

University of Latvia  
Faculty of Humanities

**Baltic Journal of  
English Language,  
Literature and  
Culture**

Volume 3

Riga 2013

**Baltic Journal of English Language, Literature and Culture**, Volume 3.

Riga: University of Latvia, 2013, 124 pages.

**Baltic Journal of English Language, Literature and Culture** is a multidisciplinary international scientific journal in general linguistics, applied linguistics, literature and culture.

Editor-in-Chief: Andrejs Veisbergs (University of Latvia, Latvia)

Issue editor: Monta Farneste (University of Latvia, Latvia)

#### EDITORIAL BOARD

Sigma Ankrava (University of Latvia, Latvia)

Ann Hodgson (University of London, United Kingdom)

Irina Novikova (University of Latvia, Latvia)

Jānis Silis (Ventspils University College, Latvia)

Trevor G. Fennel (Flinders University, Australia)

Indra Karapetjana (University of Latvia, Latvia)

Jeļena Dorošenko (University of Latvia, Latvia)

Larisa Iljinska (Riga Technical University, Latvia)

Vilmantė Liubinienė (Kaunas University of Technology, Lithuania)

Gunta Roziņa (University of Latvia, Latvia)

Ömer Şekerci (Suleyman Demisel University, Turkey)

#### Visiting reviewers

Dace Markus (Riga Teacher Training and Educational Management Academy, Latvia)

Vita Kalnbērziņa (University of Latvia, Latvia)

Cover design: Agris Dzilna

Layout: Ieva Tiltiņa

No part of this journal may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means, including photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior written permission of the publisher.

Web-site:

<http://www.lu.lv/apgads/izdevumi/elektroniskie-izdevumi/zurnali-un-periodiskie-izdevumi>

© University of Latvia, 2013

ISSN 1691-9971

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

---

<b>Maija Brēde</b>	
Characteristics of the Publicistic Style of Intonation in English and Latvian	4
<b>Anna Czura</b>	
The Role of Peer Assessment in Developing Adolescent Learners' Autonomy	20
<b>Monta Farneste</b>	
What is the Meaning of <i>School/University Essay</i> and Related Terms in English and Latvian?	33
<b>Malgorzata Jedynak</b>	
Testing the Speaking Ability at Oral Exams in Departments of English Studies	46
<b>Laura Karpinska</b>	
Outside Matter Components of English-Latvian Dictionaries Compiled before World War II	65
<b>Jana Kuzmina</b>	
Genre Analysis of Quality Assurance (ISO 9000) Documentation	76
<b>Antra Leine</b>	
Reality in J. K. Rowling's <i>The Casual Vacancy</i>	87
<b>Aristi Trendel</b>	
Rikki Ducornet Revisits Hawthorne: <i>The Stain</i> or a Time for 'Sexts'	96
<b>Andrejs Veisbergs</b>	
Phraseological Units and Idioms, East and West and Where Do We Stand	109

# CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PUBLICISTIC STYLE OF INTONATION IN ENGLISH AND LATVIAN

---

MAIJA BRĒDE

University of Latvia, Latvia

**Abstract.** All language levels undergo linguistic variation. Phonostylistic variations depend basically on the aim and the form of communication and the speaker's attitude. These include intonational variation in style appropriate to different speech situations. The paper focuses on features of the publicistic style of intonation in English and Latvian; the main purpose of the style is to stimulate and inspire the listeners. The material of the present auditive analysis comprises addresses by two prominent public figures: David Cameron, Prime Minister of the UK (10 August, 2011) and the President of Latvia (28 May, 2011). The analysis reveals the basic distinctions of the publicistic style of intonation in English in contrast to Latvian which has a more emotional approach, considerably slower tempo, more frequent use of long pauses, absence of low/mid rises in the final tone units, a more frequent use of level tones in the non-final tone units, an occasional high rise in the non-final tone units that is characteristic of colloquial speech. The speakers slow down before the most important pieces of information. The interpausal segments are occasionally short, since pauses do not always mark the boundaries of grammatical constructions. The public speakers' voice timbre is dignified, concerned and personally involved. This analysis shows that there are features of the publicistic style of intonation that overlap those of the informational style of intonation. It proves the variability of style markers and points to the importance of the interpretation of a particular speech situation.

**Key words:** phonostylistic variations, publicistic style of intonation, contrastive analysis, tone units, nuclear tones

## INTRODUCTION

Every variety of language has its own lexical, syntactic and phonological properties. 'Speakers produce utterances in order to realize certain communicative intentions. People generally talk for some purpose' (Levelt, 1989: 58). As regards characteristic phonological means of a language and in respect of a particular speech situation, the speaker is biased towards certain degrees of accuracy in articulating speech sounds, using appropriate intonation patterns, pausation, variations in loudness and voice timbre. It is generally intonation contours and syntactic structure by which information is conveyed to the listener. These two means often reinforce each other. Bolinger maintains that individual lexical items take different meanings when different intonations are imposed. Intonation is attached to the pragmatic rather than literal meaning of

an expression (Bolinger, 1989: 15). 'Prosodic cues ... a) carry some of the weight of selecting among a variety of possible interpretations by directing the listener among shades of meaning inherent in the semantic range of the words used, b) they tie these key semantic features together into a theme, and mark out a developing line of argument' (Gumperz, 1982: 100).

The acknowledgement of phonostylistic variations that depend on a number of extra-linguistic factors including the speaker's personality is implemented in singling out styles of pronunciation including intonational styles. Cruttenden holds that in all languages there are varying styles of intonation appropriate to different situations (Cruttenden, 1997: 128). Each style of intonation as part of the particular choice of linguistic means secures effective result of communication.

A group of Russian linguists defines intonational styles as systems of interconnected intonational means used in a definite social sphere to achieve some particular aim of communication. The following intonational styles are distinguished: informational, academic (scientific), publicistic (oratorical), declamatory (artistic) and conversational (familiar) (Sokolova et al., 1991: 153).

## PUBLICISTIC STYLE OF INTONATION

Publicistic intonational style is characterized as displaying variations in the direction of both academic and declamatory style. The purpose of the style apart from passing over the intended message is affecting the audience emotionally (Sokolova et al., 1991: 185). Features of publicistic style are evident in political speeches, parliamentary debates, in congress speeches, press conferences, sermons, etc. Speeches are rarely spontaneous; usually they are prepared and read out. They are presented in a forceful and lively manner to sound convincing (*ibid.*: 186). Suprasegmental features, including intonation patterns, stresses, tempo, rhythm and voice timbre are of primary importance in achieving the desired effect. Gumperz admits that in political rhetoric one can observe ethnic style that bears features characteristic of particular society (Gumperz, 1982: 87). English political speeches, addresses and sermons are distinguished by an unusually large amount of pausing, extensive use of primary stress, marked variation in sentence speech (pitch variations in tone units – M.B.), and tone unit boundaries often cut across syntactic phrases (*ibid.*). Sokolova et al. sum up the phonostylistic characteristics of English publicistic speech as follows: the speaker's voice timbre is self-assured, there is personal involvement, loudness is increased, the ranges and levels are greatly varied, the tempo of speech is moderately slow, there are a great number of pauses of different length, the speech is rhythmical, terminal tones are mostly emphatic, especially on emotionally underlined semantic centres, the sequence of stressed syllables in pre-nuclear patterns is descending and there is a great number of paralinguistic features (Sokolova et al., 1991: 188-189).

In Latvian linguistics types of publicistic speeches are dwelt on in works by Ceplītis, Katlape and Apele (Ceplītis, Katlape, 1968; Apele, 1982, 2011).

