradicting the target. They applied the theory of cognitive dissonance when promoting their new bar of soap. Here are the steps they followed:

- a) They made sure that their products are appreciated in the market among other similar ones (so they started from the satisfaction of the target);
- b) They introduced an element of contradiction (shaking the cognitive universe of the target): “It looks like a bar of soap, it washes like one, but it is not a bar of soap” The public felt confused: why do they say it is not a bar of soap when I clearly see it is? What else can it be? They also felt confused because they had been satisfied with it until now when they felt like having been cheated;
- c) A greater satisfaction comes: the strange product turns out to belong to the same trade mark and to be even better than before: “It contains  $\frac{1}{4}$  hydrating cream. It is our new Dove soap.”

We will exemplify the theory of childish impulse by means of a campaign developed by **Pepsi-Cola Company**.

There is a serious competition between Coca-Cola and Pepsi-Cola in all the markets they entered. In order to attract more consumers, in 2011 Pepsi-Cola Company started making use of the theory of childish impulse by creating an impressive story in which the promoted product was the main hero. They evoked the times when youngsters (the grown-ups of today) were meeting and socializing on some very unpleasant occasions: working to harvest crops. The times were hard, life was full of oppressions and the only sign of good-mood was the presence of Pepsi-Cola juice. So the bottle of juice becomes the link between two epochs, targeting both the grown-ups of today, as it reminded them of their youth, and the youngsters of today, as it made them curious about those times.

## **Results.Conclusions**

Investigating the last five years of Romanian advertising creation we have noticed changes which could make it competitive with the Western European one. The fact is a great achievement if we take into consideration the young age of our Romanian advertising activity. These major changes refer to the following aspects:

- a) Creating a new typology of guarantees (the saviour, the friendly dentist the funny employer, the woman for ever young) which may increase the impact of the advertising message upon the consumer;
- b) Creating a new expression of time by means of fixing a correlation between the major advantage of using the promoted product and the improvement of the look of the consumer. Thus the consumer decides to use the promoted product not only for the number of days indicated in the advertisement (e.g. 14 days), but as long as he can because he is made to believe in the promised advantage;
- c) Creating new images of the well-known spaces which are not always among the most pleasant ones (e.g. the office, the dentist cabinet, the bank). The consumers are induced a state of good-mood and optimism. As advertising has a strong influence upon the general perception of life, it is very possible that any employer might think that he could turn a busy and stressed working day into a pleasant one by using that magic promoted product (product which is nothing but a bottle of juice, or some yoghurt, or some chewing gum). Or at least, he is given the impression that there is something which may change his working day into a better one;
- d) Creating new attractive stories in which the consumer might feel like being a part of it.

The present article limited its research only to a couple of pragmatic aspects. This investigation could be improved by adding further pragmatic aspects concerning the other category of products which has been left aside on purpose. This article may be used for further investigations in advertising.

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## THE PARTITION OF INDIA AND PAKISTAN IN THE NOVELS OF SELECTED WRITERS IN SOUTH ASIAN COUNTRIES

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### Abstract

The partition of India and the associated bloody riots inspired many creative minds in India and Pakistan to create literary/cinematic depictions of this event.<sup>[1]</sup> While some creations depicted the massacres during the refugee migration, others concentrated on the aftermath of the partition in terms of difficulties faced by the refugees in both side of the border. Even now, more than 60 years after the partition, works of fiction and films are made that relate to the events of partition. Literature describing the human cost of independence and partition comprises Khushwant Singh's *Train to Pakistan* (1956), several short stories such as *Toba Tek Singh* (1955) by Saadat Hassan Manto, Urdu poems such as *Subh-e-Azadi* (Freedom's Dawn, 1947) by Faiz Ahmad Faiz, Bhisham Sahni's *Tamas* (1974), Manohar Malgonkar's *A Bend in the Ganges* (1965), and Bapsi Sidhwa's *Ice-Candy Man* (1988), among others.<sup>[2][3]</sup> Salman Rushdie's novel *Midnight's Children* (1980), which won the Booker Prize and the Booker of Bookers, weaved its narrative based on the children born with magical abilities on midnight of 14 August 1947.<sup>[3]</sup> *Freedom at Midnight* (1975) is a non-fiction work by Larry Collins and Dominique Lapierre that chronicled the events surrounding the first Independence Day celebrations in 1947. There is a paucity of films related to the independence and partition.<sup>[4][5][6]</sup> Early films relating to the circumstances of the independence, partition and the aftermath include Nemai Ghosh's *Chinnamul* (1950),<sup>[4]</sup> *Dharmputra* (1961),<sup>[7]</sup> Ritwik Ghatak's *Meghe Dhaka Tara* (1960), *Komal Gandhar* (1961), *Subarnarekha* (1962);<sup>[4]</sup> <sup>[8]</sup> later films include *Garm Hava* (1973) and *Tamas* (1987).<sup>[7]</sup> From the late 1990s onwards, more films on this theme were made, including several mainstream films, such as *Earth* (1998), *Train to Pakistan* (1998) (based on the aforementioned book), *Hey Ram* (2000), *Gadar: Ek Prem Katha* (2001), *Pinjar* (2003), *Partition* (2007) and *Madrasapattinam* (2010), .<sup>[7]</sup> The biopics *Gandhi* (1982), *Jinnah* (1998)

and *Sardar* (1993) also feature independence and partition as significant events in their screenplay.

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## Introduction

Fiction, being the most powerful form of literary expression today, has acquired a prestigious position in Indian English literature. It is generally agreed that the novel is the most suitable literary form for the exploration of experiences and ideas in the context of our time, and Indian English fiction occupies its proper place in the field of literature. There are critics and commentators in England and America who appreciate Indian English novels. Prof. M. K. Naik remarks: "One of the most notable gifts of English education to India is prose fiction for though India was probably a fountain head of story-telling; the novel as we know today was an importation from the West". (99)

Indian writing in English is a voice in which India speaks. Indian writing in English is greatly influenced by the writing in England. In its own way indo-Anglican literature has contributed to the common pool of world writing in English-the major partners in the enterprise being British literature and American literature. Indian writing in English has emerged as a distinctive literature.

It was in Bengal that a literary renaissance first manifested itself, but almost immediately afterwards its traces could be seen in Madras, Bombay and other parts of India. The first Indian English novel was Bankim Chandra Chatterjee's *Raj Mohan's Wife* (1864). It is different from his Bengali novels such as *Durgesh Nandini* or *Kopal Kandla*. In fact, it paved the way for *Anand Math* (1884), Indian's first political novel which gave the Indians their national anthem, "Vande Mataram". Then came Manoj Basu's *Jaljangal* in the form of English translation as *The Forest Goddess* by Barindra Nath Bose.

The novels published from the eighteen sixties up to the end of the nineteenth century were written by writers belonging to the presidencies of Bengal and Madras. Most of these novels are on social and few on historical issues, and for their models they drew upon eighteenth and nineteenth century British fiction, especially that of Daniel Defoe, Henry Fielding and Walter Scott.

Novels published between 1864 and 1900 include Ram Krishna Punt's *The Bay of Bengal* (1866), Anand Prasad Dutt's *The Indolence* (1878), Shoshee Chunder Dutt's *The Young Zamindar* (1883), Trailokya Das's *Hirimba's Wedding* (1884), Krupabai Satthianandan's *Kamala: A Story of*

*Hindu Child Wife* (1894) and *Saguna: A Story of Native Christian Life* (1895), Michael Madhusudan Dutt's *Bijoy Chand: An Indian Tale* (1888) and Lt. Suresh Biswas: *His Life and Adventures* (1900) and Yogendra Nath Chattopadhyaya's *The Girl and Her Tutor* (1891).

The twentieth century began with novelists of more substantial output. Romesh Chandra Dutt translated two of his own Bengali novels into English: *The Lake of Palms: A Study of Indian Domestic Life* (1902) and *The Slave Girl of Agra, an Indian Historical Romance* (1909). The first, a realistic novel, seems to have been written with the aim of social reform with its theme being widow remarriage, while the latter is set in the Mughal period.

Khushwant Singh's first novel *Train to Pakistan* (1956), originally entitled *Mano Majra*, and is one of the finest realistic novels of post-World War-II Indo-Anglian fiction. The Plot and the narrative sequence of the novel are divided into four parts: (i) "Dacoity", (ii) "Kalyug", (iii) "Mano Majra" and (iv) "Karma". *Mano Majra*, a tiny village in the Punjab, serves as the fictional setting of *Train to Pakistan*. It is situated on the Indian border, half a mile away from the river Sutlej. In spite of bloodshed and rioting in the frontier area, life in *Mano Majra* remains to be peaceful. The Sikhs, Muslims and Hindus are living in harmony and amity. Partition has not touched *Mano Majra*... "no one in *Mano Majra* even knows that the British have left and the country is divided into Pakistan and Hindustan." Life here is regulated by trains with their arrival and departure. The villagers are not acquainted with the progress of science and ignorance of scientific progress is bliss to them.

The novel begins with a reference to the summer of 1947 which was noted for its scorching heat and rainless period and marked for hot and dusty atmosphere. The summer before, communal riots, precipitated by reports of the proposed division of the country into a Hindu India and a Muslim Pakistan, had broken out in Calcutta and several thousand had been killed. The Muslims said that the Hindus had planned and started the killing. The Hindus, on the other hand, put the whole blame on the Muslims. The truth was that both sides had killed. People belonging to both sides were shot, stabbed, speared, tortured and raped.

From Calcutta the riots had spread north and east and west. In Noakhali in East Bengal, Muslims massacred Hindus and in Bihar Hindus massacred Muslims. Mullahs were reported to have roamed the Punjab and the Frontier Province with boxes of human skulls said to be those of Muslims killed in Bihar. The Hindus and Sikhs who had lived for centuries on the Northwest Frontier were made to abandon their homes and flee toward the Sikh and Hindu communities in the east. They had to travel on foot, in bullock carts, cram into Lorries, cling to the sides and roofs of trains.

Mano Majra is the place of the action of the novel. It is a tiny village situated on the Indian border, half a mile away from the river Sutlej. The Sikhs, Muslims and Hindus lived in perfect harmony in this village and there was a time when no one in the village knew that The British had left the country and the country was divided into Pakistan and Hindustan. The only thing that made an impact on them was the arrival and departure of trains. But soon things began to change. Partition began to take its toll in this tiny village also.

There were only about seventy families in Mano Majra, and Ram Lal's was the only Hindu family. The others were Sikhs or Muslims who were about equal in number. The railway station occupied an important position and a small colony of shopkeepers and hawkers grew up around it to supply travelers with food, betel leaves, cigarettes, tea, biscuits and sweetmeats.

The Peaceful life in Mano Majra comes to a jolt when on an August night 1947 the village money-lender Ram Lal's house is raided by Malli, a dreaded dacoit. On the roof of his house, the money lender was beaten with butts of guns and spear handles and kicked and punched. He sat on his haunches, crying and spitting blood. Two of his teeth were smashed. When Ram Lal, the moneylender failed to hand over the key of his safe, one of the dacoits lunged at the crouching figure with his spear. Ram Lal collapsed on the floor uttering a loud yell with blood spurting from his belly.

The dacoity had its evil effects on Juggut Singh who was a resident of the village. The dacoits dropped bangles in his house and later he was arrested as the suspect of murder and dacoity. He was in love with Nooran which in a sense cut across religious barriers. After his release from police custody, he came to know that Nooran had visited his mother before leaving for the refugee camp carrying his child in her womb. Nooran was a Muslim weaver's daughter. His father and grandfather were also dacoits and were hanged for murder. But they were reported not to have robbed own village-Folk. According to Meet Singh, Juggut had disgraced his family through his acts. Hukum Chand plays an important role in the novel.

Hukum Chand is perhaps one of the best drawn characters in the novel. Married to an unattractive and illiterate woman, he looked for love and sex elsewhere, but he was not exactly immoral. Hukum Chand considered Hindu women to be unlike other women. When it was reported that the Muslim mobs had tried to molest Hindu women, they had killed their own children and jumped into wells that filled to the brim with corpses. He wanted the Muslims to go out peacefully if possible. He was of the view that bloodshed would not benefit anyone. According to him bad characters would get all the loot and the government would blame people like him for the killing. For the same reason he was against killing or destruction of property.

But at the same time he gave instruction to the inspector to be careful not to allow the Muslims to take too much with them. "Hindus from Pakistan were stripped of all their belongings before they were allowed to leave. Pakistani magistrates have become millionaires overnight. Some on our side have not done too badly either. Only where there was killing or burning the government suspended or transferred them. There must be no killing; just peaceful evacuation". (32)

Iqbal was one who created a mild sensation in the village. He approached Bhai Meet Singh with a request for shelter and he took it for granted that he was Iqbal Singh! In fact he did not have to say what Iqbal was. He was a social worker. He had come to that village as he knew that something should be done to stop the bloodshed going on as a result of partition. His party had sent him there, since this place was a vital point for refugee movements. He had a strong feeling that trouble would be disastrous. He belonged to district Jhelum and had been in foreign countries a long time. He had his own views on morality and a host of other things.

Iqbal was well aware that criminals were not born and were made by hunger, want and justice. He always thought that if the fear of the gallows or the cell had stopped people from killing or stealing, there would be no murder or theft. Even though a man was hanged every day, ten go murdered every twenty-four hours in the particular province he was in. The population explosion also was causing great concern to Iqbal. It might appear strange that independence meant little or nothing to the people in Mano Majra. They never realized that it was a step forward and that what they needed to do was to take the next step and turn 'the make-believe political freedom into a real economic one.' They were not quite sure why the English had left them. Iqbal tried to enlighten them as to what it all meant.

But as far as the villagers concerned, view differed. There were some among them who liked English soldiers. Meet Singh told Iqbal that his brother who was a havaladar was of the view that all sepoys were happier with English officers than with Indian. Iqbal in turn asked whether he would like to continue to remain slaves all their lives. But Meet Singh had his own argument. Freedom was for the educated people who fought for it. He was sure that people like him were going to be slaves of the educated Indians or the Pakistanis. The lambardar was of the view that the only ones who enjoyed freedom were thieves, and robbers. Iqbal found himself in a predicament and was not in a position to do anything to save the situation.

In an unexpected move, the police arrested Iqbal. It was extremely foolish for the police to have done that and they knew that they had made a mistake, or rather, two mistakes as they had arrested Juggut Singh also. Iqbal's pride had been injured. He was under arrest in connection with the murder of Ram Lal. Everyone knew that he had come to Mano Majra after

the murder. He had taken the same train that the policemen had taken and they could be witness of his alibi. The situation was ludicrous but Punjabi policemen were not the sort who admitted making mistakes. He tried to convince Juggut Singh who was arrested along with him that he was not a villager and had come from Delhi and was sent to organize peasants.

When the truth was revealed the sub-inspector was irritated. When the fellow policemen told him that Iqbal was a stranger staying at the Sikh temple, he burst out. The police were doubly wrong as Jugga was out of his house on the night of the dacoity. Even Hukum Chand was angry and was surprised to see the police arresting people without finding out their names, parentage or caste.

Police who were always known for their cruelty asked Iqbal to remove his dress. Iqbal loosened the knot in the cord. They pyjamas fell in a heap around his ankles. He was naked save for the handcuffs on his wrists. He stepped out of the pyjamas to let the policemen examine them. The inspector thus ensured that he was a Muslim. When he said that he was sent by the Peoples' Party of India, the inspector asked him whether he was sure it was not the Muslim League. Mob attacks were a common phenomenon in those days and when they attacked they never waited to find out whether the persons concerned were Hindus or Muslims. The other day four Sikh Sardars in a jeep drove alongside a mile-long column of Muslim refugees wading on the road. Without warning they opened fire with their stenguns. Four stenguns! Good alone knows how many they killed.

A lot of women were abducted and sold cheap. Police stations were concentration camps and third degree methods were adopted to extricate 'truth' from those who were caught. Hindus were pinned under legs of charpoys with half a dozen policemen sitting on them. Testicles twisted and squeezed till one became senseless with pain. Powdered red chillies thrust up the rectum by rough hands, and the sensation of having the tail on fire for several days. All this, and no food or water, or hot spicy food with a bowl of shimmering cool water put outside the cell just beyond one's reach.

Some succumbed to hunger and others to the inconvenience of having to defecate in front of the policemen. The arrival of the ghost train is another important 'event' in the novel which makes the reader flabbergasted. The arrival of the train in broad daylight created a commotion in Mano Majra. People stood on their roofs to see what was happening and all they could see was the black top of the train stretching from one end of the platform to the other. Later the villagers were asked to get all the wood there was in their houses and all the kerosene oil they could spare. They were asked to bring them to the motor trucks on the station side for which they would be paid. The villagers soon 'smelt' something wrong:

The northern horizon which had turned a bluish grey, showed orange again. The orange turned into copper and then into a luminous russet. Red tongues of flame leaped into the black sky. A soft breeze began to blow towards the village. It brought the smell of burning kerosene, then of wood. And then—a faint acrid smells of searing flesh. (100)

There was a deathly silence in the village. The train had come from Pakistan and everybody knew what had happened. Even Hukum Chand felt feverish to see a thousand charred corpses sizzling and smoking while the train put out the fire.