Phonostylistic variation concerning intonation characteristics is a field yet to be explored. There have been just a few attempts to look into some features of informational style (Brède, 2010a, 2010b, 2011a, 2011b) and publicistic style (Brède, 2011b, 2011c).

This article presents the results of an analysis of features of publicistic intonational style in English and Latvian. The contrastive aspect corresponds fully to the objective of the analysis, namely to register the characteristic properties of publicistic style in both languages with a view to singling out those that might be common (i.e. typical of the style), as well as distinguishing some individual features in Latvian.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

For the material of the analysis of publicistic intonational style, addresses by two prominent public figures have been chosen: a statement concerning the fight against violence and looting in the country delivered by David Cameron, Prime Minister of the UK (10 August, 2011) and an address by the President of Latvia announcing his decision to instigate the dissolution of Parliament (28 May, 2011). Both speeches are of great concern to the broader public in terms of the information they contain, and prove the importance of a particular manner of speaking when getting a message across. Mr Cameron's address was delivered outside No 10 Downing Street, whereas Mr Zatlers delivered his address from the Latvian television studio. The transcriptions of both addresses show pauses, stresses and nuclear tones.

The sign [ ' ] before a syllable indicates stress on level pitch (the speakers are using descending scales exclusively); the sign [ , ] stands for a low level stress, [ · ] – for a half-accented syllable and [ ↑ ] – for a special rise. Nuclear tones are marked as follows: [ ˩ ] – a low fall (LF), [ ˨˨ ] – a high or medium fall (HF/MF), [ , ] – a low or medium rise (LR/MR), [ ' ] – a high rise (HR), [ ˇ ], [ ˨˨ ], [ ˨˨ ] – a fall-rise (FR). A short or medium pause is marked with [ | ] , a long pause – with [ || ] and an extra long pause – with [ ||| ].

The basic information about the intonational character of the speeches (nuclear tones in final and non-final tone units, pauses, tempo and voice timbre) was obtained on the basis of auditive analysis.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 1 INTONATION CONTOURS OF ENGLISH PUBLICISTIC STYLE OF INTONATION

Mr Cameron's speech provides the latest information on the situation and police operations aimed in particular at controlling the situation and fighting rioting after the fourth night of violence and looting in a number of cities across England.

The PM acknowledges the problem of gangs, but at the same time it is obvious there is strong popular support for the police. The address lasts approximately six minutes. The speaker's voice timbre can be described as self-assured, resolute and personally involved. The tempo of the statement delivery is moderate. The whole speech is divided into tone units mostly corresponding to grammatical constructions although there are cases when the phonetic units do not match the syntactic phrases: for emphasis certain words are pronounced in separate tone units.

### 1.1 NUCLEAR TONES IN THE FINAL TONE UNITS

All utterances in relation to the principal division of communicative types correspond to statements except the very beginning of the speech which is a brief greeting ('Good morning. ||'). As regards the most frequently used nuclear tones in English statements, the vast majority (81%) end in a low or a high/medium falling tone depending on the speaker's intention to either just conclude the thought that the statement contains or distribute emphasis according to his interpretation and understanding of how important the piece of the presented information is.

The following sentences illustrate a **low fall** in the final tone units (altogether 62.1%) that determines the tenor of the particular communicative type:

- (1) I've 'just ' come from ' chairing ' another , meeting | of the ' COBRA e'mergency com \_mittee | and I'd ' like to up ' date you on the ↑ latest situ \_ation | and the , actions | that we're , taking | to ' get this des 'picable ,violence | ' off our \_streets. ||
- (2) · Since , yesterday | there are ' more po , lice | on the , street, | ' more ' people have been ar , rested | and ' more ' people are being , charged | and \_ prosecuted. ||

Both sentences include topical information, the first one being the actual start of the PM's statement with several occurrences of the rising tone in the non-final tone units. The second example also illustrates the incomplete nature of the rising tone in the non-final tone units before the conclusive low fall at the end of the sentence. This nuclear tone underlines the speaker's serious and considerate attitude.

A **high fall** (18.9%) apart from expressing definiteness and finality signals emphasis on particular words. Sentences (3) and (4) exemplify a way of drawing attention to the most important pieces of information (a reference to the actual time in (3)) and the current development of fighting the violence and looting in (4)):

- (3) , Courts | ' sat · through the , night | , last ' night | and will · do a , gain | to `night. ||
- (4) We ' needed a ' fight , back | and a ' fight , back | is ' under `way. ||

The following stretch of speech, besides creating the impression of emphasis, bears witness to the speaker's emotional attitude towards the situation described. Before sentence (5) the PM is speaking about lack of responsibility in parts of society, and the fact that there are people who think their actions do not have consequences. The emphatic *do* pronounced with a high fall accentuates the speaker's resolute disposition and intolerance of the criminals' actions:

(5) Well, they`do , have , consequences. ||

On several occasions the statements are pronounced with the **rising tone** realized as a **low/medium rise** (16.2%). Such statements are characterized as incomplete, producing an effect of indefiniteness. The following sentences (6) in the speech are uttered in this particular succession:

(6) We will 'not put 'up | with , this | in our , country. ||

We will 'not al 'low a 'culture of , fear | to ex 'ist on our  
~ streets. ||

'Let me be ~clear. || At 'COBRA this 'morning we a , greed |  
'full con 'tingency , planning | is 'going a , head. ||

What 'ever re 'sources the po 'lice , need | they will , get. |

What 'ever `tactics the po , lice , feel | they 'need to em , ploy |  
they will have 'legal 'backing to , do so. ||

The pattern of these relatively short sentences with a low rising tone in the final tone unit creates the impression of a dynamic rendition of the facts mentioned (one should note that no marked increase in tempo was observed in this part of the speech). The effect is facilitated by a low rise in the penultimate tone unit. The regular recurrence of this nuclear tone suggests a kind of enumeration. And indeed, here the PM is speaking of the measures that will be taken to deal with the situation in the country. The examples (6) also show how a repetition of words and a particular rhythmical pattern of the tone groups add to the energetic and convincing manner of the speaker.

Another final tone registered is the **fall-rise** (2.7%), as seen in the first sentence of (7):

(7) In , Birmingham, | 'over a 'hundred and 'sixty ar`rests were  
, made. ||

In , Salford, | 'up to a ↑thousand , youths | were at 'tacking  
the po , lice | at the , height | of the dis , turbance. ||

Since this complex tone ends in a rise its pitch movement suggests that some contribution will follow to what has been said so far either by the same speaker or another interlocutor, which results in openness of the whole tone unit. In example (7), the function of the fall-rise is pointing to incompleteness of the utterance, as is evidenced by the immediately following sentence which continues with the mention of the town of Salford and what was going on there in addition to the



information about Birmingham. The rising contour of several tone units in turn underlines the effect of incompleteness and intensity with which the sentence is pronounced.