The Sikh officer said there were more than a thousand. I think he just calculated how many people could get into a bogie and multiplied it by the number of bogies. He said that another four or five hundred must have been killed on the roofs, on the footboards and between buffers. In fact fifteen hundred innocent people getting killed were only part of the story. Similar things were happening at other places also.

rs are concerned with is that 'it is Mahatma Gandhi's government in Delhi' and that 'people sing his praise in the four corners of the earth'. The effect of the change, however, was significant and as Singh has shown, frighteningly, social, as religious groups rearranged and clashed violently. He does not focus on the political realities and the predicament of the victims of the Partition in the form of loot, arson, rape, abduction, mutations, murders and displacement.

Rather, he chooses to narrate the disturbing and agonizing impact that this event has on those who have not been the direct victims of the Partition and yet been affected deep at the psychological and social levels. He makes it clear that many people played a part in this chaos and everyone was equally worthy of blame, all the while integrating examples of the sheer moral confusion which arises from trying to make sense of an event as momentous as the Partition. The broader implications of the novel are also emphasized by "Khushwant Singh has written a compelling story of people in turmoil, far broader in its implications than its length might suggest. This is not the story of one man. It is the tale of a village led to a moral action through its own indifference". (6)

Khushwant Singh best illustrates the tragedy of Partition and indirectly suggests the shortsightedness of Indian leadership who failed to foresee the consequences of division and to handle the situation ever after Churchill's forecast of blood-bath. Communal discord was not a future of Indian rural scene but it was engineered first by the British Government under the policy of divide and rule and then by the nationalist leaders, with attitude tinge, though unintentionally.

The novel *Azadi* deals with the theme of partition of Indian subcontinent into India and Pakistan. As Chaman Nahal himself was a refugee, he writes with remarkable penetration and realism. The novelist recreates in flamboyant detail the consequences of the Partition with reference to a Hindu family as they journey from Sialkot in Pakistan to Delhi, the capital of India. The novel comprises three parts- The Lull, the Storm and the Aftermath - that represent correspondingly the beginning, the middle and the end of the great event. The focus of the novel is on the demarcation of the psychosomatic consequences of the Partition on the individual and universal planes.

The story opens on June 3, 1947 with an announcement by the Viceroy, Lord Mountbatten declaring the division of the country into two parts –India and Pakistan. It ends with the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi on January 30, 1948. *Azadi* thus deals with eight tumultuous months in the history of the Indian Subcontinent. *Azadi* is not merely a historical document. Though Mountbatten, Rajaji, Jinnah, Gandhiji and Nehru and a host of other leaders are all present, none of them appears in person in the novel. They are all described through the reactions of the people. The Punjabis are still buoyant that the leaders – and particularly Gandhiji – would never allow the division of the country. That day they accumulate in the house of Bibi Amar Vati and are shocked to listen with gulp of air the announcement made by the Viceroy and agreed to by the Indian leaders without compassion for the Hindus and Sikhs living in west Punjab that is going to Pakistan.

*Azadi* is the story of millions of people uprooted from their homes for no fault of their own, and is symbolised in the person of Lala Kanshi Ram and his family in the searing pain they undergo in the process of their upheaval and alienation from their home-land. Lala Kanshi Ram, a wholesale dealer in grain, is an Arya Samajist. He has lived and proposed for many years in Sialkot and is unwilling to leave even after the Partition is pronounced. He has always been friends with the Muslims and his dearest friend is a Muslim, Chaudhari Barkat Ali. Lala Kanshi Ram could never have imagined that he would be unwanted in his birthplace and that he would finally have to leave like many other Hindus and Sikhs. Yet his daughter became victim of communal riots – there is no family that has not lost some one. Like millions of other Punjabis, he travels on foot to India with his wife Prabha Rani and son Arun, moves from city to city – Amritsar, Jullundur, and Ambala and finally arrives in Delhi, to suffer more humiliation. His story represents the story of a whole nation, of millions who were forced to leave their homes and to whom azadi brings only untold misery and an uncertain future.

The Muslims, nevertheless, commemorate their predictable freedom very victoriously. Being anxious with joy, they run amuck and kill Hindus and Sikhs and plunder their property, abduct and rape their women, disfigure their children, burn their houses – and what not. The uprooted inhabitants of the land of the five rivers commence their demonstration in the direction of India as they do not have any place now in the land of the pure. Millions of refugees migrate to India and vice versa.

*Azadi* is the story of Lala Kanshi Ram and his family living in Sialkot, and on the universal plane, of the people exaggerated by the Partition. Lala Kanshi Ram, the protagonist. A wholesale grain merchant in Sialkot has earned name, fame and destiny by working very hard. His son Arun a college student and his beloved wife, Prabha Rani make his familial life quite happy. The first four chapters of the first part the lull very closely accustom us with Lala Kanshi Ram who is a distinctive Indian of the time and whose idol is Mahatma Gandhi. Through statement of belief he is a nationalist Hindu living in the Muslim – majority Sialkot. He loves his land and it is at this juncture in Sialkot that his father and forefather lived. The British, according to him be obliged to quit India and give azadi to the Indians he writes: “Like any other Indian, he had a prejudice against the British. He hated them for what they had done to his country and wanted Azadi”. (Nahal, 18)

However, the political atmosphere in the country is in utterly chaos the Punjabis are kept under perpetual tension and the Muslims as well as the Sikhs fail to guess anything about the Partition. The selfish leaders play their role very shrewdly, only few men sitting and deciding the fate of the millions. The Arya samajist Lala hopes to achieve freedom with an undivided India.

The Lala speaks in Panjabi and writes in Urdu. For him Urdu is not the language solely of Muslim. In his mind there is no grudge against the Muslim, but he is aware of their attitude towards Hindus and Sikhs. He has firm faith in Gandhi and is sure that he will never agree to a division of the country. However, he is deeply worried that, “everything will be ruined if Pakistan is created”. (39)

Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims have been living together in peace and harmony for many decades in the Punjab city of Sialkot. Kanshi Ram’s world is shaken by the creation of Pakistan and he stands as a shattered individual, his cherished beliefs and values not giving him support. Events are presented through the consciousness of Lala Kanshi Ram, who becomes a spokesman of the Hindus, who are deeply disturbed by the unprecedented political event. Lala’s experiences symbolize the pain and sufferings of the millions affected by the Partition. Thus “*Azadi* is not only the story of Lala Kanshi Ram but millions of people like him”. Lala has brought a few acres

of land in his native village and prospered there. He tries to education his illiterate wife Prabha Rani, who takes it indulgently as one of her husband's whims. He leads a quiet life with his wife and children at Sialkot. He has a daughter, Madhubala, married off to Rajiv and a college going son, Arun. He lives in a rented house belonging to Bibi Amar Vati along with Sikh families which enhances the atmosphere of communal harmony and also maintains healthy relationships with his neighbors and friends irrespective of religion. He has no interest in politics but is deeply influenced by Arya Samaj.

Lala, along with his family and his neighboring families, listens to the radio announcement, and is shocked and disturbed to listen to Lord Mountbatten, the Viceroy of India announcing the government decision on Partition of the country into India and Pakistan. Lala does not go to India soon after the declaration of Partition. He continues to live in Sialkot only because he has a deep attachment with the land of the five rivers. Resembling a real Congress leader, he believes in living with the Muslims looking upon them as brothers. The young generation of Sikhs and Hindus on the contrary, ready to pay the Muslim in the same coin, but the Lala like the Mahatma, tries to maintain peace through non-violence in his locality. The Muslims, still, are very happy to get their long-cherished dream fulfilled and celebrate their victory by talking out huge processions. One such procession enters the Trunk Bazaar of the Lala, after some negotiations with the Deputy Commissioner and the Superintendent of police. Here the reactions of different characters are clearly discerned and their attitudes defined. The Police Inspector, Inayat-Ullah Khan, takes side with the Muslims and threatens the Hindus. But

The Deputy Commissioner, who is a Hindu, is disoriented on listening to the Viceroy's announcement of the Partition.

The Viceroy's pronouncement, as a result, changes the entire schedule of the Punjabis. On the individual level, it creates difficulties even in the love-affair of Arun and Nur. Lala son Arun, "a shy, pimply youth of twenty" loves a Muslim girl Nurul-Nisar, the sister of his friend Munir Ahmad. In the flush of youthful romance Arun could have preferred Nur to his parents, but the communal holocaust suddenly makes "a man" of him, and chooses to share the joys and sorrows of life with his parents. The love affair of a Hindu youth and a Muslim girl though, seems to be only an idealised one as it was not practically reasonable in those times because of communal and political overtones, the irritated and enraged Arun, too, blames and leaders like Jinnah and Nehru, who rush into azadi hurriedly. As a result, Arun and Nur, and also Barkat Ali and Lala curse the hastily achieved freedom and the instantaneous Partition.

The delineation of authentic massacre, nevertheless, begins from the last chapter of the first part. Till then there are portrayals of only intermittent

killings and molestations. It is on the 24th June, that the Muslim friends of the Lala kill a number of Hindus, and then it becomes a daily ritual. It is reported that Muslim refugees from India come to Sialkot in a heartbroken condition, telling the stories of molestations and massacre by Hindus and Sikhs. This provokes the Muslim to kill the Hindus who began to go to the refugee camps and then to India. Whatever the Muslims did to us in Pakistan, we're doing it to them here!" (298-99) He feels miserable and repentant and seeks to apologise all the Muslims on behalf of all the Hindus when he says "we have sinned as much. We need their forgiveness!" (300) the novelist, however, demonstrates that even after Partition, some Muslims stand for communal harmony. Chaudari Barkat Ali is one such large hearted person who does not support any anti-Hindu violence. O.P. Mathur opines that Lala:

Takes a stance which clearly demonstrates his freedom from commitment to anything except love, compassion, tolerance and forgiveness, in a word 'freedom of spirit and mind' which alone makes political freedom meaningful. The superficial differences of religion peel off and reveal the essential humanity of man and the idiocy of the evil that seeks to raise artificial walls of hatred between one human being and another". (90)

Thus Lala realizes that forgiveness is the only way to recover one's sanity, one's humanity and to live in peace with oneself. It is not only story of Lala but millions of people like him. "...Nahal stresses through the protagonist Lala Kanshi Ram the necessity of human forgiveness, lying due emphasis on the "affirmation of life" to which he is committed". (Prasad, 215) J.M. Purohit endorses this view when he says, "All most all his novels end with optimistic vision". (Purohit, 130)

Partition resulted in the monstrous holocaust ever witnessed. There was wholesale destruction due to communal frenzy and the whole balance of human relationships is upset. Yet the novel reveals a ray of hope and regeneration before it closes. This prompts Asha Kaushik to remark that "...although beginning on a note of ambivalence and uncertainties of national integrity in the face of religious fanaticism, moral degradation and political fragmentation. Azadi closes with the affirmation that a nation out lives even annihilating tragedies." (Kaushik, 69)

The Partition of the sub-continent in 1947 was the most auspicious incident in the history of Indian freedom struggle. Tens of thousands of people were killed and an equal number of people were rendered homeless and injured. The extraordinary migration that took place during those days has no parallel in history.

Whereas taking a brief assessment of the Partition it becomes clear that it was the Muslim communiqué launched by the Muslim League's Two

– Nation theory that gave birth to Partition. In advance the Congress was not ready for any kind of division of the sub-continent. Nevertheless finally the leaders of Congress party were also circumstanced to accept it as it became an `inevitable Alternative`. Thus the genuine responsibility of the Partition goes to Jinnah and his Muslim League, of course, Jinnah was not the first person to sow the seeds of separatist tendencies. It was smooth before 1867 that Muslims like Sir Sayed Ahmad, Choudhary Rahmat Ali and Muhammad Iqbal, tried hard to create a separate Muslim nation. The Congress, on the other hand, tried to maintain synchronization between the two communities. But unfortunately the Indian leaders failed to keep the Hindus and the Muslims together and in 1947 the vast Indian sub-continent was partitioned.

The events in history have encouraged the novelists throughout the world to pen them down in fiction. For instance, Leo Tolstoy dealt with the Napoleonic wars in his world famous work *War and Peace* and Dickens wrote his *A Tale of Two Cities* on the background of French Revolution. Similarly, the 1857 Indian Mutiny has also been a theme of several English novelists. The Partition being an event of such an enormity, it is also dealt with by some Indian novelists writing in English and other regional languages.

On the other hand, though there are nearly fifteen novels on the theme of Partition. The Indo – Anglian novelists have given stress depicting only on the human anguish and sufferings rather than inquisitive deeply into the historical and psychological causes that led to a schism in the human psyche. All novelists uneventfully depict the massacre, rape, bloodshed, arsoning and other inhuman atrocities committed by both the Hindus and Muslims. They are almost interchangeable from one Partition novel to another.

Khushwant Singh, Chaman Nahal deal with India's independence and the holocaust that followed in the wake of the Partition of country. However, they do not merely give us historical document. Their purpose is to describe the impact of this national tragedy of the Partition on ordinary people.

The first published novel on Partition, *Train to Pakistan*, emerges out of the trauma of Partition. It opens with a reference to the severe summer of 1947 signifying the process of the world of man turning into a human wasteland. The scene is laid in India on the eve of Partition in 1947 when about ten million people are in flight – Hindus from Pakistan and Muslims from India. Nearly a million are killed in the large scale communal disturbances. Only Mano Majra, a small village, a microcosm of rural India, remains unaffected by the communal frenzy. But events move fast and the fate of the people in Mano Majra is affected by the catastrophic events of the Partition. Muslims of the village are evacuated to a refugee camp, later to be

transported to Pakistan by a train. Hindu fanatics hatch a plot to blow up the train which was averted by Jugga and in the process he gets killed. His Muslim lover is saved and so do the Muslim passengers on the train symbolizing hope and light in the cruel world of darkness and despair.

In *Azadi*, Nahal's purpose is to describe the impact of the Partition on ordinary people. He portrays the pain LalaKanshi Ram and his family of Sialkot, now in Pakistan, goes through due to Partition and their alienation from their own homeland. This reflects the suffering of the millions of people who are uprooted and forced to migrate to India. People sadly realize that they are unwanted in their own native places and that *Azadi* brings only untold misery and an uncertain future. Nahal describes the excruciating experiences of the uprooted people in refugee camps and on their way to India, travelling on foot, in convoys and submitting themselves helplessly to violence of all sorts – arson, murder, abduction and rape. After arriving in India, much suffering awaits them, in their own free country, at the hands of an indifferent and callous bureaucracy. He does not take sides and blames both Hindu and Muslim communities for their sadistic animalism. However, what can be perceived underlying these harrowing experiences is the projection of the novelist's optimism. Punjabis grieve more for loss of identity than the loss of life and property. Nahal understands this crisis of identity and portrays it profoundly than other Partition writers who either treat it superficially or ignore it totally.

Like Khushwant Singh, Nahal also witnessed the atrocities committed on the minorities after the announcement of the Partition. As the practising lawyer of High Court in Lahore (Pakistan), Khushwant Singh and being the native of Sialkot, (Pakistan) Nahal – both of them have firsthand experience and knowledge of the horrors of the Partition. In a way these two novels (*Train to Pakistan* and *Azadi*) can also be read as twin novels on Partition. The anger, bitterness and hatred found in *Train to Pakistan* and *Azadi* in spite of the fact that an individual family is concentrated to show the effect of Partition on it. This factor any way shows that the loss is personal and deep. One is touched but not involved. Surprisingly, in *Azadi*, despite a feeling of intimate involvement, all bitterness and hatred seemed to have been mellowed with the healing passage of more than a quarter century after the Partition riots. So in *Azadi* published in 1975, Nahal is able to invest his theme with a rare humanistic insight and objectivity.

The two novelists on Partition – Khushwant Singh and Chaman Nahal – discussed Gandhian theory of non violence. If Khushwant Singh's *Train to Pakistan* depicts brutality of the Partition, it also reveals humanity and compassion. Nahal, like Khushwant Singh, watched the violence from close quarters and hence realized that violence cannot be an answer to violence. Through LalaKanshi Ram (*Azadi*), he stresses the

necessity of human forgiveness, lying due emphasis in “affirmation of life”. Nahal provides solution to victims of Partition (*Azadi*), while *Train to Pakistan* has only discussed the problem. Nahal accepts the Partition as a fact and talks about the problem of rehabilitation rather than going into the political details.

Every part of the novelist finds an uncertain solution to the Partition of communities and conflicts. It is a fictional or idealistic solution- love affair between a Hindu or Sikh boy and a Muslim girl. In *Train to Pakistan* we have the love- affair between *Juggat Singh*, to execute the heroic act of rescuing the train to Pakistan. In *Azadi*, the novelist has portrayed the love-affair between *Arun*, a Hindu youth and *Nur*, a Muslim girl. These lovers are represented to bring about unity and organization among the militaristic communities. Consequently all the novelists have tried to prove that ‘love’ has the supreme value which can save the world and not abhorrence. This is their fictional solution.

The wide-ranging predisposition of the majority of the novelists seems to deliberate on the physical vivisection of India. In these novels we observe the historic migration of millions of people across the new border which provides the novelists with bits and pieces to describe the violent scenes in a melodramatic manner.