## 1.2 NUCLEAR TONES IN THE NON-FINAL TONE UNITS

Out of 157 units the rising tone in the form of a **low/medium rise** was registered 95 times (60.5%). It fully corresponds to the expected way of presenting facts in complex grammatical structures that contain several tone units. The rising tone functions as the indicator of continuation, at the same time, pointing to certain dependency of one part of the structure upon another (its role of introducing enumeration has been mentioned before):

- (8) To , day, | ' major po ' lice ope , rations | are ' under , way | ' as I , speak | to ar , rest | the ' criminals who were ' not · picked ' up · last , night | but who ' were · picked ' up | on ' closed- · circuit ` television , cameras. ||
- (9) To , morrow, | ' COBRA will ' meet a , gain, | , Cabinet will ' meet, | I'll ' make a ' statement to , Parliament, | I'll ' set · out in , full | the ' measures that we'll , take | to help , businesses | that have been af , fected, | to ' help re ' build com , munities, | to ' help re ' build the ' shops and , buildings | that have been , damaged, | to · make , sure the ` homeless are re , housed, | to ' help ' local au , thorities | in ' all the ' ways that are .. necessary. ||

In both examples a low rise in the introductory phrases, i.e. the opening tone units, serves to draw the listeners' attention to what will be following in a moment. In general, the splitting up of the sentences into tone units conforms to the grammatical division of the sentence which clearly reveals the function of the rising tone to express incompleteness and indefiniteness of a stretch of speech. There are a few cases when the speaker makes a pause without changing the pitch direction, i.e. without introducing a kinetic tone. The **level tone** (3.1%) like the rising tone indicates incompleteness of the utterance, e.g. in tone unit 7 of (8) and in tone unit 1 of (10).

The **falling tone** (25.5%) in the non-final tone units brings about the impression of special concern with the thought expressed. In the case of a **low fall** (7.7%) the listeners can perceive the speaker's extremely serious, considerate and concerned attitude:

- (10) But there is ' abso·lutely | ' no ' room for com ..placency | and there is ' much ' more to be ..done. ||

A **high fall** (17.8%) generally produces the effect of liveliness and emphasis. In (11), (12) and (13) it is emphasis on certain words (*badly, violence, not acceptable, focus, respect*) that, along with the following pauses, marks the speaker's

interpretation of the situation in the country and the government's resolution to stop the violence:

- (11) ... it is , clear | there are ' things that are `badly , wrong | in our  
so ~ ciety. ||
- (12) ' This | con ' tinued `violence | is ' simply ' not ac`ceptable | and  
it ' will be ~ stopped. ||
- (13) For ' too , long | there's been a ' lack of `focus | on the com ' plete  
' lack of res`pect | ' shown by these ' groups of ~ thugs. ||

Another tone that has been registered in the non-final tone units is a **fall-rise** (10.9%). Since usually and also here it is realized as a combination of a relatively high fall with a low rise, the effect is that of accentuation and continuation, as can be heard in examples (14) (*responsibility*) and (15) where it is used in the split form in tone unit 2 (*owes them something*) :

- (14) It is a com ' plete ' lack of res, ponsi`` bility | in ' parts of our  
so ~ ciety. ||
- (15) ' People al`lowed to , feel | that the ' world `owes them , something, |  
that their ' rights out ' weigh their res, ponsi ` bilities | and that  
their `actions | do ' not ' have ~ consequences. ||

Example (16) illustrates the impact of a repeated intonation contour in creating emphasis which is achieved with the use of a fall-rise in tone units 4, 5 and 6 successively:

- (16) The po ' lice are al ' ready , authorised | to ' use , baton ' rounds |  
and we a ' greed at , COBRA | that , while they're , not `currently  
, needed | we ' now have in ' place con `tingency , plans | for  
' water , cannon | to be a ' vailable at ' twenty ' four ' hours'  
~ notice. ||

The following sentence (17) demonstrates a variety of kinetic tones in the non-final tone units. It starts with a fall-rise in the first unit that introduces the PM's views of what the majority of people's disposition to the thugs is. The emphatic expression is intensified by stressing the personal pronoun. In tone units 4 and 7 where the fall-rise is split by a few syllables it functions in the way described above. Another usage of a fall-rise in one word (*broken*) occurs in the penultimate unit, which allows the PM to concentrate on the concluding phrase that does not hide the speaker's contempt concerning one part of society. The whole intonation scale, including several high falls as well as fall-rises in the non-final tone units, contributes to the impact of the speaker's convincing manner:

- (17) ' I'm ~ clear | that · they are in `no , way repre, sentative | of  
the `vast ma,jority | of `young , people in our , country | who  
de ' spise them, , frankly, | as ' much as the ~ rest of us , do, |  
but there are `pockets of our , society | that are ' not just  
~ broken | but, ' frankly, `sick. ||

A factor that alongside high falls and fall-rises helps distinguish some particular meaning and/ or draw the listeners' attention to a particular word is a special rise (the pitch level rises and is higher in comparison to that of the preceding stressed syllable). Among the words singled out in this way there are numerals (*sixteen*) (18) and adjectives and nouns (*latest, appalling, phony, values*) (19) that need to be given extra weight e.g.:

(18) ... there were a ' round ↑ sixteen ' thousand po , lice | ...

(19) ... I'd ' like to up ' date you on the ↑ latest situ \_ation | ...

... we ' saw the ' same ap ↑ palling ' violence and , thuggery | ...  
and we ' will not ' let · any ↑ phony con , cerns | about ' human  
, rights | ' get in the , way | ...

We ' need to ' have a ' clearer ' code of ↑ values and , standards | ...

Also the sentence/phrase stress pattern with some stressed form words and pronouns (the conjunctions *and* and *as* and the personal pronoun *I*) implies a vigorous and categorical approach to presenting the facts:

(20) ... and · let me ' pay \_tribute | to the ` bravery of those po , lice  
, officers | ' and, in , deed, | ` everyone , working for our  
e ' mergency \_services. ||

' As I , speak, | ' sentences are ' also being , passed.

... but ' I would ex , pect | ' anyone con , victed | of ` violent  
dis, order | will be ' sent to \_prison. ||

The next example illustrates the effect of emphasis achieved by splitting a sentence into relatively short tone units:

(21) It is for the , courts | to ` sentence, | but ' I would ex , pect |  
' anyone con , victed | of ` violent dis, order | will be ' sent to  
\_ prison. ||

## 2 INTONATION CONTOURS OF LATVIAN PUBLICISTIC STYLE OF INTONATION

The address by Valdis Zatlers, President of Latvia, also contains information of vital importance to the whole population of Latvia, but in contrast to Mr Cameron's address it is much more emotional. For the first time in Latvia's history, the President is announcing his decision to instigate the dissolution of Parliament. The Saeima (Parliament) was elected just the previous year, and notwithstanding certain positive developments, there is a lack of public confidence in it. The President cites the main reason for this onerous decision as being a serious conflict between the legislative and judicial powers, as well as the influence of certain persons upon the government. The President is conscious of the fact that his decision might also affect the support for his candidacy for the presidency.

The length of the speech is approximately 11 minutes. The speaker sounds dignified, and personally involved. His voice timbre in several fragments of the speech discloses his serious concern about the situation in the state. The tempo of his presentation is moderate and on several occasions slow.

The listener will readily note a frequent use of pauses, which adds considerably to the effect of the importance of the information provided, and technically determines the number of relatively short tone units, e.g. (22). The length of pauses varies from short to extra long, the latter being used also in the non-final tone units:

- (22) Es ' skaidri ` apzinos, ||| ar ' savu | , lēmumu | varu ' pārvilkt  
 , svītru | manām , izredzēm | tikt ' ievēlētām par ' valsts  
 .. prezidentu. ||

The opening of the speech starts with a greeting ( , Labvakar, | ' Latvijas .. tauta! || ('Good evening, people of Latvia!')) which in public speeches is traditionally pronounced with a fall followed by at least a medium-long pause. The final phrase of the speech, a line of the anthem of Latvia, occasionally used to conclude solemn speeches, is an interjection (formally, an order/instruction/request) (· Dievs, ' svēti ` Latviju! || ('God bless Latvia!')). As an interjection it is often pronounced with a high fall that underlines both the significance of the content and the finality of the whole presentation. Altogether the speech comprises 62 statements. In Latvian, serious and considerate statements, as in English, require the falling tone. In most cases the speaker alternatively uses a relatively low or high/mid fall. The address also includes four rhetorical questions.