While these novels depict only the tribulations of Partition and are loaded with the scenes of atrocities, there is scarcely an endeavor at analyzing the ideological clash which encouraged people to hate one another. But in *Train to Pakistan*, and *Azadi* novelists have attempted to discuss the historical and philosophical causes which were responsible for Partition. Chaman Nahal has shown that Gandhi’s way of fighting were not understood by typical Indians and hence the movement was an utter failure. Though, novelist does not sustain terrorism as an answer to the Gandhian philosophy of *Ahimsa*. Chaman Nahal has very objectively dealt with the psyche of Muslim of India who had no alternative but to reconcile them with the situation. Except these two, the other Partition novelists seem to be contended with the description of violent scenes of killings and rapes.

The novel *Train to Pakistan* does not depict heroic characters nor does it use a human protagonist as the mouthpiece of the writer’s own philosophy. The focus of attention is a realistic portrayal of the social, communal and cultural life of the people which is doomed to devastation by a sudden political decision to Partition the country.

Commencing among the translations from Indian languages into English the novels *Twice Born Twice Dead* by K.S.Duggal, *The Skeleton* by Amrita Pritam and *Kites Will Fly* by Bisham Sahani also deal with the Partition issue originally in Indian languages. Amrita Pritam’s novels are noteworthy for they provide not only a female angle to the Partition issue,

but it deals with the predicament and the complex fate of the abducted women across the Pakistani border. Unfortunately, translation situation as it is in India, today not many translation of such novels deal with the Partition issue.

One more striking feature of these novels is the use of the symbol of train. All the novelists have used the train as the symbol of destruction and death. In fact the train as it symbolises a continuous activity and it brings two places and people together. But in the novel on Partition, the train becomes the mass of carrying corpses of thousands of men, women and children from this side to that and vice versa. Thus, in the normal course of time the train symbolizes hope and safety, but dissimilar to the anticipation the train here symbolises death and destruction.

During the days of Partition trains were the only available means of transfer of population between the newly created Pakistan and what remained of the Indian sub-continent? Thus, when the historic migration occurred it was the train which played a very significant role. The very title of Khushwant Singh's novel is ample testimony to this. Similarly, ChamanNahal's *Azadi* and other novels in which we find the trains crossing the borders of the two nations, taking masses of people to safety only to be attached by the enemy to murder abduct and rape. Thus, the train provides the novelists with an opportunity to highlight the gruesome tragedy of Partition.

In *Train to Pakistan* and *Azadi* and same other novels we come across several trains bringing dead bodies of Muslim to Pakistan. In the course of time the train is recognized as the 'ghost train'. The train is the predominant metaphor throughout the novel. It brings in an atmosphere of terror. It is also the symbol of industrialization and the materialistic age which has led to the destruction of humanistic values.

The novels under discussion are repetitive in their descriptions of violent scenes of atrocities have almost become exchangeable from one novel to another. *Train to Pakistan* and *Azadi* read like a film story. However a deal with the idea of logical clash between violence and non-violence, *Azadi* is stuffed with the scenes of in human atrocities. But all these novelists deal with the theme of Partition on a surface level and in a somewhat unsophisticated manner. To sum up, these novels have not been able to improve upon the Dickensian formula of the historical romance.

## Conclusion

A significant consideration of the Partition novels reveals that the Partition of the Indian subcontinent was an unprecedented political event in the history of India and that the Partition novels are authentic portrayals of the contemporary political relation as literature consistently records human

life. The historical event of the atrocious tragedy of the Partition in 1947 in the wake of freedom is unsurprisingly reflected in the novel, the most seismographic form of creative literature.

From the epigrammatic appraisal of the history of the Partition it becomes clear that mainly it was the Muslim separatism mannered by the communal Muslim League's *Two Nation Theory* and the *divide and rule* policy of the British that resulted in the Partition. Originally, though the Congress was not ready for any kind of division of India, finally the leaders were constrained to accept it as an 'inevitable alternative' though the humiliation of the Partition goes mainly to Jinnah and his Muslim League, he was not the first man to sow the seeds of separatist tendencies. It was even before 1867 that some Muslim leaders visualized a separate Muslim nation. Later on the antagonistic tendencies of Hindus and Muslims on the grounds of religion and the increasing dominance of Hindus and Sikhs in politics, administration, education and economic affairs widened the emotional rift between them. Unfortunately, the Indian leaders failed to keep the Hindus, Sikhs and Muslim together and resultantly it was in 1947 that India was partitioned.

Though the Partition novel (which is a political novel) is a species of historical novel, it is realistic to the core and has in it a very little scope for the passionate element. However, it need not necessarily be a dry and drab political chronicles but can be a creative work of fiction. And since the historical novel is in part mainly a product of the *Romantic Movement*, it is difficult for a writer to evoke stark political realism through the medium of fiction. Fictionizing realism is perhaps the most difficult task for a creative writer. Again, for those witness-turned-writers, the writing is all the more difficult and challenging.

Our study of the novels shows the most of the novelists are from North India and comparatively a few from the south on the basis of community. The novelists fall into three groups-Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims and that a majority of the novels are by Sikhs. Of all AttiaHosain is so far the solitary woman novelist, and that a Muslim. Amrita Pritam is of course another great woman novelist in Hindi and Panjabi communities. Parsees and Christians rarely find a place in the novels as authors or characters.

As regards the approach of the writers, it is clearly seen that they show noteworthy neutrality and legitimacy in the treatment of the sensitive theme. The reason for this is perhaps the novelists have inherently and instinctively imbibed the spirit of objectivity. And though, some of them are the 'witness-turned-writers', they depict the tragedy with restraint and impartiality. They admit that all communities are equally guilty of the holocaust and all have an inherent evil element in them. Here it must also be noted that all novelists irrespective of their religion or community condemn

the British rulers for their divisive politics and their inherent egocentricity and judiciousness. They do not fail in exposing the routine corruption on the part of government machinery - the officers, police and even the military personnel. They also blame the selfish leaders for their act of betrayal of the people and bring to light the real nature of the various political parties. At the same time an optimistic note of the predominance of healthy human relations is sounded through episodes of love, sympathy and companionship, notwithstanding chaotic conditions of violence bloodshed and deterioration of human values.

The recent communal riots following the demolition of the Babri Masjid which led to wide-spread bloodshed in both the communities is a glaring example of this fact. What have we done to prevent the recurrence of such gory events in the future? We cannot rest in peace until we tame the monster of communal frenzy by creating mutual trust and fellow feeling among the people of all communities residing in India. The agony of the author of *Train to Pakistan* must be removed and his disturbed soul must be set at ease by our avowed mission to stay together in peace as one nation, one community despite divergent religious faiths and beliefs. India is a garden with variegated flowers of different hues and fragrances; all the more beautiful because it is so. Our hope lies in Iqbal's immortal humanistic and patriotic lines: Religion does not preach Hostility among people we are all Indians and India is our home. "Majham Nahin Sikhata Aapas Mein bair Rakhana Hindi Hai ham, Watan hai, Hindostan Hamara." Thus the two novels under study end on an optimistic note and they certainly enlarge the vision of the readers.

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# **CULTURAL CHANGE IN THE ARAB GULF; NATURAL PROGRESSION OR IMPERIALIST PLOT?**

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## **Abstract**

This paper begins by examining Noor's (2011) position that the countries of the Arab World have diverse cultures, histories and needs. And that the West (however defined) has made the mistake of homogenizing this diversity. The paper then turns to the Arab Gulf, demonstrating that, despite commentators like Denman (2013) and Asadi (2012;2013) who persist in seeing the Muslim-Arab World as an entity, the six states of the Arab Gulf Cooperation Council are equally diverse. This paper draws on Roscoe's (2013) suggestion that once cultures meet, touch and evolve, there are automatic implications for identity, but that these implications are not necessarily negative. The paper offers examples of changes in cultural assumption in the Arab Gulf in the past 30 years, and demonstrates how these changes can be regarded as progressive or detrimental according to different cultural viewpoints.

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**Keywords:** Culture Islam accommodation transformation  
misinterpretation evolution agency.

## **Introduction**

In the summer of 2011, Masi Noor, the Senior Lecturer in Social Psychology at Canterbury Christchurch University, referred to the events of the Arab Spring, saying "We in the West have been guilty of homogenizing the whole region. We need to understand that they are all very different countries with diverse cultures, histories and needs, which until now we have not listened to, either due to ignorance or expedience." (Noor 2011; 11-12)

The truth of the first part of that statement ought to be self-evident to any reflective practitioner who has worked in the Arab World for any length of time, but Noor's use of the terms "ignorance or expedience" raises questions. I would suggest that even scholars may have a tendency to employ general, shorthand terms when more detailed analysis may be required.

What, for example, does Noor himself intend by “the West”? In the Arab Gulf, “the West” almost automatically refers to the USA and Britain, or Britain and the USA, depending on which country one is in. In Tunisia and Algeria, by contrast, “the West” usually refers to France, and in Morocco, the term could be used of France, or even Spain which maintains its enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla on the Mediterranean Coast.

## **Culture**

House (2009) claims that there have been two traditional views of culture. The first is the humanistic view, capturing “the ‘cultural heritage’ as a model of refinement and an exclusive collection of a community’s masterpieces in literature, fine arts, music etc” (House, 2009; 109). This view places value on “high” and exclusive culture, which is frequently the product of wealth and leisure. It disregards everything else. Put simply, the architecture of the palace is admired; the houses of its builders are ignored.

Then there is the anthropological concept of culture, focusing on how communities live their lives – “all those traditional, explicit and implicit designs that act as potential guides for group members’ behavioural patterns” (House, 2009; 109). In this approach, behaviour defines culture, and that behaviour can be sub-divided into behaviour deemed “inappropriate” or “appropriate” – that is, appropriate in the eyes of the community, according to social standing, age or gender.

House also, however, admits that “with the rise of post-modernist, cultural studies-inspired thinking, the whole notion of culture has come under attack.” (House, 2009; 110). In this post-modernist critique there is no such thing as “pure culture”, because stable social groups do not exist. The behaviour of individuals and external influences constantly destabilize groups, with the result that the concept of culture is little more than a shorthand term, the idealization of a concept that primarily serves to reduce the differences between people living in any one area.

## **Arab-Muslim Culture**

It is this same shorthand, or simplification, that leads McConachy and Hata (2013; 300) to urge that “learners need to be encouraged to move beyond the view that one nation has one culture with one set of norms” and yet we still find papers with titles like “Cultural Divide between Arab-Muslim students and Western Literature; Implication for the English Language Classroom” (Denman 2012). Denman is currently doing research on English literature and Arab-Muslim identity at the Sultan Qaboos University, but his paper appears to be based on the assumption that there is a single Arab-Muslim identity to begin with, and some might argue that this is, again, “homogenizing.”

Certainly, most Arabs are Muslim, but most Muslims are not, in fact, Arabs. A pamphlet issued by the Islamic Information Centre of the Sultan Qaboos Grand Mosque points out that only 20% of Muslims are Arabs. The most populous Muslim nation is Indonesia. Then come Bangladesh and Pakistan. Even in India, the Muslim minority numbers 160 million, which is twice the population of the largest Arab nation, Egypt. And Egypt is only 90% Muslim.

Secondly, books like *Beyond the Veil; Male-Female Dynamics in a Muslim Society* (Mernissi 1975), add to the confusion by implying that the cultural dynamics of a single Arab country are true of all Islamic societies. Mernissi's study is an important example of how not to present research, and Saqi Books ought to have known better than to publish it under the present title.

Mernissi does indeed offer an investigation of gender relations in "a Muslim Society", if we read "a Muslim society" as meaning a single society that happens to be Muslim. Her society of choice, however, is Morocco, which is both geographically at the extreme edge of the Arab World, and unusual in as much as it has a significant Berber minority. Mernissi's informants, furthermore, were all women in late middle age, which means that they were born in the 1920s, at the time of the French/Spanish protectorates. In those days, and uniquely in Morocco, it was customary for pre-pubescent girls to become engaged, and go to live with their fiancés' families. The formal marriage did not take place until the girl entered puberty, but even then, it meant that most brides were only 13 or, at the most, 14 years old.

When the Kingdom of Morocco became independent in 1956, the nationalist government raised the age of marriage to 18. It must be admitted that, in the remoter mountain villages of Morocco, teenage marriages still occur, but even in 1977 it was highly misleading to suggest that child marriage was the Moroccan norm, and that it was customary across the entire Muslim World.

### **Arab-Gulf Culture and Change.**

Both Denman and Mernissi, therefore, appear to suggest (possibly unwittingly) that cultures are fixed. The same can also be said for Asadi (2013) although her arguments are more deeply rooted in simple ignorance.

Asadi is an Iranian-American who works at the Al Faisal University, a private female institution in Riyadh. This is an important point, as it means that Asadi has probably never interacted with Saudis outside the classroom. Her research is based on a questionnaire circulated among her students, and on interviews with *TWO* (my emphasis) other female expatriates, though her

questions seem to have been less than searching. This much can be seen from three statements from her informants.

(a) “A lot of their beliefs contrast my own, so I just have the urge to educate them” (P. 85) is a classic example of denigrating “the generalised characteristics of anyone who is different from the unproblematical Self” (Holliday 2005; 19). Your beliefs are different from mine, so YOU need educating. This is an attitude that could be characterised as smug, ignorant and self-complacent, but its offensive ethnocentricity is magnified when we remember that this speaker voluntarily moved into another culture and is now attempting to impose her own conception of “the unproblematical self” in that environment.

(b) “I hold dear the rights of a free and secular democracy for everyone regardless of race or creed” (P. 87) is a comment that screams for a definition of terms and an exploration of its own internal contradictions. Exactly which “free and secular democracy” does the speaker have in mind? In Britain, politicians tend to avoid open reference to religion, but the Monarch is the Supreme Governor of the Church of England, and one of her titles is Defender of the Faith. Britain also has a bi-cameral parliament, but members of the upper chamber, the House of Lords, are not elected, they are selected as a result of recommendations put forward by the leaders of the principal political parties represented in the House of Commons. In France, where devotion to secular sentiment has resulted in overtly religious symbols such as the Muslim hijab, and turbans for Sikh males being banned in schools, the summer of 2013 saw massive demonstrations by Roman Catholics against the decision to allow same-sex marriage; one protester taking things to the extent that he committed suicide at the high altar of the Cathedral of Notre Dame. In the USA, where state and church are constitutionally separated, it has become impossible for any candidate to be elected to high office without repeated assurances that his/her religious beliefs match those of the more vociferous believers in the constituency.

(c) “I enjoy expanding the minds of Saudis and hope they will make much needed changes in their country because of the things I have taught them” (P. 87) is simply breathtaking in its mindless condescension.

Yet none of these statements is evidence of linguistic imperialism. What we see here is, perhaps, pedagogic incompetence, or, let us hope, examples of highly unrepresentative ignorance. These are statements that result from the muddled thinking of two very stupid women, and their tenor is familiar to anyone who has spent any time on Dave’s ESL Café, but such gormlessness is hardly the game-plan of a hegemonic military-political-educational alliance that aims to dominate the globe.

At the 2012 TESOL Arabia Conference, Asadi appeared to believe that because she had based much of her theory on Phillipson’s work, then

that work had a particular authority. This is a circular argument that leaves no room for Phillipson's critics – and those critics are now speaking more loudly than ever before (Saraceni 2008; King 2011; Waters 2013). In King's (2011; 285) terms, the postmodern theory of linguistic imperialism "sees the world in terms of power, victimhood, privilege, colonialism (of the Western sort, mainly, not so much that of the former Soviet Union or China), conspiracy (where others might find only muddle and stupidity), and above all, imperialism, which Phillipson detects at every bend in the road. The world of postmodernism is a world in which words have taken leave of their ordinary senses, as it were, their meanings drifting here, there, everywhere, until backwards reels the mind."

To demonstrate the truth of that last statement, let us look again at Asadi's informant's hope that the Saudis "will make much needed changes in their country because of the things I have taught them." What this woman obviously fails to realize is that she is working at an all-female university in Saudi Arabia precisely because there have already been quite staggering changes, and that those changes occurred, remarkably, without her help. Such changes, moreover, have affected the entire Arab Gulf. In his memoirs, the Emirati businessman Mohammed al Fahim comments, "Life in Abu Dhabi at the time of my birth was the same as it had been in 1800" (Al Fahim 2011; 32). Similarly, Khalfan al Habtoor, another Emirati businessman, and two years Al Fahim's junior, states that "It was 1949 when I emerged yelling into a world that no longer exists." (Al Habtoor 2012; blurb).

Holes (2009; 217) goes further:- "The rate of social and economic change in the Gulf in the last 50 years, and especially in the last 20, has been giddyingly fast, and certainly much faster than at any time previously. Before this sudden acceleration there seems to have been a long period of stability, one might almost say stagnation, in the way of life, no matter who occupied the seats of power. In a sense, when we talk about 50 years ago in the Gulf, we may as well be talking about 200 or 300 more years ago, so slow was the pace of change until recently."

Yet more evidence of change is offered in the careers of Salim bin Kabina and Salim bin Ghabaisha, and in this instance we have the pictures to prove it. Bin Kabina and Bin Ghabaisha were Wilfred Thesiger's companions on his epic journey from Salalah, through the Empty Quarter and down to what was then the Trucial Coast (Thesiger 1959). Thesiger employed them when they were impoverished 15 or 16 year-olds, at a time when they were already responsible for widowed mothers and younger siblings, but owned only a rifle and the clothes that they wore. (Figure 1 and 2).



Figure 1 – Salim bin Kabina.