## 2.1 NUCLEAR TONES IN THE FINAL TONE UNITS

The following examples illustrate a **low fall** in the final tone units that is in keeping with the speaker's considerate and solicitous manner, which can be very well perceived in the very first sentence of the speech (23):

- (23) ' Ši · ir jau | ' trešā , reize, ||| kad es ' uzrunāju , jūs | ' Latvijas  
 , valsts || , grūtajos | un ' izšķirīgajos .. brīžos. ||

A low fall is used in the majority of the statements (69.3%). This nuclear tone turns out to be the most appropriate for expressing readiness to act and solve the complicated situation in the country ((24) and (25)):

- (24) Mēs ' rūpīgi , pārrunājām | ' situāciju ' valstī .. šodien. || ' Ir  
 .. jārikojas. || ('We must act.')
- (25) Esmu ' pieņēmis , lēmumu ||| ' rīkoties .. radikāli. || ('I have made  
 a decision to act *radically*.')

Also the decision to instigate the dissolution of Parliament is declared with a low fall in the final tone unit (26):

- (26) ' Pamatojoties uz ' Latvijas ' Republikas ' Satversmes , četrdesmit  
 ' astoto , pantu, | ' ierosinu | ' Saeimas .. atlaišanu. ||

The following example shows how a low fall as the final nuclear tone in a separate tone unit serves to accentuate the thought expressed in the whole utterance:

- (27) , Cilvēki, | kas ' vēlējās , būt | , aizrautīgi | un ar ' degsmi  
' kalpot | , Latvijai. || ('People who wished ... to serve *Latvia*')

Three out of the four rhetorical questions pronounced with a low fall sound composed and convincing, e.g.:

- (28) Ko , darīt? || ('What should be *done*?')  
Un ' tad rodas ` jautājums | – ' kā ` vārdā || šie , upuri | tika  
, nesti? || ('What were these sacrifices *made for*?')

One of the questions asking whether under the circumstances of a rather depressing situation there is also some achievement is pronounced with a high fall emphasizing the word for 'achievement':

- (29) Bet es , gribu ' uzdot , vienu ` jautājumu | – vai ' ir , kāds  
, panākums? ||

A **high fall** as a final tone unit nucleus in the statements occurs 15 times (22.4%). Obviously its function is attracting the listeners' attention to both particular facts and the speaker's personal attitude. Example (30) is a brief answer to the question in (29). The logical emphatic stress falls on the verb:

- (30) Mūsu ' valstī ` ir , panākums. || ('Our country *has* achieved something')

A high fall in example (31) falls on that part of the sentence where the President reveals the naked truth: nobody is ashamed of thinking one thing, saying another, and acting yet differently. In contrast to (30), where the tone singles out a positive fact, here the emphatic fall demonstrates the speaker's intolerant attitude:

- (31) Es ' gribu , teikt, | ka , vienreiz ' jāpieliek tas , punkts, | ka mēs  
, domājam , vienu, | ' runājam , citu, | ' darām ' vēl ko , citu, |  
un ' neviens no tā ` nekautrējas. ||

There are a few cases when the speaker mentions some quantitative indicators denoted by numerals that are meant to be perceived accurately. Phonetically the effect is achieved with the help of a high fall:

- (32) ... , šobrīd || ' esošajai ' Saeimai | ' uzticas ` desmit (10)  
, procentu (%) , cilvēku. || Un diem ,žēl | ' tā ' nebija ` pirmā  
, reize. || ('... *the first time*')

A high fall serves also for indicating contrast. In the following sentence the speaker first mentions those who were satisfied with the results of the election in Latvia and then in the last tone unit with a high fall refers to foreign friends of Latvia:

- (33) 'Vēlēšanu , rezultāts | ·deva 'gandarījumu `visiem || – gan , jums  
par savu 'izvēli, | gan , politiķiem, | ·kuri tika , pārstāvēti |  
'jaunajā , Saeimā, || un 'arī ·mūsu 'ārvalstu `draugiem. ||

There are a few cases when before a low fall at the end of the final tone unit the speaker accentuates some word with a high fall (in (34) – ‘for Parliament’ and in (35) – ‘not only’); no particular pause has been registered after the high fall:

- (34) 'Pirmā 'reize , bija | 'divtūkstoš 'devītā 'gada 'trīsdesmit  
'pirmajā , martā, || kad 'beidzās , termiņš || 'manis 'izvirzītajiem  
, uzdevumiem || `Saeimai un , valdībai. ||

- (35) Mēs jau 'šobrīd | 'sākam ·gandrīz vai , runāt | ne `tikai par  
, valsts , nozagšanu. ||

One statement is pronounced with a rising tone which points to incompleteness of the thought. In the previous sentence, the President admits that there are many good things that have been accomplished, in (36) he mentions a few concrete facts and the enumeration is continued in the further part of the speech:

- (36) Ir 'pilnīgi `cits || 'uzvedības , kods | 'Saeimas , plenārsēžu  
'zālē, | ir 'cits , pieklājības 'kods. || (‘There is a completely  
different code of behaviour in plenary sessions of Parliament, a  
different code of civility.’)

On one occasion the speaker uses a combination of the rising and falling tones. They fall on identical words (‘The situation... grew ever *worse*.’) which underlines the President’s negative assessment of the situation:

- (37) Un 'situācija ar katru , brīdi | 'kļuva , sliktāka un , sliktāka. ||

## 2.2 NUCLEAR TONES IN THE NON-FINAL TONE UNITS

In the non-final tone units the most frequently used tone is the **rising tone** as an indicator of incompleteness. In 130 cases out of 246 (52.9%) the registered nuclear tone is a low or a mid rise. Only two tone groups are pronounced with a high rise, which can be heard much more frequently both in men and women’s speech in colloquial register.

The following examples illustrate the use of a **low/mid rise**. In (38) the speaker splits a simple extended sentence into 8 tone units, which considerably slows down the tempo, resulting in extra emphasis being given to each and every component of the highly critical statement addressed to Parliament. The rising tone is used in all non-final tone-units:

- (38) Diem , žēl | ·rodas 'tāda , sajūta, | ka, lai gan ir 'pagājuši  
'septiņi , mēneši, | 'jaunievelētā , Saeima | 'komfortabli , jūtas |  
'politisko , shēmu, | , melu | un 'visatļautības , gaisotnē. ||  
(‘Unfortunately, there is a feeling that even though seven months

have passed, the newly elected Parliament feels comfortable in an atmosphere of political scheming, lying and impunity.')