Figure 2 – Salim bin Ghabaisha

By the time of their second series of journeys, both men were older, harder and tougher (Figure 3),



(Figure 3)

and after Thesiger left the Trucial Coast, Bin Ghabaisha transformed himself into a notorious raider (i.e. bandit) with a number of blood-feuds on his hands. Thesiger feared for the future of both his companions, predicting that “economic forces beyond their control would eventually drive them into the

towns to hang about street corners as ‘unskilled labour’” (Thesiger 1959; 330).

In fact, he need not have been so concerned. Both men are still alive, and have transformed themselves again. They have now become living legends. The explorer and adventurer Adrian Hayes recently retraced Thesiger’s route, with camels, though also with sat-nav, a camera crew and without the problems caused by internecine tribal warfare and blood-feuds (Hayes 2012). At the end of the journey, Bin Kabina and Bin Ghabaisha welcomed him at the city of Al Ain (Walsh 2013).



(Figure 4).

They are now the most respectable of gentlemen, both in their seventies, and the patriarchs of large and flourishing families, living in grace-and-favour villas gifted to them by the late Sheikh Zayed al Nahyan of Abu Dhabi.

The Emirati businessmen and the erstwhile raiders all exhibit what has been described as the Gulf Arabs’ “power of accommodation” (Raban 1979; 154). The last third of the 20<sup>th</sup> century totally transformed their world, bringing unparalleled wealth to small communities in a very short time frame. Obviously, mistakes were made at both individual and government level, and these have been gleefully remarked by hostile critics, but on balance, the Gulf States have shown a remarkable ability to cope with change, meeting new ideas head-on, and filtering them through their shared heritage and culture.

Britain’s decision to withdraw from East of Suez in 1971 (Cordesman 1977) marked a political turning point. Bahrain and Qatar opted for independence; the former Trucial States opted for federation and the establishment of the United Arab Emirates. At this juncture, Sheikh Zayed demonstrated the personal tact and diplomatic skill that were required to co-

ordinate the separate Emirates, allowing each the freedom to develop its own identity within the framework of a larger organization.

Even so, the current UAE is not without its critics. One instance here is Dr. Sally Feldman, sometime Dean of the School of Media, Art and Design at the University of Westminster, now Senior Fellow, Creative Industries, at the same institution. In 2005 Dr. Feldman went to Dubai looking for a repressive police state. Like Asadi's informants, she tailored her observations to fit her preconceptions. Among other things, she complains of the "silent, unsubtle presence of armed police" (Feldman 2006; 189); of the law against littering; of the fact that she was unable to buy a beer in a waterside café by the Dubai Creek, and because nobody tried to steal her mobile phone.

One wonders if Dr. Feldman has ever noticed the police pairings, armed and wearing flak jackets, who patrol at railway stations and airports in the United Kingdom; if she is unaware that anti-littering legislation exists in other countries, or if she has ever heard of licensing laws. If she is really so dependent on alcohol, she could have obtained it in any large hotel near the Dubai Creek. So far as her phone is concerned, moreover, surely a city that is almost free of street crime is to be applauded, rather than deplored as evidence of totalitarian control.

In Oman, His Majesty Sultan Qaboos became the only ruler in history to conduct a successful counter-insurgency against Marxist guerillas, and then proceeded to establish a welfare state that is now moving towards constitutional democracy. The government is determined to reduce its dependence on revenue from hydrocarbons and to that end has funded an extensive tourist infrastructure, including a Royal Opera House.

In Qatar, by contrast, Sheikh Hamed bin Khalifa al Thani staggered the Arab Gulf by being the first ruler in its history to voluntarily abdicate in favour of his son, Sheikh Tameem bin Hamed. Before that, Sheikh Hamed had overseen the construction of gleaming tower blocks, a Sports City, a highly successful national airline, and a broadcasting network based around Al Jazeera television (Emirates Centre for Strategic Studies and Research 1999). Al Jazeera has made its reputation by embracing investigative journalism, although it is true that it leaves Qatar alone (El Oifi; 2011.)

By any standards, these are impressive achievements, and they indicate that the Arab Gulf is now part of the globalised economy. Last year, the UAE Academic Jamal Al Suwaidi published a book entitled *From Tribe to Facebook* (Al Suwaidi 2013), whose title sums up this transformation. Until approximately 1970, the Arab Gulf states were backwaters, sitting on the edges of world affairs, but now they have moved to centre stage and have adopted English as their international, business language because, in

Babrakzai's (2004) phrase, "they want to compete with the Anglo world, rather than join it."

Linguistic Imperialism – yet again.

This ought to be a fairly simple point to understand, but it finds no favour with those who endorse Phillipson's (1992) theory of linguistic imperialism. This theory has most recently been criticized as "a ready-made sociopolitical template....superimposed onto ELT and the resulting picture unproblematically 'read-off'" (Waters 2013; 130), but it still has the power to awaken white-liberal guilt. Following Gramsci's theory that conventional common sense is the hegemony of the ruling class, Phillipson offers the cake-and-eat-it argument that if English is imposed on a colonial dependency, then that is outright linguistic imperialism. If, by contrast, an independent country like Malaysia, having tried to limit the use of English in favour of the national language (Moh'd-Ashraf 2003; Tsui 2004), reverts to English in the interests of economic growth and social prosperity, then this, too, is linguistic imperialism – a sort of confidence trick played on the electorate by a corrupt government.

This is also the stance taken by Asadi (2013), who bases her argument on her own version of history. "English was introduced to Saudi Arabia in 1924 due to the presence of the British and American governments" (Asadi 2013; 83) is simply untrue. In 1924, there was no Saudi Arabia. In 1924, what is now Saudi Arabia was divided into the Sultanate of the Nejd, ruled by Abdulaziz ibn Saud, and the Kingdom of the Hejaz, ruled by Hussein bin Ali, formerly the Sharif of Mecca. Secondly, the first institution to teach English in the Kingdom was the Scholarship Preparation School (SPS), established in Mecca in 1936 (Al Ghamdi and Al Saadat 2002). Mahboob and Elyas (2014; 129), moreover, point out that "This *one* school (their emphasis) was only open to Saudis going abroad, and not to the other citizens", so it hardly constituted much of a cultural threat.

Asadi also grossly misinterprets recent educational developments in the Kingdom. Absurdly citing Biava (1995) she offers as evidence "Saudi Arabia's language planning objectives aim to increase English language instruction and reduce Arabic and Islam (sic) courses." (Pp. 83-84).

There are two points here. Firstly, Asadi appears to be unaware that the current educational policies are actually a triumph for Saudi Arabian parent power. In 2002, there was a fire at a girls' school in Mecca. Several girls died because the school was housed in a building that had never been designed to accommodate classrooms, and the fire doors were locked. It was also alleged that members of the Society for the Prevention of Vice and the Promotion of Virtue had hampered the relief efforts, because they feared that some of the girls might have been unveiled.

Following the fire, the Chairman of the Presidency for Female Education gave a press conference, at which he made the extraordinarily complacent statement that he was only answerable to the King, and that his job was safe. Within a week he had been dismissed, and responsibility for girls' education had been handed over to the Ministry of Education. At the same time, the Ministry was ordered to revise the entire education syllabus, reducing the number of hours spent on Islamic Studies and introducing English at Primary School level. This allowed critics like Al Brashi (2003) and Karmani (2005) to raise the inflammatory slogan of "more English, less Islam" but Mahboob and Elyas report that the reforms were probably long overdue. Before 2003, English was taught in schools for four 45 minute periods a week. Islamic studies were taught for four 45 minute periods a day.

It must also be stressed that the initiative for reform came from the then Crown Prince, now King, Abdullah himself (Lacey 2009; 238). They have nothing to do with Biava's arguments about Christian proselytizers; missionary activity remains illegal in the Kingdom. The King's initiatives are, however, indicative of an on-going struggle between the Saudi royal family and the religious authorities. The latter have opposed, at various times, telephones, radio, television, any form of female education, mobile phones with camera attachments, female athletes participating in the Olympics and women working in shops – any shops – including shops selling female lingerie in shopping malls that men are forbidden to enter. On every occasion, they have urged that these things are *haram* (forbidden by Islam – see Hudson 2013) but they have lost the battle on every point.

They have also lost the battle so far as English teaching is concerned. Asadi (2013; 84) cites the critics Kamzi (1997) and Karmadi (2005) but at the same time, she ignores research by Al Haq and Smadi (1996; 313) which concluded that in Saudi Arabia "learning English is neither an indication of westernization nor entails an imitation or admiration of Western cultural values."

Their research has since been endorsed by Congreve (2006) who concludes that while some Saudi Students have "a very positive attitude towards the utility of English" (P. 353), that attitude reflects a goal orientated, instrumental motivation, and as Gardner (2000; 10) points out "doesn't seem to involve any identification or feeling of closeness with the other language group." The reliability of those findings, of course, is proved by the fact that the Saudi elite (including senior religious figures) have always used private schools where their children are taught English.

This year, moreover, Mahboob and Elyas' (2014) study has demonstrated the extent to which both Islam and Saudi culture remain central to the teaching of English. The 2007-2008 edition of *English for Saudi Arabia* includes units with titles like "Before Al Hajj", "The Early Spread of

Islam” and “Ramadhan”, while “‘Money’, includes lessons on describing Saudi currency notes etc” (Mahboob and Elyas 2014; 138-139) and other units are about “Saudi Arabia yesterday and today” and “Arab aid”.

Possibly even more importantly, Saudis now travel. As early as the mid-1970s, Raban refers to Saudi tourists in Amman in the most respectful terms:- “this modest, studious family with their passion for archeological sightseeing” (Raban 1979; 313) and intra-Gulf tourism now flourishes. The King Fahad Causeway linking Saudi Arabia to Bahrain is only 24 kilometres long. Special flights leave Riyadh for Salalah every August so that Saudi families can enjoy the pleasures of Dhofar’s monsoon season. Dubai attracts shoppers and tourists in their thousands. Saudis have seen for themselves that other Gulf countries, where English has been introduced from Grade One of Primary School, have not collapsed into moral chaos.

### **Conclusion**

This clearly demonstrates that “cultures ...are always meeting, touching and evolving, with associated implications for identity” (Mahrooqi and Roscoe 2012; 134). The religious authorities in Saudi Arabia have tried, harder than most, to keep contaminating influences out of the Kingdom. The rest of the Gulf, by contrast, has shown Raban’s power of accommodation to a quite remarkable degree.

Saraceni (2008; 280) has indicated that Phillipson’s conspiracy theory “involves a complete absence of conscious, intelligent and informed agency on the part of the stakeholders” while Mahmoud and Al-Mahrouqi (2012; 9) state that “In the Arab world, English is gaining ever more prominence as countries race to embrace modernity and economic development and become part of the modern world.” Their choice of verb is interesting; “countries *race*” (my emphasis), they are not driven. As Waters (2013; 129) indicates, English “is better seen as ‘demand-driven’, an expression of the desire by governments, corporations, agencies and individuals around the world to exploit the potential of English as ‘linguistic capital’ for their own ends. From this point of view, rather than viewed as an imposition, English is seen as an indispensable means of enabling those who acquire a knowledge of it to participate as fully as possible in global affairs.”

If we accept this argument, then we must also accept that it is demeaning, patronizing, condescending and neo-colonialist to deny such agency to any group of people, and suggest that they really ought to remain true to their “traditional culture” – however defined - and reject English. Why should any educator abrogate to himself/herself the right to decide what is best for another people?

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## **B-SLIM MODEL AS AN ENGLISH TEACHING MODEL IN THAILAND**

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### **Abstract**

In the business world, English language is considered as an important language for communication among people. According to the Act of Thai Education during B.E. (2008-2015:39), the sustainable development for Thai people has become the main focus in this era. To transform the education especially in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is needed to be integrated the new methodology in language teaching into three main areas. They are: education development, education extension and cooperation in services and educational management. The objectives of the study were: 1) to develop learning activities in and outside classroom context by using B-SLIM Model with the University students in Thailand 2) to compare the results of learning with the B-SLIM Model in the course of listening and speaking in Business English II after using B-SLIM Model 3) to investigate the level of listening and speaking of students following B-SLIM Model. The conceptual framework applied in the study was the development of Listening and Speaking skills by using B-SLIM Model as a teaching model in the course of Listening and Speaking in Business English II

The qualitative method was mainly used, combined with the quantitative data collected from 27 students studying at Chandrakasem Rajabhat University and registering in the course of BENG 1102 Listening and Speaking in Business English II. The normal classes of Listening and Speaking course II in and outside university campus such as Suvarnabhumi International Airport was a place of data collection. In addition, B-SLIM Model (Bilash's Second Language Instructional Method) was applied and used in creating the criteria for data analysis by means of experimental step and teaching step by step according to B-SLIM Model. The method of data analysis was the use of basic statistics.

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**Keywords:** B-SLIM Model

## **Introduction**

At the present, Thai government policies have been geared up the education in the country to be equal to other ASEAN neighboring countries. As in 2015, Thailand will take a full effect in being one of the ASEAN members, therefore, Thai government has tried to develop, support, and reinforce people such as educators, students and educational organizations in both private and public sectors to realize the importance of English ability of the young generation. Thai government has cooperated with its ASEAN members such as Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, The Philippines, Burma, Laos, Singapore, and Indonesia in terms of strengthening the prosperity of economy, politics, stability of society and culture. To do this, it will not be easy to finish in a short period of time. It takes time to transform education to be equal to other civilized nation.

This research, therefore, aims to explore the new teaching method “B-SLIM” Model by Olenka Bilash (2006) in order to improve the listening and speaking skills of university students in the course of Listening and Speaking in Business English II. Listening and speaking skills are reserved as the direct skills for communication. Therefore, the B-SLIM Model was proposed in the research study.

## **Objectives of the study**

The study aimed to:

1. Develop teaching and learning activities according to the use of B-SLIM Model in and outside classroom context.
2. Study and compare the results of students after learning through the B-SLIM Model.
3. Investigate the level of students’ skills after learning by a B-SLIM Model.

## **Research Questions**

1. How do the B-SLIM Model activities improve students’ speaking and listening competence in the Rajabhat context?
2. What are the levels of listening and speaking skills of students according to Chandrakasem Rajabhat University students?

## **Population**

The population of the study was the Business English students of Chandrakasem Rajabhat University, Bangkok, Thailand, who were taking a Course of Listening and Speaking in Business English II.

## **Sample**

The sampling size was 27 students who passed the Course of Listening and Business English I by means of a purposive sampling.

## **Research Instruments**

The research instruments of this study include:

1. The Coursebook of Listening and Speaking which contains 10 units starting from unit 19-30 (from Survival English Textbook)
2. The teaching method “B-SLIM Model” by Olenka Bilash (2009) focusing on 5 main criteria: Language awareness, Pronunciation, Vocabulary, Grammar, and Situations and Fluency.

## **Research Methodology**

The B-SLIM teaching model applied in the study as follows:

### **1. Planning and Preparation**

This is the first step which the researcher chooses the activities and contents based on the “Survival English “Textbook in order to meet the objectives of the course and prepare the appropriate materials for English communication.

### **2. Comprehensible Input**

This step aims to provide the students background of English sentences, conversations and opportunities to ask questions. At the end, the students are required to demonstrate the language they learn in the situational activities. The 5 inputs are related to this step are Language awareness, Pronunciation, Vocabulary, Grammar, and Situations and Fluency.

### **3. Intake Activity**

As this step is intended to assist the students who are not able to understand the language they learn, the teacher can organize a new activity in order to help them to have the opportunity to practice and understand what they have learnt. At this stage, the students will be able to use complicated sentences, difficult words as it is a stage of “Intake-Using-It”.

### **4. Output**

This is an important step in which the students have the opportunity to use language they have learnt outside the classroom context. The frequent found activity at this step is an individual activity such as “Introducing University”. They are required to make a video clip for a purpose of introducing university in 3-5 minutes. Then, the video clips will be uploaded into a facebook with a name of “BENG 1202: Aj. Jumjim.”

### **5. Evaluation**

The data are collected by means of observation and enquiry in order to ask for the students' problems and to be useful for the future research. Besides, the self-evaluation of a researcher and students' evaluation, participation, assignments, tests, mid-term and final examination are examined as well.

### **Findings**

The results of the study indicated that the overview of students' ability was in a medium level. It revealed that the students were able to communicate with the appropriate tenses which were in a Good level. The students were able to develop their speaking skill rather than listening skill especially their pronunciation was clear and easy to understand when communicate with others. Language awareness, listening for main idea, words and sentences stress, vocabulary, meaning of words, expressions, grammar, accuracy and fluency and continuation right situations were in the middle level with the mean of ( $\bar{X}$ ) respectively: 2.37, 2.96, 3.18, 3.11, 3.25 and 3.11 which were in a good level. The findings met 'a learning by doing and learning in interaction' which aims at the learner-centred approach (Brown, 2001; Foster, 1999; Richards&Rodgers, 2001)

### **Conclusion**

This study reconfirms that the activities of B-SLIM Model could improve students' speaking and listening competence of Chandrakasem Rajabhat University students. Overall, the students were at the medium level of improvement in terms of listening and speaking skills particularly in terms of five criteria for B-SLIM Model which were Language Awareness, Pronunciation, Vocabulary, Grammar and Situations and Fluency. In addition, the results of this study point that the students need more opportunities to practice in a real situation and have an overseas excursion in order to build the students' self-confidence outside the classroom context.

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# **NARRATIVES REVISITED: THE CASE OF NARRATIVES OF RECURRENT EVENTS**

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## **Abstract**

This article will be devoted to examining the discourse structure of conversational narratives which, it will be argued, share certain characteristics with the discourse structure of anecdotes, such as the event line, the orientation, the evaluation, etc. The question which will be posited is whether these texts could be designated as anecdotes. It will be argued that because of the absence of a complication-resolution format which is considered as an obligatory nucleus for an anecdote these texts do not meet the criteria of anecdote-like status. The analysis will also highlight the fact that this particular variety of narratives can be found in great numbers in ordinary, everyday conversation.

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**Keywords:** Narrative, anecdote, discourse analysis, storytelling, naturally-occurring conversation

## **Introduction**

Narratives have been defined in Labov's seminal paper as "one method of recapitulating past experience by matching a verbal sequence of clauses to the sequence of events which (it is inferred) actually occurred" (Labov, 1999: 359); in other words, they are a reconstruction of a series of events "organised chronologically in terms of what happens after what" (Martin & Rothery, 1981: 7) . A narrative, according to Labov, consists of six distinguishable components: an abstract, an orientation, a complication, an evaluation, a resolution and a coda, each having their own role to perform. The abstract offers a summary to the oncoming story, but it is noncompulsory, i.e. some narratives do not contain an abstract. The orientation fills in information about the character(s), the place and time of the story. The complication/complicating action forms the main body of the narrative and gives the actions or chronological events in the story, usually using verbs of action in the simple past or simple present. The evaluation specifies the point of the story and explains the reason the story is worth

telling. The resolution answers the question, “what finally happened?” and the coda, which again is not always present in a narrative, returns the story to the turn-by turn conversation.

Anecdotes are a sub-type of narratives<sup>8</sup> because, besides a complication and a resolution, anecdotes also contain evaluative and expressive speech devices, direct speech and conversational historical present. Another very important characteristic of anecdotes is their humour which is couched not only in their content, but also in their formal structure<sup>9</sup>.

### **Analysis of Data:**

An anecdote has been defined as a humorous account of some real incident (s); it contains a **complication** and a **resolution/punch line** and direct reported speech which is usually re-enacted by the teller. Bauman’s (1986: 55) definition, where he suggests that

*the anecdote may be defined as a short, humorous narrative, purporting to recount a true incident involving real people...*,

foregrounds similar ideas. He maintains that anecdotes have a truth value, and, structurally, they are built upon reported speech which brings out the humour in them.

In an attempt to attain a full understanding of anecdotes and their discourse structure, a body of conversations was compiled<sup>10</sup>, and the texts these conversations reveal present a rich focus for the investigation of this type of discourse.

This paper will explore conversational narratives which display anecdotal features, in order to show that despite the inclusion of such features as the event line, the evaluative framing devices and the orientation, these narrative texts are not considered to be anecdotes. They are not regarded as anecdotes because of the absence of a complication and a resolution.

One of the short humorous narratives from the data is the following, which is taken from a group of female participants talking after a day’s work<sup>11</sup>. This example was regarded by S, the main speaker in the excerpt, as a story when she helped me transcribe it:

*S: do you think policemen spat at*

*G: yeah*

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<sup>8</sup> This is my own definition of the term “anecdote”. I take “narratives” to be a generic term which includes sub-types, one of which is “anecdotes”.

<sup>9</sup> The structure of anecdotes I am referring to here pertains mainly to their ending. They culminate in a punch line and are received with laughter from the participants.

<sup>10</sup> A corpus of data consisting of long stretches of natural informal conversations was collected (a total of 16 hours 50min).

<sup>11</sup> Two of the participants are university students and the third is a nurse.

*S: I told a policeman to f\*\* off once c'z he shouted at me when I was running shouted knees up or something*

*S/G/F: hahahahahahahah*

*S: I get really cross when people heckle me when I'm running*

*G: och I get heckled on my bike*

The first observation one can make is that this extract begins with a question:

*S: do you think policemen get spat at*

This question sounds similar to the category “story-prompt” which frequently appears before anecdotes in chat shows (Alaoui, 2010). However, as opposed to story-prompts this question is asked by the same participant (S) who produces the passage under discussion while the other participant, speaker (G), answers the question by a simple “yeah”, affirming her belief and agreeing that “policemen do get spat at”.

Second, this text is analogous to an anecdote, since it includes an event line. However, it does not completely reach story-status. It would be a story if it followed this pattern because the above invented passage relates the events in the order they happened:

*I was walking down the road one day and this policeman shouted at me*

*knees up or something so guess what I turned around and told him f\*\* off*

It has an **orientation** (in the first clause); it uses direct speech (that of the policeman and that of the speaker). More importantly, it incorporates a **complication** (the policeman shouting at the speaker) and **resolution/punch line**. Because of the manner it is narrated in the actual text, the passage is construed as an **abstract/orientation** in that it could be heard as explanatory material, while the real anecdote could be told at a later stage. There is no sense of **complication-resolution**, since this text contains a single main clause with a single main verb “told” in

*I told a policeman to f\*\* off...*

There could be some controversy about the status of the verb “shouted” in

*Shouted knees up*

In other words, it is not certain whether the above verb is a repetition of the same verb which occurs a little earlier in the passage:

*C'z he shouted at me when I was running*

or it is the main verb of a main clause with an elliptical subject,

*(he) shouted knees up*

Even if the second option is taken, i.e. that the above clause is a main clause, and hence the text would have two main clauses rather than one:

1. *I told a policeman...*

## 2. *(he) shouted knees up*

the text would still not achieve story status, because it does not have a **complication-resolution** since telling the policeman to “f\*\* off” (complication?) is not resolved by his shouting “knees up”. It is more likely to have been the other way around: policeman shouted “knees up” (complication), as a consequence she told him to “f\*\* off” (resolution).

Therefore, despite the inclusion of some narrative features, this text does not attain story status. This is due to the lack of chronological order in the event line; in other words, the order of the events does not match the order of the clauses, thus suppressing the sense of **complication-resolution**. Another rationalisation for it being a non-story, and this is valid only in so far as the first option is taken, is that the text has only one main clause with a narrative verb, whereas a fully-formed anecdote should have at least two main clauses: one for the complication and the other for the resolution.

### Stories of Recurrent Actions

In the corpus of data collected, there are a number of examples which at first glance might be regarded as stories, since they have an event line, and sometimes they include what looks like an **abstract** and a **coda**. These cases deal with event lines in the past, and, in this respect, they approach the anecdote schema discussed earlier. However, they cannot be regarded as fully-formed anecdotes because they involve recurrent actions rather than actions which took place at a unique moment in time. In Telling the American Story, Polanyi (1989) refers to this kind of narrative in a footnote thus:

... In a generic narrative, any given event, agent, or object is not unique, but stands for such a class of events, agents, or objects, since the world of the narration is not a unique world, but is rather a class of worlds in which the activities and the circumstances described generally obtain. Generic past time narratives are structures around indefinite past time events encoded in event clauses with generic models such as *would* or *used to*. (Polanyi, 1989: 18)

This is the case of the examples to be analysed below: their time reference frame is “used to” rather than “it happened once”. These narratives are not regarded as anecdotes because the repetitive recurrence of actions suppresses the sense of **complication** and **resolution**.

The first narrative text to be discussed in this section is that of the speaker (M) describing how, as a child, she used to be taken by her uncle to church. This event (being taken to church) was a recurrent one; it is

presented as having continued as a frequent occurrence over a period of time (when she was a child). The narrative begins as follows:

M: *My uncle used to come up an' start preachin' to u:s c'z we weren't par' of his church an' he used to get us to join the church y'know by – when we were kids by bringing us on their Sunday school trips an'- an' by taking us to: the (happiest little home by which we lived)*

As has been suggested before, the main feature in this beginning is the repetitive use of the modal auxiliary “used to”, followed by the infinitive verb:

### **NP (subject) + used to + infinitive verb**

According to grammarians (Quirk and Greenbaum, 1984; Swan, 1984) the form “to be”+*infinitive* refers to past habits and states, rendering a sense of habitual activities which have been repeated over a period of time which is not completed. In this excerpt, there are three main clauses and all three are headed by “used to”; plus the use of the verb “to be” in subordinate clauses:

*C'z we weren't par' o' his church when we were kids*

Both the use of “used to” and “to be” makes this passage a description of what used to happen. In this respect, it forms an **orientation**, setting up the contest of a story.

The text continues in this mode, so that instead of turning into one specific instance, using for example “one day” or “once”, it simply carries on without interruption these habitual recurrences:

M: *he used to have i' for kids special things for kids b't it was only to get them into the process so we used to go =*

S: = *ehemm=*

M: = *an' quite like it c'z we sang all these songs an' did all these a:ctions an' everythin ((sings))  
runn(h)ing ov(h)er(h) runn(h)ing ov(h)er my cups  
a' full 'n' running over since the Lord saved  
meheheh I'm as happy as(hh) c(h)an be hahahaeh  
they didn't do tha:t at our Sunday school so we  
thought it was quite good b't we weren't really(h)  
(h)int(h)er(h)es(h)t(h)ed (h)in an(h)yth(h)ing(h)  
(h)el(h)s(h)e hahahah plus I think you get good  
presents at Christmas an' stuff*

As seen from the above, the enumeration of the activities the uncle and the children “used to” do extends throughout the event line. Indeed, the event line is realized in “used to” form, while the rest of the narrative does

not. The single instance where a verb<sup>12</sup>, apart from the past form of “to be”, is utilised without the form “used to” is:

*We thought it was quite good*

This is not part of the event line; it rather comes at the end of the event line, and even though it does not carry a sense of recurrence, it sums up what the children thought of the other recurrent events (going to church, on trips, singing, getting presents). In fact, it comes here as an **evaluation** since it serves as commentary on the events. It can be regarded as a **coda** too because of its position at the end of the narrative; and like a coda, it is introduced by the particle “so”, which signals transition from one mode to another, in this case, from what usually happened, to the children’s assessment of it<sup>13</sup>.

The structure “used to”, denoting a recurrence in the past, is in operation in the following example as well<sup>14</sup>:

1. *M: funny that you say that c’z my daughter used to be a real (Adam Ant) fan at that time an’ she must be about four and she used to sing his Stand and Deliver but she couldn’t make out the words so she used to sing stand in the liver [hahahaheh*

*L[hahahaha*

*M: ( you’re singing) then we sorted it out =*

*L: = hahahaha*

*M: so whenever I saw the video I wanted to lau:gh an’ also she used to have this thing about a horse she was a horse fanatic y’ know so she had this rocking horse she used to go on it with a riding stick an’ a ha:t [hahah*

*L: [heheh*

*M: an’ her daddy will make her a tape of all her favourite songs hahah an’ tha: was one o’ them she’d y’know [she is right =*

*L: [((sings)) stand [in’ the liver hahahaha]*

*M: [hahahaha ] an’ she would go on an’ on for the whole of the tape hahahaha l(h)ik(h)e this fie[:nd ]*

*L: [emm]*

*M: it’s funny*

*L: hahahahaha*

<sup>12</sup> I am referring here to verbs in main clauses, as for subordinate clauses some verbs in the simple past are used, e.g. ‘sang’ and ‘did’. However, as in the first example analysed in this section, verbs in subordinate clauses are not counted as part of the event line.

<sup>13</sup> For more information about the use of “so” as a marker of transition, see Schiffrin (1987).

<sup>14</sup> Whole complete texts will be quoted in this section to make it easier to follow the argument I put forward.

There are six instances of the expression “used to” in this example, and because this text is about what this little girl used to do, it seems to be more about a recurrent action than about a specific episode.

The following clause which comes at the beginning of the passage (quoted above)

*my daughter used to be a real (Adam Ant) fan*

might have been part of the **orientation**, introducing a character (my daughter) and filling in background information about her (being and Adam Ant fan). However, the terms "used to" are repeated over the next lines, thus, summing up a recurring behaviour in the past – although it happened within a fixed period in the past; in other words, the speaker M is talking about a period of time (when her daughter was four) during which a particular kind of recurrent action could be identified.

However, the narrative begins with a preface,

*funny that you say c'z...*

and the speaker's relating what used to happen then comes as an explanation,

*...c'z my daughter used to be...*

Interestingly enough, the narrative closes with a near repetition of the preface,

*it's funny*

which can act as an **evaluation** that assesses the episode, and a coda which ends the narrative and returns it to the present (note the use of the present tense). Thus, the speaker's use of "funny" at the beginning and at the end of the text forms a framing device, a device which can also be found in naturally occurring anecdotes. Furthermore, this episode, even though a recurrent one, seems to work on incongruity: the notion of this little girl with a hat and a riding stick, listening to songs and singing. The mixture of these strange elements (resulting in incongruity), the use of a formal framing device, and the presence of an event line, all lean in favour of this text being an anecdote.

One of the reasons that makes it difficult to categorise this text as anecdote, however, is that the notion of **complication-resolution** does not seem to work with habitual actions. Indeed, the structure **complication-resolution** cannot be imposed on the above text, so that if we list the events involved:

*She used to sing all his songs*

*She used to sing his stand and deliver*

*We sorted it out*

*She used to go on it (rocking horse)*

*Her daddy will make her a tape*

*She would go on an' on*<sup>15</sup>

we do not find a climax (complication) nor a denouement (resolution). It might have been possible to have this structure of complication-resolution if the text was, for example, about this little girl singing incomprehensible words (complication), ending in her parents' finding out what she was singing (resolution). The absence of **complication-resolution** suggests that while this text is a narrative, it is not a fully-fledged anecdote.

The next example is somewhat more complicated than the ones discussed so far. It does not incorporate any use of terms such as "used to" in the event line; it does, nevertheless, involve a protracted state of events, i.e. it takes place over a long period of time:

M: *but ACTually now that you said that there was someone – there was a woman who emm ( ) who'd been in this kind of state for years and she come-she comes (through) some prison camp an' all that from the wa:r right =*

L: = *emm =*

M: = *bu' she was behaving in this very o:dd way 'n' they've been treatin' her for years bu' they never discovered it w'z actually something in her blood or y' know it w'z one of these kinds o'things that was causing the (variable) it took them years to discover that [c'z they] were busy =*

L: [*yeah* ]

M: = *looking at it from this psychological point of view =*

L: = *an'-an' I mean it's-it's[for them it's great business*

M: [*so she went to-she was demented you know she [was more an' more demented]=*

L: [*gets worse an' worse* ] *if they don't catch it*

M: = *I mean-I would've thought one of the first things you would want to do is to check the physical-the whole physical thing before you started doing all this – what is really just kind of ( ) often jokes psychologically heheheheh*

L: *emmm*

The above narrative starts with what could be considered an **orientation**, introducing background information about the character:

*there was a woman  
who'd been in this kind of this state  
she comes (through) some prison camp  
she was behaving in a very o:dd way*

<sup>15</sup> A part of the text I have not included here is, "whenever I saw the video I wanted to laugh". The reason for omitting it is that I feel it is not part of the time frame of the events listed. In other words, it has nothing to do with the story of this little girl on the rocking horse.

*they've been treatin' her*

These clauses seem to establish the contextualising material for the narrative. The verb "discovered" in

*They discovered it w'z actually somethin' in her blood*

is the first in the passage to come as a "narrative" verb, as it introduces an independent clause and is in the simple past; it also entails an action.

Despite the fact that the verb "discovered" is the first "narrative" verb in this text, it comes to explain the state of the character in the text. Thus, its role is nearer to that of a **resolution**; it resolves for the hearers why the character in the passage is behaving oddly, and why the psychiatrists have been treating her for a long time without finding the cause.

If the following segment,

*They discovered it w'z actually somethin' in her blood*

is taken as a **resolution**, then where is the **complication**? Could the **complicating action** reside in the prior clauses, i.e. in the clauses which were considered as **orientation**? Would they perform the role of **complication** even though they are of the descriptive type? Such questions are constantly raised by the texts which the conversational data offer<sup>16</sup>. Because of the difficulty of attributing the **complication** to a specific narrative clause, this example is hard to categorise as an anecdote.

Example 4 offers similar features to the ones described above:

L: *I had this uncle he is crazy he is crazy he (lives) in America an' he's-he's been married for forty odd years now an' then he's -it's-my aunt is a twin an' he always says you know he got-he's always joking about all the other women he comes across ( ) my batty uncle in America an' he says O:h he said I married the wrong one I should have been that night with Marion (I might not have recognized her) an' I end up with you old bat for God's sake ( o::h my goodness) an' he always came up with stories day after day after day an' my aunt went ((in an American accent)) O::h shut up George hahahahah*

S/H: *heheheheh*

L: *hahahahah .hh an' he's talking an' he says o::h she w'z just like this ((makes a gesture of a woman's shape))an' she was sitting like [an' that was just her head*

S/H: *[heheheheh*

L: *[hahahahah*

S/H: *[heheheheh*

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<sup>16</sup> Here I am referring to the naturally occurring conversation which I have compiled and analysed.

The beginning of this passage sets up the context for what comes later in the narrative:

*I had this uncle  
He lives in America  
He's been married for forty odd years  
My aunt is a twin  
He always says  
He's always joking*

The role of the above material is to orientate, since all the clauses either are in the progressive aspect, include the temporal adverb "always" (which performs a similar role to "used to" in the other narratives), or do not denote an action, but rather a state.