In (39) the distribution of the rising tones in relatively short tone units serves to place emphasis on some positive results Latvia has achieved as mentioned in the speech. As in (38) (in tone units 6 and 7), so here the rising tone is employed for enumeration (in tone units 3 and 5):

- (39) Mēs ' pierādījām , to, | ka , Latvija | ' spēj ' pārvarēt , krīzi, | ka  
' Latvijas , valdība | ' spēj ' iegūt ' tautas , uzticību | un ' doties  
.. tālāk. ||

There are utterances in which besides the rising tone the **level tone** has been registered (17.5%), e.g. in tone units 2 and 4 of (40). The absence of a kinetic tone signals the speaker's intention to continue the so far incomplete thought; short pauses introduced to separate tone units with static tones also indicate his emotional state (here he mentions the gap between society and Parliament):

- (40) , Taču | ' galvenais ' uzdevums | ' tomēr , bija | ' atmet | , tos  
' niķus un ' stiķus, | kas ' bija par , pamatu | ' lielajai , plaisai | –  
' uzticības ..plaisai, | kas bija starp , sabiedrību | un ' devīto  
.. Saeimu. ||

The only two **high rises** (0.8%) in non-final tone units cannot be considered characteristic of the particular intonational style. They sooner point to individual peculiarities of the speaker's manner, or else could be associated with emphasis on the negative meaning of both words the tone falls on ('*lack of confidence*' in (41) and '*unfortunately*' in (42)). Technically in both cases the high rise continues the pitch movement started by a low rise in the preceding tone unit:

- (41) ' Saeima ' izrādīja | , necieņu | un ' neuzticēšanos || ' tiesu ..varas  
, kompetencei. ||
- (42) ' Pagājušās ` ceturtdienas | , Saeimas , balsojums | diem ' žēl |  
ir kā ..sirēna, | kas ' brīdina par | ' nopietnu , konfliktu | starp  
, likumdevēju ' varu | un ` tiesu , varu, | ' divām no ' trim  
, varām, | uz ' kurām ' balstās · mūsu ..valsts. ||

As expected, a certain proportion of the non-final tone units are pronounced with the **falling tone**. Apart from the cases when it marks boundaries between grammatical constructions, the falling tone is used to create the impression of greater importance. It sounds much more weighty in contrast to the rising tone, and on many occasions it serves to accentuate the thought and attach particular significance to certain words within the context of the message. A low fall is used less frequently (10.9 %) than a high or a mid fall (16.3%). As can be seen from (43) the low fall in the first tone unit seems sufficient to attract the listeners' attention since the speaker chooses to make a long pause before going on. Also the single word *tiesnesi* ('*a judge*') in tone unit 5 pronounced with a low fall creates nearly the same effect as if it were pronounced with a high fall, except that the

speaker sounds restrained, thus providing a backdrop for more conspicuous pitch movements that create actual emphasis:

- (43) Jau ' devītajā ˘ Saeimā ||| ' likumdevējs | ' neapstiprināja || ' amatā |  
˘ tiesnesi, | kura , profesionālā , atbilstība bija , novērtēta , tiesu  
˘ varā. ||

The following examples show how both a low and a high fall are combined in successive tone units to achieve emphasis on the key words of the utterance: *pārvarējuši* ('We... have *overcome* the economic crisis.') in (44) and *īpašām* which is repeated twice ('...some regions of our state have *special* rights, so *special*...') in (45):

- (44) Mēs ' trīs · gadu ` laikā, || ' izmisīgi ˘ cīnoties, | ' brīnumainā  
˘ kārtā | esam ` pārvarējuši | , ekonomisko ˘ krīzi. ||
- (45) ' Pielikt ' punktu ` tam, | ka ' daži ˘ reģioni | · mūsu ˘ valstī | ir  
ar ` īpašām tiesībām, | ' tik ` īpašām, | ka nav jau ' runa · vairs par  
, to, | ka tiek ' diskriminēta ` Latgale. ||

Occasionally the speaker uses two nuclear tones within one and the same tone unit, as can be seen in (46) in tone unit 3, where a high fall is followed by a low fall. This example reveals the potential of a high fall for creating the effect of contrast: individual people's interests are opposed to the interests of the State:

- (46) ' Saeima , vairākkārtīgi || ˘ parādīja, | ka vis ` pirms tā ˘ aizstāv |  
˘ kādu ' šauru , grupu | vai pat ' konkrētu , cilvēku | , personīgās  
' intereses, | nevis ` valsts , intereses. ||

The effect is even more compelling if the two nuclear tones are both high falls. In such a way the President's statement about giving people a chance to change the situation for the better sounds persuasive and appealing:

- (47) Es ' gribu ' dot ' iespēju | arī ' kļūt un ` mainīties ` labākā |  
˘ formā. ||

On two occasions the **fall-rise** has been registered (0.8%). In (48) the combination of a low fall and a low rise in tone unit 3 serves to point to the incompleteness of the stretch of speech, whereas a high fall combined with a low rise in tone unit 3 of the following example (49) sounds emphatic because of the high starting point of the first component:

- (48) , Izravēt | ' to · ļaunuma , sakni, | kas ˘ šķir , varu | no  
˘ sabiedrības. ||
- (49) , Vienreiz ' pielikt , punktu, | ka ' visa mūsu ' sūri ' grūti | ` kopā  
, pelnītā , bagātība | , nogulst | ' ofšoru · firmu ˘ kontos. ||

One can easily notice that in long sentences depending on the logical centres of the utterance and the speaker's wish and feeling for certain emphasis, the tone units are realized with different nuclear tones, for instance, in (50) the succession



of the tones is as follows: LR, HF, HF, LT, HF, HF, LR, HF, LR, LR, LR, HF, LT, LR, LT, LR, LF:

- (50) Mēs 'redzam arī , to, | ka `valdība, || kurai ·būtu 'jābūt `lemt-spējīgai | par 'Latvijas | `nākotni, | par 'tiem `uzdevumiem, | kas 'attīstītu , Latviju, | `celtu tās , labklājību, | diem , žēl | vis `vairāk 'skatās uz , to, | ko saka ·kāds , cilvēks | ·ārpus `Saeimas, | lai gan 'būtu | 'jābūt , tādai 'situācijai, | ka 'valdību·vada | , Ministru 'prezidents | un 'valdība ir 'atbildīga 'Saeimas ..priekšā. ||

Apart from the use of tones that possess expressive potential there are other ways of singling out items of information or words that the speaker finds especially important within a particular context. One such way is raising the pitch level onto the particular word (technically on its stressed syllable), i.e. using a special rise. In (51) the unusual word combination '*privatization of democracy*' is meant to arouse and activate the public's concern about the ongoing processes in the state therefore the word for '*democracy*' is singled out:

- (51) 'Varētu pat , nojaust, | ka 'tuvojas arī | 'mūsu 'valsts  
↑ demokrātijas ..privatizācija. ||

Another way of making the listeners appreciate the importance of a message is to stress words that in a neutral interpretation of facts would be left unstressed. A fully stressed word in (52) is the verb '*to be*' in a separate tone unit as part of the compound predicate ('My duty *is* to act for the good of the State...'). It allows the listener to concentrate on what the President is saying about his duty:

- (52) Un 'mans , pienākums | 'ir | 'rikoties | 'valsts , labā, | 'nevis ..savā , labā. ||

Example (53) shows how the use of double high falls is intensified to a dramatic effect with a stressed conjunction in a tone unit of its own ('We were watching *and* did not do anything'). The sentence also illustrates the need for half-accented words (·*neko*) that provide a distinct rhythmical pattern and allow the listener single out the preceding or following word (the President's address contains many instances of this type):

- (53) `Noraudzījāties, || , **un** | ·neko `nedarījām. ||

The following statement demonstrates convincingly the role of the weak accent in creating the effect of rhythm and drawing the listeners' attention to more significant words within the given context (*es* – '*I*' in tone unit 1, *prezidenta* – '*President's*' in tone unit 3 and *visas* – 'all' in tone unit 4):

- (54) Bet 'es ·esmu | 'devis | ·valsts ↑ prezidenta ..zvērestu – || 'visas  
·manas , pūles | 'veltīt | 'tautas un 'Latvijas ..labumam. ||

In one instance the speaker chooses to introduce two stresses in a word that results in additional emphasis (*pašsaprotami* ('As if it were *self-evident*...')):

- (55) It kā 'tas būtu 'paš ..saprotami, | ka 'tā rikoties | ir ..gods. ||

# CONCLUSIONS

The basic distinctions of the publicistic style of intonation in English in contrast to Latvian which has a more emotional approach, considerably slower tempo, more frequent use of long pauses, absence of low/mid rises in the final tone units, a more frequent use of level tones in the non-final tone units, an occasional high rise in the non-final tone units that is more characteristic of colloquial speech. Pre-nuclear patterns also undoubtedly play a considerable role in determining intonational styles (see the table).