In the next part,

*He says O:h he said I married the wrong one...*

the switch in tense from simple present (he says) to simple past (he said) could reflect the speaker's move from generalization to a specific episode; that is to say, unlike Wolfson's (1984) notion of tense alternation<sup>17</sup>, the tenses in the two above verbs refer to two different time frames. This is enhanced by the disjunct marker "O:h" which shows that the speaker is correcting herself as far as time reference is concerned.

However, just as it looks that the text has moved into a story frame, with the past tense, direct reported speech (plus the re-enactment of the speech patterns of the character), the speaker switches back to the habitual actions of her uncle, with the use of "always" in

*He always came up with stories*

Then once again there is another switch to the specific in

*My aunt went O:h shut up George*

Hypothetically, if the passage followed the following pattern,

*He said I married the wrong one...*

*My aunt went O:h shut up George*

without the inclusion of "he always came up with stories" in between, the passage would have been heard as an anecdote of a particular time (when the uncle said "....." and the aunt went "....."). Just as it stands, it is not very clear whether the whole text is relating past recurrent actions. The next part in the text,

*he's talking an' he says o::h she w'z just like this...*

with its return to describing habitual actions induces the prior part to be taken as recurrent actions as well.

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<sup>17</sup> Wolfson maintains that speakers alternate the tenses in their storytelling, from past to present tense. This alternation does not reflect a change in temporal reference since the past can be substituted to the present without any change in meaning.

In sum, the narratives of recurring actions do not constitute fully-formed anecdotes. This is due to the fact that their being habitual actions, rather than actions happening at a specific time, precludes the sense of **complication** and **resolution** which is necessary for anecdotes.

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### **Appendix**

#### Transcription conventions:

The conventions of transcription I am using here are identical to the ones I used in an earlier paper (Alaoui, 2010), and so they are quoted below *verbatim*:

*One major point the transcription raises is how much detail one can include in the transcript. Because the main focus here does not reside in the specific features of linguistic production of speech such as pronunciation, intonation, voice quality and the likes, the transcripts do not display these features, except when they make a systematic contribution to the interpretation of anecdotes. There was no attempt at differentiating between accents because this was not regarded as relevant. The symbols used to transcribe the materials are:*

*= used when there is no interval between two utterances*

[ *used if they utterance of two or more speakers overlap*  
] *used when the overlapping utterances stop overlapping*  
[[ *used when utterances start simultaneously*  
: *if the vowels are lengthened*

( ) *use of empty brackets if there is some doubt about the word(s) that were spoken at a certain time. Sometimes the words in doubt are given between the brackets.*

(.) *pause which has not been timed*

*Used twice. When there is a space left before and after the dash it is used to show that there is a short but noticeable pause. When the dash is used without leaving any space (before and after it), it represents a self-interruption, usually with a glottal stop.*

**CAP** *use of capital letters when the utterance is characterized by high pitch*

## **FEMALE BODY IN INDIAN CINEMA-A REFLECTION**

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### **Abstract**

In every society each one knows the social order of behaviour and the expectation of the society from respective genders, be it biological or social. Cinema as a medium in many ways depicts the social reality on screen. On one hand it becomes a document of the existing fashion or technology, and on the other it also is governed by the norms of the existing time and presenting the images which would reflect realism of social order. This paper attempts to see the journey of female body image in Indian cinema with specific reference to the popular actresses' body type and see if socio-economic situation was /is an influencing factor for the shift from a full body to thin waistline or from fair skin, long hairs to higher navel which is the current fad.

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**Keywords:** Cinema, India, Women, Body image, Globalization

### **Social order and body image**

Every society in its own way has time and again stated the way in which women should look like or the role she should play. Irrespective of the culture, women across have followed these rules and abided by them so as to get accepted in the society. The human body is therefore treated as an image of society and there can be no natural way of considering the body that does not involve at the same time a social dimension (Douglas, 1996).

According to Judith Butler,

'If gender is the social construction of sex and if there is no access to this "sex" except by means of its construction, then it appears not only that sex is absorbed by gender but that "sex" becomes something like a fiction, perhaps a fantasy, retroactively installed at a prelinguistic site to which there is no direct access' (Butler, 1993).

The social order dictates the roles of the individuals in the society based on their gender. In the larger understanding of the society men are

responsible for the activities in the public sphere and be the bread earner, whereas women perform more domestic roles such as child rearing and maintain the family order. Though Margaret Mead differs with this notion and in her books *Coming of Age in Samoa* (1928), she suggests that there is difference between gender, sex and sexuality. And also in some societies men stay at home and concentrate on personal cosmetic beauty and women undertake manual work. In this context gender refers to the roles people play in society and it is produced by gender division of labour, whereas sex refers to the biological construction and sexualities refer to the performance of gender identities.

During the World War I and II, social conditions pushed the working class to involve all members of a family to contribute to the overall income of the house. This again underpinned the idea to have large families and have more children. These social conditions made it imperative for women to have a fertile, physically strong and able body. This favored image of woman with broad hips and voluptuousness since she would give birth to more children and hence considered more desirable than others.

It is often presumed that man is what he eats and a woman is what she looks. A woman's form is symbolic of her character. Thus traditionally an obese woman was not simply considered fat, but she was understood to be out of control for a man to cope with. The unrestrained body here is a statement of unrestrained morality. To control women's bodies is equal to controlling her personality and representing an act of authority over body in the interest of public order, organized around male values, of what ought to be right. While slenderness for men and women was the dominant norm of sexual attractiveness, Slenderness may also be ironically a denial of sexuality or more specifically of procreative functions and fertility. Corsets, jogging, exercising and anorexia are associated to weight loss or personal control eventually leading to suppression of menstruation.

Today's slim woman is less likely to be looking for a marriage partner. Slimness is now under the business preview of food and drug industry, more geared to the narcissistic ends of the personal happiness, social success and social acceptability. The slim body is neither the product of ascetic drive for salvation nor the artificial aid of the corset. Instead it is a specific feature of calculating hedonism as the ethic of late capitalism (Stone, 1977).

Human bodies are subject to physical or organic needs<sup>18</sup>. Human agents live their sensual, sexual experience via the categories of a discourse of desire which is dominant in given societies, but this discourse of desire is ultimately determined by the economic requirement of the mode of production (Turner, 2007, pp. 17-32). The liberation of desire is implicitly the liberation of male desire which fails to provide any explanation of the location of women in a society where men through economic changes are either driven out of work by structural unemployment or liberated from work by automation (Turner, 2007, pp. 17-32). The commodification of sex lends support to the argument that modern society is a pornographic society, ‘a society so hypocritically and repressively constructed that it must inevitably produce an effusion of pornography as both its logical expression and its subversive, demotic antidote’ (Carter, 1979, p. 86).

As Borges has observed

‘The world we live in is a mistake, a clumsy parody. Mirrors and fatherhood, because they multiply and confirm the parody, are abominations. Revulsions is the cardinal virtue. Two ways whose choice the Prophet left free, may lead us there: abstinence or the orgy, excess of the flesh or its denial’ (Borges, 1972, p. 83).

The thin body is better equipped for desire. By accepting the dominant norm and denying her sexuality as a personal choice, the anorexic accepts or at least conforms to, an ethic of consumer sexuality. It is interesting to note, therefore that ballerinas who are an epitome of sexual attractiveness are, as a subculture, also commonly anorexic (Druss & Silverman, 1979). By suppressing menstruation, the daughter suppresses sexuality and adopts a permanent childlike body and attitude to the mother. On one level anorexia is a refusal to mature. At the same time, self starvation gives an enormous sense of self control via control of biological processes. Food refusal is used as a defence against the original fear of eating too much, of not having control, of giving in to their biological urges, this accumulation of power was giving her another kind of “weight” (Bruch, 1978).

The ideology of the assigning value to the body goes back to the preindustrial time. The myth of beauty and ugliness have laid the very foundation of normalcy, especially the myth of Venus which has been bred into the minds of the audience and the ways of viewing a body as it appears in various visual medium (Davis, 1997). Though there are no ground rules or

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<sup>18</sup> In Greek philosophy one should try to live a frugal life in which necessary desire are satisfied and natural but not necessary desires given some place, while vain desires are outlawed. Such a life would naturally be virtuous ( (Huby, 1969, p. 67)

principle which can be used as evidence to prove that the notion of beauty or ugliness is universal or can be generalised.

Looking good and feeling fine are the part of new self-indulgence which dominates world of advertisement. The narcissist culture of the modern capitalism is often seen to be evident of the decline of patriarchal structures in the home and work-place. Feminism is on the decline because of economic centrality of home as a production unit, the democratization of lifestyles, and the employment of women are all said to have weakened the traditional combination of male authority, gerontocracy, patriarchy and religion. Women under such false contentment, narcissism enjoys pseudo-liberation from the family, only to be subordinated by the new culture of consumerism (Turner, 2007, p. 172).

Thus we see that over a period of time the ideal body type kept shifting with the changes in the socio-economic status of the women. Most of the time the curves or the slenderness became dominant based on the need of the society to reproduce or gain financial independence.

### **Impact of World War on western cinema**

Gradually in the west, the moving images started capturing stories on screen involving artist from both genders. Since the early films were documentation of the event and society of that time, it was merely presentation of facts and therefore did not have any formal actors. Later when films depicted stories, the characterization was based on the demand of the script and perhaps therefore there was 'no stigma' attached to women working in cinema, the kind of roles that they played depicted the socio-political scenario of those times, but Second World War changed the ideals. With men fighting the war, women were forced to step out of their house and work in factories so that the industries could thrive. This was the time when women were expected to 'wear the pants' around the house. Society valued women who were proficient, strong and physically tough. After the war got over and men returned from the battlefield, the cultural values shifted back to home front for women.

Western films which dominated the screenings, (since the medium was born there) imbibed the order of such society as well. The characters followed the rules of both genders very interestingly, keeping in mind what the niche audience wanted. Male characters if they belonged to certain class in film, were expected to present themselves in formal clothing, combed hairs, and be neatly dressed whenever they made any kind of public appearance, and so was expected from female adults especially to make sure that while they are sitting, their legs were not apart and thighs were not revealed and both male and female have the appropriate look. The

disciplined ordering of personal front was one way in which the individual were obliged to express their aliveness to others (Goffman, 1963).

The roles played by these women were restricted to wearing skirts and rearing babies which meant that importance was reinforced to fertility and this was also presented onscreen where audiences preferred more curvaceous frames.

### **Indian cinema – Early history**

Indian cinema began its journey much before *Dada Saheb Phalke* made *Raja Harishchandra*<sup>19</sup>. Lumiere brothers exposed the British as well as Indian elite audiences to moving images and this experience left all of them spell bound. The screening at Watson hotel in then Bombay inspired both professional and amateur photographers to try their hands with this new instrument which could record and replay the event. Soon bunch of filmmakers emerged and started experimenting with the medium by recording events of some significance or slice of life images. The early cinema, also known as the silent era, consisted of films from America and Europe, mostly non-fiction or reportage. They dealt with varied issues from arrival of important people to procession to games or any other event of national or international importance.

Indian cinema's roots lie in many art forms (theatre, music, painting, photography, literature, dance, storytelling) as well as other aspects of culture that were stimulated by the colonial encounter and the new media that developed during the nineteenth century (Dwyer, 2006). The cinema that emerged during this time reinforced that women do not deviate from their role as a home maker. Though in India, cinema entered much later than in Europe, the film culture of that time was all about excitement of this new medium which allowed images to move on screen. Subsequently, when the screen images developed narrative, tempo, assumption, glamour, know-how, and physical strength, what followed were the unending reels of adventure, comedy, romance, and exoticism in the quick changing urban landscape of a big city. A city which already had embodied new sites to be dotted with cars, factories, airplanes, ocean-liners, guns, movies, sporting spectacles, and modern lifestyles (Bhaumik, 2011)

Films screened at that time were more like serials which were gaining immense popularity among audiences. Some of these western film serials like *Fantomas*, *Judex*, the *Nick Winter* series, and also those which featured female protagonist such as *Pearl White*, *Grace Darmond*, *Ruth Roland*, and

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<sup>19</sup> India's first indigenous film made in 1913, it was first of its kind of an attempt to give film making the status of industry not only in terms of craft but also culture.

*Irene Castle*, or male lead such as *Elmo Lincoln* and *Eddie Polo* were among the popular face during early cinema in India (Bhaumik, 2011) . These film series used adventure, drama, and stunt as genre to give a magical experience of film screening which happened in the dark tents. To appeal to the mental makeup of port and metro city Mumbai, the filmmakers used larger than life structures like airplane and ships as part of the settings to tell the story. These films were basically news reels with ‘no actors or actress’.

European cinema had gained immense popularity by then and need of the time was to shift to features films which were exhibited in some local town cinema halls which were mix of *Parsi* theatre, music hall entertainment and movement performances. These became a major site of interface between Indian and Western popular cultures. “Oriental” dancers and bands performing at the Royal Opera House<sup>20</sup> passed on their performance techniques to their Indian counterparts. Some of the famous performances showcased in Royal Opera House were by *Mademoiselle Bibi Jan* an expert of Turkish dances and *Roshanara* who performed Delhi gypsy dances in June 1918 (Bhaumik, 2011).

These town cinema halls were not just empty spaces but also signified the entrenchment of a new audience’s taste for social problem films (*ICCE*, Vol. III, p. 764). These films demanded a different kind of treatment to the story telling art which was not as same as the serial films. Here the stress was on action and not on narrative. The features also acknowledged a different kind of connection with European culture which was again based on familiarity with the cultural background and lifestyles of Europe. Viewers, who were able to understand English language, followed the inter-title text of the story, and who could take pleasure in European social romance, were the only ones who enjoyed these kinds of films.

India was gradually accommodating this new medium of entertainment as more and more enterprising individuals were learning the craft of cinematograph and modifying it according to their needs. The imported cinema had exposed the audience to this entertaining tool and the film makers of Bombay filmmakers were now using this as a tool of entertainment which could be at par with foreign films. However, only a few elements of imported cinema, usually those that had prior referents in Indian cultural practice or social insight were taken up by Indian filmmakers. Films featuring Olympic star, Annette Kellerman, were very popular, undoubtedly because of the titillation provided by the ‘Venus like’ bathing beauties in scanty clothing (*ICCE*, Vol. IV, p. 25, (Bhaumik, 2011).

Wadia Brothers were among the first few Indians who got inspired by the new mass medium and later contributed immensely in giving films its

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<sup>20</sup> Royal Opera House was opened in 1915, source Times of India, February 1<sup>st</sup>, 1936

due popularity and respect. They saw films from various countries in the 1910s and their favorite genre, the imported serial film, influenced their choice to produce stunt films under their own banner and invent the first female stunt superstar of Bombay cinema, Fearless Nadia. (Interview with Homi Wadia, by Kaushik Bhaumik)

The films made in Bombay were based on the stories from Gujarati folk lore and mythological stories which indicate the cultural trend in film production and also the rush to depict them as cultural performance on screen to appeal the dominant population of Gujarati's at that point of time. The settings of most of the Hindi films of this time period were based on indigenous requirements of culture and sensibility. Hindi movies operated within a specific settings and narrative. For example, in the Hindi movie, love was expressed in particular settings. These were usually pastorals imagined by the city dweller of the spaces which suited the traditional landscape of love like *Kashmir* or *Khandala*. A rural setting for the visual depiction of love goes back to the paintings of *Ravi Verma* and pervades the entire corollary of popular picture production during the twentieth century (Jain, 2003).

A third popular genre consisting of films featuring child stars such as Peggy Cummings and Marie Osborne, found a comfortable niche in a society primed by the centrality of the child *Lord Krishna* as a major cultural star. The popularity of the films of Maciste or Tarzan was understandable for a culture in love with wrestling. It is hardly surprising that such films were emulated when Indian bodybuilders like *Nandram* (Indian Eddie Polo) and Sandow entered the industry (Bhaumik, 2011, p. 12)

### **Onscreen roles and requirements for heroines**

When Indians started making films, the screen was more or less an extension of theatre and folk dance which had their premise in mythology and folklores. *Pundalik* by *Sakharam Bhatwadekar* was the first fiction film which was based on Hindu mythology as it was the kind of subject that would appeal pan Indian audience. Though the credit for proper 'commercial' indigenous feature film goes to *Raja Harishchandra* produced and directed by

D.G. Phalke which was based on the mythological hero '*Raja Harishchandra*'<sup>21</sup>,

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<sup>21</sup> According to Indian mythology King Harishchandra was a person with high morals and values, who to keep his vow of virtuousness along with his wife and child goes through lot of struggle and in the end is blessed by gods themselves

Historically, the people's perception about the ideal female body type has been shaped by the dominant political environment and cultural ideals of that time and society. Films in India including *Raja Harishchandra* and others which were made later followed the cultural norms of Indian society. Where, woman represented the continuity of -life, an energy which could not be divided or diverted without a corresponding loss of -vitality; she could not desire to be something other than her prescribed social role.— There was no difference between what was spiritual and what was sensuous. Indian women did not deform their bodies in the interests of fashion; they were more concerned about service than rights: (Coomaraswamy, 1918)

The time film '*Raja Harishchandra*' was made, cinema was not looked up as a mass entertainment. Rather, it was only meant for upper class elite, and people who worked in making of these cinemas were looked down as almost outcast. Therefore the entire cast and crew of this film consisted of only male actors, including those who played the character of women on screen, as it was a social taboo for the women from upper class especially Hindu families to work on stage or screen for that matter.

One aspect of early cinema was the popularity of 'Gori Miss' or the white skinned actress. As films were considered a disreputable occupation, women from respected families would not think of having any direct or indirect connection with the film business. On the other hand women of Baghdadi Jewish origin and Anglo-Indians were willing to step into films (Somaaya, Kothari, & Madangarli, 2012). The audience had a desire for these actresses to the fact that 'the male Indian spectator could possess the "English" beauty and in so doing enact a reversal of the power relation that prevailed in British-dominated colonial society' (Hansen, 1998).

The kind of roles women play onscreen is more often than not, the male director's notion of what roles women ought to be playing. This notion is based on the director's beliefs, attitudes and values, combined with what the director thinks viewers want to see. The expectations of the viewer in turn is based on his beliefs, attitudes and values, which come from the social framework within which they live, which is the same in which directors, live. There has to be a consistency in the beliefs, attitudes and values of all those involved. Some of the early actresses came from varied backgrounds and diverse cultures. One of the reigning star of early 1920's and 30's *Sulochana* (original name Ruby Meyers) was a telephone operator before she debuted in *Veer Bala* (1925) a Kohinoor Film Company's film directed by *Mohan Bhavnani*. Similarly, Esther Abrahams aka *Pramilla*, who was known for her roles as vamp, came to films from Parsi travelling theatre. Among these was also Patience Cooper, who used her own name and worked as a dancer for a Eurasian troupe and a Parsi Theatrical Company before joining films. She was often cast as the sexually troubled but innocent heroine at the centre of

moral dilemmas represented by male protagonists (Rajadhyaksha, 1995). Her performance in film *Pati Bhakti* (1922) raised her to hall of fame as a devoted and submissive wife *Leelavati* whose antithesis was the other woman played by an Italian actress Signora Minelli who dressed in semi transparent costumes in her films and set the silver screen “on fire”.

In the 1920's Himanshu Rai an Indian film maker made Indo-German collaborative films. Starting with silent films, and later on the talkies, he made a number of films based on Indian mythology, history and social issue in which Himanshu Rai used a number of Eurasian actresses to play the female lead characters. These women were given Hindu names like *Sita Devi* - and were introduced to the public as "educated Hindu women". This variance of Eurasian actresses representing Indian historical/mythological characters, underlined the problematic of its representation (Dutta, 2000).

Other actresses of that time included Renee Smith aka *Sita Devi*, Iris Casper aka *Sabita Devi*, Susan Soloman aka *Firoza Begum*, Effie Hippolet aka *Indira Devi*, Bonnie Bird aka *Lalita Devi*, Beryl Claessen aka *Madhuri* and Winnie Stewart aka *Manorama*. It was only in 1932 when *Durga Khote* an educated, English speaking Brahmin girl entered the film industry and changed the perception that not only women from low or outcaste background entered the film industry, but also from respectable families accepted the profession of acting.

Since the early days of cinema, the image of woman's body portrayed on screen has also undergone transition as well as transformation. Be it from a being a voluptuous full bloom figure or follow current trend to be size zero, the body portrayed on screen has also been influenced by the socio-economic situation of India.

Indians traditionally have believed in healthy food habits and have found curved body type more desirable since it signified wealth, prosperity and ability to take care of the family. As a country the geographical location of India is close to equator which makes it a tropical country and therefore it required traditionally women to have a structure which could bear healthy children in other words a full body type was considered more fertile. This could be one of the reasons why various art forms depicted curvaceous female body. The cinema of India in 1940's and 50's thus reflected both the dimensions of this argument. Where, on one hand actress like *Meena Kumari* performed role which depicted her as an unconditional nurturer in her films like *Sahib Bibi aur Ghulam* (1962) having more curves or the kind of body a woman was expected to have to create an image which can appear to be potential or capable of performing domestic duty on screen, and on the other hand actress like *Nutan* played more assertive role in films like *Bandini* (1963), *Seema* (1955), *Chaliya* (1960), *Dulhan ek raat ki* (1967) and *Devi* (1970).

The new wave cinema in the 1970's and 80's was an attempt to showcase the new independent working women. The image portrayed in the films of these decades depicted woman in a new role which was different from the image to provide only visual pleasure to the audience. Filmmakers like *Basu Chatterjee*, *Basu Bhattacharya* and *Hrishikesh Mukherjee* made films with their lead protagonist of women character in film like *Rajanigandha*, *Baton Baton Mein*, *Gharonda* and many such, in which efforts were made to explore women's subjectivity, her role in nation building at the same time her constant struggle for identity.

### **Liberalization, Privatization, Globalization, Body Image and their effect on movies**

In modern societies power has a specific focus; the human body- is the product of political/power relationship (Foucault, 1981). The current consumerist structure of production/consumption induces in the subject a dual practice, first is linked to a split but profoundly interdependent representation of his/her body, and the second represents human body as capitalist product and as an object for fetishes. In both the cases body is far from being denied or left out, instead there is a deliberate investment in it from economic and psychical term (Baudrillard, 1998).

Post liberalization, privatization and globalization (LPG), Indian film industry started attuning itself to the female body representation of the west to address the diasporas' audience. The kind of actresses which were selected to represent women were young and western in origin and were also expected to match to the body type of the western society and norm. These norms were based on the genetic makeup of the body which was based on a particular geographical location of the region and the current social practice which was 'thin is in'. The nineteenth century corset or the twentieth century fad for slimness through dieting and exercising was meant to make sure that women conform to certain norms of beauty which men find attractive. Women accepted these notions as they would confer them with respect, praise and way to man's heart.

The slim body is no longer the product of either an ascetic drive for salvation moreover it has become a symbol of consumerism, glamour and sexual availability. The oddity of the failure of sociology to develop a theory of the body and bodies is emphasized by the prevalence of commonsense notion that diet, jogging, fasting, slimming and exercise are not merely essential aids to sexual fulfilment but necessary features of self development in a society grounded in personalised consumption (Turner, 2008). Current cultural norms of female beauty emphasize slimness and slenderness in contrast to the weighty matrons of our very own *Raja Ravi Verma*.

The fashion model's body is no longer an object of desire but a functional object, a forum of signs in which fashion photography pulls all its artistry into re-creating gesture and naturalness by a process of simulation. In fact in advertising and fashion both men and women refuse the status of flesh, of sex, of finality or desire, where beauty is not in the expression but in their figures (Baudrillard, 1998). Similarly, it was argued by Orbach (1981) in 'Fat is a Feminist Issue' (FIFI), that the kind of body women develop due to compulsively eating and becoming fat or by her conscious desire to become thin is undermined by the unconscious desire to be 'fat', both these cases are primarily result of women's social oppression and here 'fat' is a social disease that women are made to suffer.

Government reforms introduced in 1991 dismantled then existing structures and opened doors for multinationals to enter India. The nation underwent accelerated globalisation, flooded by foreign brands and satellite-TV channels, bringing the West, with its glittering promises of glamorous, modern lifestyles, straight into middle-class homes. These changes which entered the drawing room of the middle class created confusion, anxiety and nervousness about the traditional values which it held for all these while. There was visible transition say from hot warm freshly cooked breakfast to cold instant food or opting to move away from traditional joint family to single unit nuclear family.

This also gave rise to numerous debates about who or what is 'Indian' and what is foreign. Popular Hindi films responded by reconciling global consumer life- styles with traditional 'Indian' values - their mantra was similar to the song from Popular Hindi classic *Shri 420*<sup>22</sup> or one of the post LPG film called *Phir Bhi Dil Hai Hindustani*<sup>23</sup> (2000). Such films provide reassurance in a rapidly globalising world that 'Indian values are portable and malleable'. In a pivotal move, films shifted their diasporas Indian – an NRI aka 'non-resident Indian' - to the centre of their narratives. Super hit films like *Dilwale Dulhaniya le Jayenge* (DDLJ), *Kuch Kuch Hota Hai* (KKHH), *Kabhi Khushi Kabhi Gham* and *Yaadein* created a mythical India and at the same time endorsed global consumerism by using motif of malls. The use of shopping mall as a space of cultural melting point also provides reassurance to moneyed NRI audiences that their pursuit of wealth and material comforts is in keeping with 'Indian' traditions (Chaudhary, 2005).

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<sup>22</sup> Popular Hindi film directed and acted by Raj Kapoor which gained popularity internationally for its song '*Mera Juta hai Japani, yeh pantaloon englishtani, sar pe lal topi rusi phir bhi dil hai hindustani*' which symbolically referred to Japan, England and Russia yet confirmed to Indianess when it came to being at heart.

<sup>23</sup> *Phir Bhi Dil Hai Hindustani* is a film which borrows its title from the song of the film 'Shri 420'. This film is a comment on media, politics and people broadly.

The earlier generation of Indian migrants saw these films for the sake of nostalgia, whereas the present day generation view Hindi films more in terms of an identity issue and has appropriated Hindi film music and dance as a means of cultural assertion in order to hold on to something of their own (Dutta, 2000). This motive of viewing and representing is in stark contrast to earlier films, where NRIs never appeared on screen or remained present only through letters sent home, since west was viewed as morally degenerating and spiritually bankrupt part of the globe.

Bombay cinema exports elaborate staging of *Indianess* through the rituals of the so called traditional family. Such a cultural form has been argued to gratify the need for cultural affiliation and replication reproduction for the NRI. Popular Hindi films address this issue of globalisation and also endow capitalism through its fashion and advertising.

Woman and her desires have often been the focus of what constitutes *Indianess*. The reason for this could be that women in India are traditional symbols of motherhood, nature and purity. Films like *Dil to Pagal Hai* represents the change of body image in Indian actresses post LPG. This film showcases actress Karishma with her 'body is a temple' physique; representing the perfect body of a western dancer. She inhabits the space of a gym, a dance studio as well as stage. On the other hand, this movie shows other heroine Madhuri Dixit as a woman who inhabits the hero's dreams with her translucent costumes, while practicing classical dance (kathak) and working out in leggings. The existence of Third World women narratives in itself is not evidence of de-centering hegemonic histories and subjectivities. But, it is the way in which they are read, understood and located institutionally which is of paramount importance (Mohanty, 1994)

The contemporary films do continue to follow the same pattern of body representation. The lead actresses like *Katrina Kaif* or *Jacqueline Fernandez* or *Deepika Padukone* are often depicted as educated professional women who hardly explore any professional space on screen instead are shown spending most of the onscreen time wooing the man and grabbing his attention. According to Chetan Bhagat, 'Many Indian men, even the educated ones, have two distinct profiles of women — the girlfriend material and the wife material. One you party with, the other you take home. The prejudice against non-traditional women who assert themselves is strong'. This re-enforces the fact that films will serve what sells hot to the audience. This manifests on screen when otherwise size zero actress while performing an 'item number' is enhanced through costumes to bring out moderate bust and rounded hips, in other words present her as desirable ideal Indian woman. The Indian film industry still looks at curves and voluptuous body to bring out the conventional *Indianess* of woman and therefore when it

brings out image of Indian women in 'Sari' or rustic item girl, the camera captures the curves to satiate the visual pleasure of the audience.

### **Conclusion**

The idea of body come to us through socio-cultural formulation handed out to us through ancient temple idols, sculptures and other forms of art which suggest more rounded body as a sign of fertility. The erotic representation in these art forms signifies fertility as a matter of natural presentation of the body, and articulates its closeness to the need of the geographical position/location, the physiology of the continent.

Colonialism lead to definition of what is desirable based on European notions, which meant that for a 'modern' character to be depicted on screen it had to be in accordance to the norms of west. Even though the courtesan of fifties ruled the screen and hearts of audiences as *Chandramukhi* or *Champa*, they represented the qualities, virtues of Indian woman and not the seductress of early 40's who was based on western ideas. Here, sexuality was more about hiding than revealing which meant for body to be visible; it required certain mass which could depict shape and sensuality at the same time. Therefore contemporary Indian films depict a woman in traditional outfit, she does not represent rural space or population but aspiration of rural Indians to become urban is played out on screen. Here, modern Indian woman who conforms to the norms of west or modern world professionally on screen opts for jobs of say as a journalist or an artist who is comfortable with outfits like jeans, skirts or modern take on traditional Indian *kurta*, by wearing them without *duppatta*. The admission of shame about total nudity or exposure lead to sari being draped around body loosely as absolute nudity is considered a sign of vulgarity and lack of fertility.

Also with Indian diaspora audience expanding, more films are being made keeping their demands and yearning in mind. Yet one cannot deny the fact that behind storyline and visualization there remains a dominant or core ideology to conform to conservative Indian value system. The characters might be located in any part of the globe, but do not deviate when it comes to aspiring ideal girl or woman as spouse of daughter-in-law of the house. Thus, despite the fact that Indian cinema cruises through a dozen different foreign locales in every song sequence, the idealizing concepts such as duty towards family and tradition limits the possibilities for any emancipatory journey for the heroine.

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# ESSENTIALS OF PSYCHOLINGUISTICS : AN INTRODUCTION TO MODERN APPROACHES

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## Introduction

That this study is titled “Essentials of Psycholinguistics” is, no doubt an indication that the concept, psycholinguistics is a wide linguistic phenomenon whose artifacts cannot be absolutely highlighted within the parentheses this study. The best that could be done here is to emphasize some notables of the concept to expose students to its multi-faceted nature. As a way of introduction, it is apt to start with Libben’s (2000:447) definition which states that “psycholinguistics is the study of language processing mechanisms”. Libben continues that the discipline focuses on “how word meaning, sentence meaning and discourse meaning are computed and represented in the mind.

Language processing is indeed a complex phenomenon that requires a great extent of understanding of the working of the mind. Psychology as it were, is a discipline that studies the working of the human mind. This is the primary point of interface between the field of linguistics – the scientific study of language – and psychology, the study of the human mind. This fact explains why psycholinguistics is more often considered as a marriage of two disciplines (linguistics and psychology). According to Libben,

We engage in language processing most everyday of our lives. This processing takes place when we watch television, listen to radio, read a passing billboard while driving, or discuss the weather. (2000:447)

All these activities, as Libben posits, are carried out with great ease and in a “subconscious manner”. The, understanding of these activities *vis a vis* language processing and production is the foundation of psycholinguistics. Therefore, this chapter, *inter alia*, introduces the field of psycholinguistics by focusing on its “essentials” which include its definitions, scope, and methods of investigation and analysis.

### **Psycholinguistics: Definition and Origin**

As a complementation of Libben's (2000) definition cited above, Carroll (2004:3) defines psycholinguistics as "the study of how individuals comprehend, produce, and acquire language". With this emphasis we are made to see the field as that akin to cognitive science, a discipline whose priorities reflect insights of psychology, linguistics, neurosciences and to a lesser extent philosophy. Little wonder Carroll claims, "as the name implies, psycholinguistics is principally an integration of the field, of psychology and linguistics" (2004:04). Stillings et al. (1995:3) explain that psycholinguistics is "the part of the emerging field of study called cognitive science". Consequently, Carroll is quick to admit that "the psychological study of language is called psycholinguistics." This, no doubt, has shown that the discipline is a branch of Applied Linguistics whose interests applies insights from psychology to the study of language.

The history of psycholinguistics can be divided into two periods. These periods are explicated by Carroll as follows:

The first period was dominated by Wundt who presented a cognitive view of language. The behaviourist position later held that verbal behaviour can be explained in terms of environmental contingencies of reinforcement and punishment. This view was criticized by Chomsky, leading to a second wave of psycholinguistic activity. This period was characterized by an effort to incorporate linguistic theory in psychological research as well as by the view that innate linguistic mechanisms are necessary to explain child's language acquisition (13).

Altmann (2001:129) is to add that "Psycholinguistics boomed (as did the rest of psychology) in the early to mid 1960's."

Altmann tells us that "the Chomskyan revolution promoted language and specifically its structures as obeying laws and principles in much the same way as, say, chemical structures do" (2001:129). As at the time Chomsky wrote his influential books (e.g Chomsky 1957), an important legacy of the Saussurean linguistics (structuralism) was the study of language as an entity that could be studied "independently of the machinery that produced it; the purpose that it served, or the world within which it was acquired and subsequently used" (Altmann 2001:129). Recognizing the need to break away from this emergent legacy, Chomsky 1957, 1959) argued that the behaviourist accounts of language were inadequate, claiming that "it would be an error, then to suppose all properties, or the intersecting

properties of the [linguistic] structures that have evolved can be explained in terms of natural selection” (1975:59). Russel (1959:3) seems to lend credence to this when he posits that any linguistic philosophy “which cares only about language, and not about the world is like the boy who preferred the clock without the pendulum because although it no longer told the time, it went more easily than before and at a more exhilarating pace”

Psycholinguistics evolved, when it did, at the instance of the recognition of the inescapability of language from its underlying mental machinery and the external world. As at the time of Wilhem Wundt, psycholinguistics had become, primarily, a field which is as concerned with the mind as much as it is with language. The term psycholinguistics was first deployed by J.R. Kantor in his *Objective Psychology of Grammar* (1986) a book in which, according to Altmann (2001:130), Kantor “attempted to refute the idea that language reflected any form of internal cognition or mind”. The term became:

more firmly established with the publication in 1954 of a report of a working group on the relationship between linguistics and psychology entitled psycholinguistics: A survey of Theory and Research Problems

This report according to Altman, was published simultaneously in two journals that separately, serve the linguistics and psychology disciplines. This has opened up a myriad of publications embellishing and modifying the discipline of psycholinguistics.