Table 1 Phonostylistic characteristics of publicistic speeches in English and Latvian

	English	Latvian
Timbre	self-assured, proficient, concerned, slight emotional colouring of the voice	dignified, concerned, personally involved, emotional
Tempo	moderate	moderate and slow
Pauses	variable (short, medium or long); they occur mostly at the boundaries of grammatical constructions	medium, long, extra long; they often cross the boundaries of grammatical constructions
Rhythm	stable	stable
Nuclear tones	<i>in final tone units</i> predominance of falling tones, esp. low falls; also low/mid rises have been registered; <i>in non-final tone units</i> predominance of low/mid rises; among the falling tones high/mid falls dominate; also fall-rises have been registered	<i>in final tone units</i> predominance of falling tones, esp. low falls; <i>in non-final tone units</i> predominance of low/mid rises; among the falling tones high/mid falls dominate; also level tones have been registered

It turns out that there is a great variety of them in both languages. Pre-nuclear contours and their function in characterizing a particular style remains a sphere to be investigated. Features of one style may overlap those of some other style. This analysis reveals that there are features of the publicistic style of intonation that overlap those of the informational style of intonation. It proves the variability of style markers and points to the importance of the interpretation of a particular speech situation.

# REFERENCES

- Apele, A. (1982) *Runas māksla*. Rīga: Zinātne.  
Apele, A. (2011) *Prasme runāt publiski*. Rīga: Zvaigzne.  
Available from <http://www.number10.gov.uk/news/pm-statement-on-violence-in-england/> [Accessed August 28, 2011].  
Bolinger, D. (1989) *Intonation and Its Uses. Melody in Grammar and Discourse*. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press.  
Brēde, M. (2010a) Valodas variācijas intonācijas stilu izpausmē (pp. 67-74). In *Vārds un tā pētīšanas aspekti 14 (1)*: rakstu krājums. Liepāja: Liepājas Universitāte.

- Brēde, M. (2010b) Intonācijas stilistiskais potenciāls (pp. 17-20). In *No vārda līdz vārdnīcai*. Akad. J. Endzelina 137. dzimšanas dienas atceres starptautiskās zinātniskās konferences materiāli. Rīga: LU, LVI.
- Brēde, M. (2011a) Stylistic variation as manifest in the informational style of intonation. (On the basis of English and Latvian TV broadcasts). *Baltic Journal of English Language, Literature and Culture*, 1: 4-13.
- Brēde, M. (2011b) Stylistic variation of intonational means (On the basis of informational and publicistic styles of intonation in Latvian). *9<sup>th</sup> Conference on Baltic Studies in Europe. Abstracts*. Sweden: Sodertorn University.
- Brēde, M. (2011c) Nukleāro toņu funkcionālā slodze informatīvā intonācijas stila kontekstā (pp. 59-64). In *Vārds un tā pētīšanas aspekti 15 (1)*: rakstu krājums. Liepāja: Liepājas Universitāte.
- Cameron, D. (2011) *PM statement on violence in England. Wednesday 10 August 2011*.
- Ceplītis, L., Katlape, N. (1968) *Izteiksmīgas runas pamati*. Rīga: Zinātne.
- Cruttenden, A. (1997) *Intonation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Gumperz, J. J. (1982) *Discourse Strategies*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Levelt, W. J. M. (1989) *Speaking: From Intention to Articulation*. Cambridge, Massachusetts, London and England: The MIT Press..
- [Sokolova et al.] Соколова, М. А., Гинтовт, К. П., Тихонова, И. С., Тихонова, Р. М. (1991) *English Phonetics*. Москва: Высшая школа.
- Zatlers, V. (2011) *Valsts prezidenta Valda Zatlera uzruna Latvijas tautai*. 28.05.2011. Available from <http://www.youtube.com> [Accessed August 28, 2011].

**Maija Brēde** (Prof., Dr. philol.) is currently working at the University of Latvia. Her research interests include phonetics and phonology and a few aspects of discourse analysis. Email: [mabred@lanet.lv](mailto:mabred@lanet.lv)

# THE ROLE OF PEER ASSESSMENT IN DEVELOPING ADOLESCENT LEARNERS' AUTONOMY

---

ANNA CZURA

University of Wrocław, Poland

**Abstract.** The aim of language education is no longer limited to developing learners' linguistic skills only. In order to promote language learning as a life-long process, a growing impact in the language classroom is placed on non-linguistic aspects, such as motivation or learner autonomy. The latter can be fostered in the classroom by means of alternative assessment methods, such as portfolio, project, observation and peer assessment. This article provides an account of a quasi-experiment conducted in the first and second year of lower secondary school in Poland in order to investigate whether and to what extent the application of peer assessment affects the level of autonomy in adolescent learners aged 13-14. The study is based on mixed methods research comprising both quantitative and qualitative data elicitation tools such as a questionnaire, classroom observation and interviews. The applied methodology helped to discover that although the overall level of autonomy did not change as the result of the treatment, a number of autonomous behaviours emerged. It can be concluded that peer assessment does not suffice to foster autonomy in adolescent learners; still, it might appear as a useful element of a wide-ranging teaching scheme aiming at involving learners in the teaching and learning processes.

**Key words:** learner autonomy, alternative assessment, peer assessment, adolescent learners

## INTRODUCTION

Fostering learner autonomy has become one of the key elements of foreign language learning and teaching stipulated by the *Common European Framework of Reference* (Council of Europe, 2001). This document has an important impact on the national core curriculum for language learning introduced in Poland in 2009. Apart from developing learners' competence in respect to language skills, teachers need to promote autonomous behaviours and instil in learners the sense of responsibility for their own learning. Learner autonomy can be fostered by means of diverse classroom procedures such as encouraging self-reflection, introducing collaborative tasks or implementing diverse forms of assessment. Assessment is an important element of classroom procedure as it both serves as feedback on learners' performance and provides insights into the effectiveness of the teaching practice.

The aim of the quasi-experiment implemented in this study was to determine whether peer assessment applied in a lower secondary school (learners aged 13-14) exerts any effect on adolescents' level of autonomy in the period of one year. The researcher focused on the overall level of autonomy as well as its seven components selected for the purposes of this study: selection and implementation of relevant resources, collaboration with other members of the group, the ability to establish learning aims and objectives, engagement in outside classroom learning, learners' ability to evaluate their own learning process, implementation of appropriate learning strategies and the subjects' attitudes toward the teachers and their role in education. Moreover, the application of mixed methods research instruments helped to gain valuable descriptive insight into the language classroom and demonstrate how the new assessment method was implemented in practice.

## THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

The emergence of cognitive and constructivist psychology and the focus on the holistic growth of a person caused a shift from knowledge-based to experience-based and learner-centred approaches in education. These changes necessitated modification of instructional goals so that they would aim to 'facilitate the learner to become a more skilled, independent and responsible person through a better understanding of the process and of himself' (Kohonen, 1999: 280). One of the tools that could be used to promote the holistic development of the learners is assessment since it not only serves as feedback on the learners' success or failure in the learning process, but also provides valuable insight into the effectiveness of the teaching practice by indicating the areas that need further development and improvement.