The year 1957 was indeed something of a “watershed” for psycholinguistics because of two significant books – Skinner’s *Verbal Behavior* and Chomsky’s *Syntactic Structure*. In fact, Chomsky’s book started the argument that premised grammatical competence on an individual’s psychological apparatuses, and which started to lay to rest the behaviourist enterprise. Consequently,

with Chomsky, out went Bloomfield and in came mental structures, ripe for theoretical and empirical investigation. Chomsky’s influence on psycholinguistics, let alone linguistics, cannot be overstated (Altmann, 2001:129).

This was how the Chomskyan revolution threw out the Behaviourist game plan with his dynamic linguistic standpoints which reintroduced the mind and mental representation into the theories of language.

Over the years (at least with effect from the Wundtian hypothesis) psycholinguistics has developed into a fully fledged scientific discipline. In the 1960’s, the psychologists George Miller created an important bridge between psychology and linguistics by introducing many psychologists to

Chomsky's idea. Not only this, the period witnessed a fruitful collaboration between Chomsky and many psychologists to advance publications that were at the forefront of psycholinguistic research "to determine the psychological reality of linguistic rules" in language development (Carroll 2004:13). This set the linguistic pace which emphasized rekindled interest in language acquisition and learning. This paddles the boat of psycholinguistics towards innatism rather than towards Behaviourism.

The imposing influence of Chomsky in psycholinguistic investigation looms large as this is indicated in the number of reference to the Jewish American linguist. By the early 1980's the already over-stressed influence of Chomsky started to fade as fresh insights that transcends the mere study of language processing became the emergent trend. The latest trend in the psycholinguistic interests has embraced, among the related interest, the investigation of language deficiencies/disorders like aphasia, amnesia, spoonerisms etc. Invariably as things stand now, the discipline has:

- i. increasingly been viewed as a portion of the interdisciplinary field of cognitive science which includes contributions from computer science, philosophy, neuroscience and other related fields.
- ii. added another dimension to its elaborated wave of interest in psycho-syntactic fusion of the Chomskyan revolution by the extended interest in how people understand, remember and produce discourse units of language larger than the science.
- iii. embellished its psychological indices to account for the presence of a mental lexicon within the human's pre-verbalizing stage of speech making.
- iv. ensured that interest in innate language mechanisms has been complemented by a resurgence of the child's linguistic environment.

These put together, we discover that the field of psycholinguistics is now a more diversified field than what it used to be. This is because, as Carroll educates us,

Neither psychology nor linguistics is dominated by a single theoretical viewpoint, and the impact from this other fields within cognitive science has added new perspectives and insights that have been incorporated into the growing field [psycholinguistics] (2004:15).

Carroll further tells us that remarkable progress has been made in applying psycholinguistic research to topics such as reading (as attempted by Jack and Carpenter 1987), bilingualism (as attempted by Bialystock 2001),

and language disorder (as attempted by Tatter, 1998). There is no doubt that the field of psycholinguistics has surpassed that initial simplistic marriage of the two fields of linguistics and psychology. For instance, as we are informed once more by Carroll, books on reading comprehension now integrate linguistic theories of sentence structure; computer simulations of reading and psychological experimentation on eye movements and saccades. This invariably gives us that mandate to accept psycholinguistics as an interdisciplinary work on language (Miller 1990).

### **Psycholinguistics as a Fusion of Disciplines: An Overview of the Scope**

Though we have stressed that psycholinguistics is now more of a melting pot (or a meeting point) for disciplines in recent times. However, this does not de-emphasize the fact that it is primarily a business of the linguists and psychologists as the term implies. This is why it is more often elegant to accept such definitions that consider the discipline as “that area of study which draws from linguistics and psychology” as elegant and acceptable. (“Definition of Psycholinguistics” [http Answer.Com](http://Answer.Com)). Such affiliation between linguistics and psychology has indubitably made it difficult to draw a line between psycholinguistics and what is generally known as psychology of language as both are interested in the psychological factors that enable humans to acquire, use, comprehend and produce language. The modern researchers of psycholinguistics have brought fresh insights from biology, neuroscience, cognitive science and information theory to the study of how the brain processes language. This neuro-cognitive/biological interest in language processing has opened the frontiers for many sub-disciplines of psycholinguistics. Hence, we have areas like

- Cognitive science
- Computational linguistics
- Forensic linguistics
- Neuro linguistics
- Psychology
- Linguistics etc.

### **Linguistic-Related Areas of Psycholinguistics**

**Phonetics and Phonology:** These aspects of linguistics are concerned with the study of speech sounds. Psycholinguistic interests more often focus on how the brain processes and understands these sounds (“Definition of Psycholinguistics” [http Answer.Com](http://Answer.Com)).

**Morphology:** Morphology is the study of word structures, especially the relationship that exists among related words as well as the function of words based on certain rules. Chomsky ties the understanding of these rules to some kind of Native Speakers’ psychology.

**Syntax:** This is the study of patterns which dictate how words are combined to form sentences. Chomsky also believes that correctness and grammaticality are the functions of the native speaker's know-how.

**Semantics:** Semantics deals with the meaning of the words and sentence. Ogden and Richards define semantics as the "meaning of meanings". Whereas syntax is concerned with the formal and rule-governed structures of sentences, semantic deals with the actual meaning of sentences. Linguists generally believe that it takes some psycholinguistic commitment to deduce the meanings of expression.

**Pragmatics:** This is concerned with the significance of situational context in the interpretation of meaning. The speaker/hearer relationship operates much on the psycholinguistic environment presented at the instance of any communication event.

### **Psychology-Related Areas of Psycholinguistics**

#### **Developmental Psychology**

This branch of psychology studies children ability to learn and process language either through experimental method or quantitative method.

#### **Cognitive Psychology**

This branch of psychology evaluates an individual's level of understanding based on his utterances. A psychologist is bound to assume that a child of a particular age is, or is not, capable of expressing himself in a certain manner.

#### **Psychoanalysis**

Another name for this branch of psychology is "talking cure". It is a sub-discipline of clinical psychology. It was initiated by the works of Sigmund Freud. Psychoanalysis was recommended as a viable prognosis for specialists in psychiatric science to help them analyze the speech form of a mentally damaged individual in a bid to determine the extent of madness as well as the medication.

### **Science Related Areas**

#### **Neurological Science**

Neurological medicine is a branch of medicine that examines and treats all forms of brain disorders. This field offers more practical tools of analysis to psycholinguistics. These tools have helped to discover that some parts of the brain are more involved in speech production than the other.

### **Theoretical Methods of Psycholinguistics**

Psycholinguistic methods are, in most cases, based on experiments incorporating lexical decision tasks. Here, language users are viewed and

examined as SUBJECTS and they are presented and evaluated based on their linguistic inputs. Subjects are often asked to perform a task and the psycholinguistic researcher attempts to measure the levels of performance. Here is Libben’s explanation on the choice of method of a psycholinguist:

A substantial additional challenge for the psycholinguistic researcher is presented by the fact that most of language processing does not involve observable physical events such as eye movement ... Research in this field therefore requires that mental language-processing events be inferred from observable behaviour. Consequently, a large part of psycholinguistic research is concerned with the development of new (and often very clever) techniques to uncover how language processing is accomplished (2000:448).

As Libben educates us, two methods or techniques of psycholinguistic investigation are always available. These are FIELD TECHNIQUES and EXPERIMENTAL PARADIGMS.

### **Field Technique**

In field technique a psycholinguistic researcher is expected to observe human physical events, without necessarily controlling the subjects’ inputs, and fashion his hypotheses. Within the frontiers of field technique are the analysis of events as eye movements during reading, speech disorders like slips of the tongue and the evaluation of the human being in relation with other animals (e.g. the ape). In what follows are some examples of field technique analyses:

### **Slips of the Tongue (Spoonerism)**

Slip of the Tongue is otherwise named after William Spooner as spoonerism. According to O’Grady and Archibald (2000:629) Slip of the Tongue is “a type of speech error in which words or sounds are re-arranged with often humorous results”. It is a kind of speech production misplacements that result in performance errors. Some of the notable errors from slips of the tongue, as highlighted by Libben (2000) are presented below.

- |    |          |   |   |
|----|----------|---|---|
| 1. | Intended | : | You have missed all my history lectures |
|    | Error    | : | You have hissed all my mystery lectures |
| 2. | Intended | : | Noble sons of toil                      |
|    | Error    | : | Noble tons of soil                      |
| 3. | Intended | : | You have wasted the whole term          |

4. Error : You have tasted the whole worm  
 Intended : The dear old Queen  
 Error : The queer old dean.

### **The Hypothetical Projects of Psycholinguistic Research**

One of the interests of psycholinguistics has been to prove that language is *specie specific*. That is, language is the exclusive properties of human beings. Psycholinguists have therefore embarked on many research projects that attempted to teach the chimp how to use language basically because of the perceived intelligence of the animal and its supposed anatomical sophistication that is close to that of man. Three of the projects are succinctly expressed below.

#### **Project Vicki**

One of such chimps subjected to the experimental procedures of the psycholinguists was named VICKI. Vicki was raised for 7 years by Keith and Catherine Hayes. According to Finegan (2004:22), at the end, Vicki “could only utter four words – mama, papa, up and cap – and she managed them only with considerable physical strain”. This reveals, at least, according to Finegan that “chimps are simply not equipped with suitable mouth and throat organs to enable them speak”.

#### **Project Nim**

Psycholinguistics soon discovered that the sounds made by the members of the ape family were not productive sentence that can parallel those made by human beings to communicate. Consequently, a more concentrated effort at making the ape to generate language was carried out on a chimp named Nim Chimpsky (after Chomsky). After five years of working on Nim, psycholinguist Herbert Terrace concluded that chimps were not capable of learning language despite the fact that it appears that “Nim had several linguistic accomplishments [and] in part repeating the achievements of his predecessors” (Finegan, 2004:24). At the instance of this project, researchers discovered that even with elaborate training, Nim produced very little response.

#### **Project Washoe**

Also because of the need to further proof whether or not chimps have the physiological capability to speak, and the mental capacity to learn language, Allen and Beatrix Gardiner started to raise a ten month old chimp which they christened WASHOE. The couple attempted to raise Washoe as a human child. After a considerable number of months, Washoe, who appears

more brilliant than her predecessors, could do almost everything a human child is capable of doing. But, she could not speak.

The Gardiners adopted the American Sign Language (ASL) approach and in fifty one months, Washoe had acquired about a hundred and thirty two signs which enabled her to communicate well. Finegan concludes:

The Gardiners made the simple but crucial assumption that human language is acquired by children in a rich social and intellectual environment and such richness contributes to the child's cognitive and linguistic life. The Gardiners' research with cross-fostered chimpanzees has persuaded some observers that there is no absolute difference between human language and the communicative system that chimps can learn. (2004:23)

Other psycholinguistic projects also took interest in a child's language acquisition process and the influence of the parental inputs. Psycholinguists believe that it is

Impossible to shy away from the necessity of adult's input in child's acquisitional process especially as it is obvious that a child requires interactions with speakers of the language. (Afolayan, 2009:35).

Finegan (2004:341) establishes this position with a project carried out on little Genie, a girl who was locked away from language for thirteen years:

As a witness to the necessity of adults input, there is the case of Genie, a child who was not exposed to any language while she was growing up. Genie's parents locked her away for the first 13 years of her life and seldom spoke to her. When she was discovered, she was unable to speak.

Susan Curtis tried to teach Genie how to speak English, she was not successful because, as Finegan makes us believe, "deprived of linguistic input in the first few years of life, Genie's capacity for language acquisition had become impaired" (2004:341).

### **Experimental Method**

The Experimental method of psycholinguistic investigation employs direct paradigms to evaluate the various language processing activities of human beings.

## **Lexical Decision**

Psycholinguists believe that there is a mental lexicon within human's language processing faculty which is a collection of the individual units of expression. The mental lexicon is perceived as a more flexible version of the desktop dictionary. Lexical Decision is one of the experimental paradigms through which the richness, or otherwise, of an individual's mental lexicon is determined. Libben (2000:450) informs that:

In the Lexical Decision paradigm, the experimental subject is seated in front of a computer screen. A word appears in the middle of the screen and [the subject] is expected to judge...whether or not the word is a real English word by pressing a button labeled 'yes' or a button labeled 'no'.

In this paradigm, there are two *Dependency Variables* (i.e what to be measured). These are the time of response and the accuracy of the response.

## **The Priming Paradigm**

This is an extension of the Lexical Decision paradigm, only that the word to be judged (target) is preceded by another stimulus (prime). What is measured here is the extent to which the prime influences the subject's decision. Both Lexical Decision and Priming are relevant at the morphological level as the machinery of the mental lexicon cannot adequately account for sentence processing (Libben, 2000). The two experimental paradigms that touch sentence processing directly are TIMED READING experiment and EYE MOVEMENT experiment.

## **Timed Reading**

Timed Reading experiment is based on the assumption that the more difficult it takes to read a sentence the more difficult it could have taken its processing (Libben, 2000). One of the commonplace timed reading experimental paradigms is the BAR PRESSING PARADIGM. In this experiment, the subject also sits in front of the computer to press the bar on the keyboard as each word in a given sentence appears on screen. Here, the amount of time needed in sentence processing is determined.

## **Eye Movement Study [EMS]**

The psycholinguistic term for Eye Movement, especially during reading activities is called saccade. Eye movement is always used to determine fixation time – the time it takes the eyes it takes to capture the words in a sentence. In eye movement study,

The detail of eye movements in sentence reading are studied with sophisticated laboratory procedures in which a subject is seated in front of a computer screen on which text is displayed. A low intensity infra-red beam of light is bounced off the subject's eye ball and registered on a video camera. The image of the video camera is fed to a computer that calculates where on the screen the subject is currently fixating (Libben, 2000:464).

Through this study, it is more often discovered that fixation times are longer for less-frequent words. This study also reveals that the points of fixation are more often centred on words like nouns and verbs rather than functional words. It is also through this kind of study that researchers have discovered the reading disorder known as REGRESSIVE SACCADE, the backward jump in reading a sentence.

### **Event Related Potential (ERP)**

Event Related Potential is a kind of experimental method which is devoted to the brain activities. This paradigm attempts to measure the electrical activities in the brain.

### **Neuro-Linguistics**

Neuro-linguistics is more of a sub-field of psycholinguistics. It is simply the study of how language is represented and processed in the brain. This seeks to discover which parts of the brain are involved in various aspects of language production. Neuro-linguistics therefore ventures into the area of language processing through the understanding of the human brain.

### **The Human Brain**

Libben (2000) explains that the brain is the pinkish white matter in the skull which is about 1400 grams. Aristotle believes that the brain's primary function was to cool the blood. This reasoning is biological. Biology, however, does not seem to provide empirical explanation to how human experiences like fear, dream and knowledge are coded in the brain which is composed of nerves called neurons. The brain is the upper chamber of the spinal cord. It is believed that the activities of language processing and language presentation are concerned with the workings of the cerebral cortex. The cerebral cortex is divided into two hemispheres (right and left) which can be sub-divided into:

Sulcus (plural sulci): The fold in cortex

Gyrus (plural gyri): The fold out cortex

Longitudinal fissure: The separator of the hemispheres

Neuro-linguistics is not so much directly concerned with all the complex activities of the brain but with those connected with language processing as it involves the brain.

## **Brain Damage**

Occasionally, the human brain gets damaged. The most prominent of such damages is stroke otherwise known as cerebro-vascular accident. When a brain damage result in language disorder, such is called aphasia.

## **Type of Aphasia**

### Non Fluent (Motor) Aphasia

This type results from damage to the front of the central sulcus. It is tagged 'non fluent' because patients exhibit great strain and effort to produce speech forms. Non fluent aphasia can either be GLOBAL aphasia, which renders patients completely mute; or BROCA aphasia which causes patients to produce halting speeches that are laden with phonemic errors.

### Fluent (Sensory) Aphasia

Fluent Aphasia results from damage to the left hemisphere of the cortex. The patient affected by this deficiency has no difficulty producing language but in selecting and organizing language products. The most prominent of this type is WERNICKE aphasia (named after Carl Wernicke, a German psychologist). Wernicke aphasics rarely make sense in their speeches. Libben (2000) cites an example of this case with a conversation between an examiner (E) and a Wernicke's aphasic patient (P).

E: How are you today Mrs A?

P: Yes.

E: Have I ever tested you before?

P: No, I mean I haven't.

E: Can you tell me what your name is?

P: No, I don't...right I am right now here.

E: What is your address?

P I cud if I can help these this like you know... to make it. We are seeing for him. That is my father.

The patient here is a Wernicke's aphasic who, though capable of generating well-formed structures, is grossly incoherent.

## **Conclusion**

Mey (2001) suggests that psycholinguistics belongs to the hyphenated areas of research and this summarily accounts for its complexity. As stated in the beginning of this chapter, the field is too complex a

discipline to explore in an essay of few pages. This is because of its materials that spread across the board of the disciplines of humanities, social sciences and, in recent times, sciences.

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