In recent years a shift from the *culture of testing* to the *culture of assessment* can be observed (Birenbaum and Dochy, 1996; Fox, 2008). The testing culture is rooted in the structuralist view of language and psychometric methods of measurement and by focusing on obtaining quantitative results of learners' achievement and proficiency, tests achieve high objectivity and reliability of measurement. They fail, however, to take into account the process of learning and the uniqueness of individual language performance.

The assessment culture brings about solutions to these problems as it emphasises:

- (1) the centrality of the classroom (teaching practice and learning process);
- (2) the active role played by students/learners in assessment processes including standard setting, identification of evaluation criteria, procedures, etc.;
- (3) a heightened valuing of process; and
- (4) outcomes characterized by summaries of learner competencies which are detailed, descriptive and informative, rather than a single, quantifiable score. (Fox, 2008: 102)

Being an alternative to the traditional assessment, the new approach underlines the process, as opposed to solely the product, of learning and the importance of integrating assessment with the instruction. Paper-and-pencil tests are replaced with meaningful, authentic and communicative assessment tasks, smoothly incorporated into the ongoing classroom practice. The learners' results, rather than being limited to a numeric grade, provide meaningful feedback and promote learning (Brown and Hudson, 1998).

One of such alternative methods is peer assessment (also termed as *collaborative assessment*) which refers to a situation in which learners make judgements about each other's performance according to a set of established criteria. Learners individually, in pairs or in groups assess, for instance, their peers' homework or different in-class tasks. The opinions may be presented on a rating scale, in the form of oral or written comments, questionnaires, journals, etc. Peer assessment is often considered as a prerequisite for self-assessment as it helps the learners to become acquainted with assessment criteria and provides guidance on how to use them in reference to a particular performance (Black, et al. 2003; Little, 2003). Similarly to self-assessment, the introduction of assessment by peers requires a gradual progression through a number of steps. First of all, the crucial elements of performance and the hierarchy of correctness are negotiated, and possible forms of feedback connected with the learning goals are specified. Learners need to be accustomed to being corrected by others if peer assessment is to become an integral part of learning. Although teacher and peer assessment of the same performance often yield different results, it must be remembered that the two forms of assessment also have a different function in the classroom and that peer assessment is more valued for providing a formative contribution than for a numeric evaluation of the performance (Cheng and Warren, 2005).

Aware that their work would be later checked by their peers, learners engaged in peer assessment are motivated to work more carefully while doing homework or classwork tasks because they are more inclined to accept criticism from other learners rather than from the teachers; they take such comments more seriously and try harder to improve their future performance (Black, et al. 2003). Involvement in peer assessment makes the learners more sensitive to linguistic accuracy which leads to a greater self-control of their own language production (Wilczyńska, 1999). Moreover, by engaging in reasoning, monitoring and decision-making in the peer assessment process, the learners develop higher thinking skills (Cheng and Warren, 2005). As learners differ in terms of their linguistic abilities, in the course of peer assessment they can exchange information and complement each other's competence. If peer assessment is performed against certain standardised criteria, it can be useful in preparing the learners for external assessment as the learners develop awareness about the criteria and the format of the formal examination (Little and Perclová, 2001). As another advantage may be considered the learners feeling of being empowered to contribute to diverse classroom initiatives and believing that their involvement is important (Wilczyńska, 1999). If conducted in a foreign language, peer

assessment promotes natural use of language in the classroom. While correcting each other's work, learners are engaged in meaningful discussions and exchange of information. Consequently, by being seamlessly incorporated into the collaborative classroom practice, peer assessment plays also a socializing function and develops interpersonal skills (Cheng and Warren, 2005). Due to the fact that peer assessment promotes real communication and focuses on the learning process, learners are more likely to engage in self-reflection and discuss their needs and problems with their peers and the teacher, which gives the latter an insight into the learners' learning process. Finally, when the learners are engaged in peer assessment, the teacher has more time to reflect on the class work and is able to work individually with specific learners (Black et al., 2003).

The alternative assessment (peer assessment included) necessitates reformulation of classroom practice and redefinition of teacher's and learner's roles. Learners need to become active participants in the assessment process who share responsibility in the classroom, reflect on their own learning and assessment as well as collaborate with the teacher and peers. This new approach to assessment aims at developing motivated and self-regulated learners who are able to take more responsibility for their own learning.

Due to these properties, alternative assessment is claimed to have a positive impact on the development of autonomy (Birenbaum and Dochy, 1996; Fox, 2008; Shohamy, 1996), i.e. 'the ability to take charge of one's own learning' (Holec, 1981: 3). This responsibility needs to be present at all stages of the learning process: from goal setting and ongoing management to the evaluation of the learning outcomes. By encouraging learners to apply diverse assessment criteria, focus on and discuss the quality of their peers' work and reflect on their peers' and their own work, peer assessment is likely to contribute to the development of autonomous behaviours in a language classroom.

In Poland the new curriculum for language learning implemented in 2009 assumes that the general aim of education on the lower secondary level is to develop learners' intellectual independence to enable them to make educational choices that would be compatible with their capabilities and personal interests. In order to meet these objectives, schools should create optimal conditions helping the learners to acquire and retain knowledge, develop the ability of observation and reflectiveness and, finally, encourage the learners to seek opportunities for self-education. Learners attending lower secondary school undergo a transition from childhood to adulthood; therefore, the development of autonomous learning and the ability to take responsibilities for their own decisions seem vitally important in the process of holistic development of an individual.

## METHODS

The research aimed to determine whether the applied assessment method affects the level of learner autonomy over the period of one school year. The instruments

developed for the purposes of the research helped to observe the changes in the overall level of autonomy as well as the emergence of autonomous behaviours in the following areas:

- Subscale 1, *selection and implementation of relevant resources*, refers to the subjects' use of additional learning materials, in particular the types of resources, the reasons for and the frequency of use and the role of the teacher or parents in the selection process.
- Subscale 2, *collaboration with other members of the group*, is devoted to the subjects' attitudes to cooperation and the quality of collaborative work in the classroom. It also aims at determining to what extent the subjects feel individual responsibility for the outcome of pair- or group-work.
- Subscale 3, *the ability to establish learning aims and objectives*, focuses on planning of the learning process. The research instruments aim at collecting data about the learners' goals as well as the decisions the subjects make in order to achieve the learning objectives. Another important issue is the reason for learning the language – whether the subjects study because of the grades or because they perceive the intrinsic value of learning English.
- Subscale 4, *engagement in outside classroom learning*, refers to the subject's eagerness to participate in extracurricular initiatives connected with language learning as well as their engagement in the learning process in self-study situations.
- Subscale 5, *learners' ability to evaluate their own learning process*, aims at eliciting information if the learners are able to recognise their own strengths and weaknesses in the language learning process. This subscale also focuses on the subjects' interest in the feedback received from the teacher as well as their engagement in self-assessment.
- Subscale 6, *implementation of appropriate learning strategies*, places emphasis on the subjects' ability to apply effective strategies in their learning, e.g. while memorising vocabulary and practising grammar. It is also important to know the source (e.g. teachers, parents, peers) of the strategies used by the learners.
- Subscale 7, *attitudes toward the teachers and their role in education*, concerns the subjects' attitudes towards their language teachers and their role in the learning process. The focal point in this subscale is the learners' perception of division of responsibility in the language classroom.

As the use of different research methods ensures validity of research results and helps to overcome the weaknesses and biases which may arise when only one method is applied, mixed methods research was adopted. Quantitative data concerning autonomy was obtained by means of a pre- and post-questionnaire (Czura, 2010) prepared on the basis of descriptions of autonomous behaviour (Boud, 1988; Legutke and Thomas, 1991; Dickinson, 1992; Breen and Mann,



1997; Sheerin, 1997) and acknowledged autonomy questionnaires used in the Polish educational context (Michońska-Stadnik, 2000; Pawlak, 2004). The answers were graded according to a Likert-type scale where 1 indicated 'strongly disagree' and 5 – 'strongly agree.' The questionnaire was administered in Polish. Additionally, in order to collect qualitative information, the researcher observed the groups once a month in a variety of classroom situations: language instruction, practice, production as well as assessment-related procedures. Finally, towards the end of the research, randomly selected subjects from each group were interviewed. The researcher's pre-determined observation sheet and interview questions corresponded closely with the seven subscales focused on in the questionnaire (Czura, 2010).

## 1 SUBJECTS

A research to be called *an experiment* needs to fulfil two conditions: '(1) there must be experimental and control groups, i.e. groups distinguished by which treatment they have experienced, and (2) subjects must be randomly assigned to one of these groups' (Larsen-Freeman and Long, 1991: 19). The research presented in this article does not meet one of these conditions as the subjects were not selected at random and the division into experimental groups was based on the already formed class units in the school. The research fulfils the first condition, i.e. there is one experimental and one control group exposed to a treatment; therefore, the study can be referred to as a quasi-experiment. Due to administrative reasons, such as the size of the school in which the research took place, the working time of the teachers and the timetable, the researcher needed to comply with the existing group division and form two research groups taught by two different teachers. Each research group consisted of 22 first- and second-year subjects aged 13-14. Every attempt, however, was made to ensure comparability of the research groups: all students followed the same syllabus and used the same course book series (the first-year and second-year learners used the course book on A1 and A2 level, respectively). Both groups were exposed to the same amount of the English language lessons, i.e. 3 hours per week and the subjects were assessed according to uniform assessment regulations imposed by the school and used by both language teachers.

## 2 PROCEDURE

As peer assessment appeared to be a new technique for the teachers participating in the quasi-experiment, its practical implementation in the classroom was preceded with a thorough theoretical and practical introduction of this form of assessment. This introductory training aimed to familiarise the teachers with different types of peer assessment, methods of implementing this approach in reference to different tasks as well as possible assessment criteria. Moreover, the researcher provided an ongoing support to the teacher throughout the treatment in respect to the task choice and assessment criteria.

Peer assessment was administered to assess a variety of tasks, for instance, oral presentations, written homework, dictation, grammar exercises, posters and other in-class activities. At the beginning, the learners conducted peer assessment in groups or pairs but as they gained more experience, individual work was encouraged. Each time peer assessment was conducted, the teacher selected the criteria that matched the task, e.g. the use of certain structures or vocabulary, conveying specific information, neatness (e.g. in the case of posters), etc. The criteria were delineated to the learners before assigning a task so that they would have a chance to implement them in the exercise they were supposed to prepare. Moreover, the learners were presented a detailed scale on the basis of which they needed to grade their peers' performance and give justification of their judgement. Peer assessment was not always grade-oriented, for instance, in the case of a dictation, the learners attended to the spelling errors and, instead of giving a single grade, the corrected works were then discussed in pairs. The feedback on the tasks was conducted in front of the whole group, and the learners had to recall the criteria in order to justify the suggested grade. In some cases the teacher collected the work and the outcomes of peer assessment and corrected the tasks himself. The learners were not graded for peer assessment; however, a 'plus' was awarded for impartial and diligent work, and a 'minus' was given to the learners who intentionally assessed their peers in a biased and subjective way.

The impact of the applied treatment on learner autonomy was analysed by means of three research instruments: the questionnaire administered at the beginning and at the end of the quasi-experiment, monthly classroom observations and semi-structured interviews conducted with the subjects at the end of the research.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the questionnaire before and after the treatment in the experimental group report a small rise in the overall level of autonomy; however, the dependent t-test calculated for the whole test as well as for individual subscales implies that the observed differences in results before and after the treatment are of no statistical significance. This value of the t-test suggests that the implementation of peer assessment exerts neither a positive nor a negative effect on the subjects' level of autonomy. An analogous statistical analysis of individual questionnaire items indicates that statistically significant differences can be observed in 3 questions: 5, 27 and 31. With the critical value of  $t$  amounting to  $t_{crit}=2.08$ , an increase in question 5 ( $t_{obs}=2.447$ ;  $p=0.025$ ) suggests that the learners have become more independent of the teacher in the choice of learning resources and tasks. The observed value of  $t$  in question 27 amounts to  $t_{obs}=2.090$  ( $p=0.05$ ) and the increase in mean values informs that after the treatment the subjects learnt from their peers to a larger extent than at the onset. Finally, the analysis

of questionnaire item 31 ( $t_{\text{obs}}=3.009$ ;  $p=0.007$ ) reveals a drop in the level of autonomy – in the course of the treatment the learners tended to lose interest in further work when, despite studying, they received a bad mark.

In the case of the control group, the measurements conducted before and after the treatment indicated that the results increased on 4 subscales (1, 2, 4 and 6) and declined on subscales 5 and 7. Still, the differences are too insignificant to draw any valid conclusions in reference to a rise or fall both in the overall level of autonomy and separate subscales. No change in the level of autonomy could be observed on subscale 3. The conducted statistical analysis showed that the differences between the pre- and post-test results are significant (with  $t_{\text{crit}}=2.08$ ) only in terms of questions 7, 11 and 14. Question 7 ( $t_{\text{obs}}=2.134$ ;  $p=0.045$ ) revealed a fall in the level of autonomy as towards the end of the quasi-experiment the learners tended to perceive their progress as conditional to the attractiveness of the lessons. A significant difference was also observed in question 14 ( $t_{\text{obs}}=2.89$ ;  $p=0.009$ ), according to which the subjects were less aware of their strengths and weaknesses when the questionnaire was administered on the second occasion. A rise, on the other hand, was visible in item 11 ( $t_{\text{obs}}=3.215$ ;  $p=0.004$ ), which indicated that at the end of the research the subjects more frequently sought the possibilities of using L2 outside school.

The qualitative instruments, i.e. monthly observations and interviews with the learners, helped to account for the results obtained by means of the questionnaire and additionally offered a valuable overview of the learning and teaching process as well as allowed the researcher to observe a number of autonomous behaviours that recurred throughout the treatment. The outcomes of qualitative instruments are presented below in sections devoted to the seven subscales pertaining to different aspects of autonomy analysed in this research.

The analysis of subscale 1, focusing on the ability to select and implement relevant resources, showed that both the learning and the teaching processes were predominantly based on the obligatory course book and workbook. Additional materials, such as dictionaries or handouts provided by the teachers, were applied only occasionally. The rise in learners' independence in the choice of learning resources and tasks observed in the experimental group might have resulted from the fact that some of the tasks to be peer-assessed exceeded the content of the course book and required the learners to look for materials in other sources. The process of preparing an exercise subsequently subjected to peer assessment necessitated the use of visual materials, such as pictures or maps, as well as some factual information found in an encyclopaedia or on the Internet. Still, it was not observed that the ability to select and implement resources, so evident in carrying out an assessment task, was also employed in other areas of classroom procedure.

When it comes to the collaborative skills (subscale 2), the information gathered on the basis of the qualitative research tools revealed that individual work and the teacher-learner(s) contact constituted the prevailing interaction

pattern in the observed groups. As reported in the interviews, pair- and group-work were used in the classroom rather rarely. Collaborative work was more likely to occur when the learners were involved in the peer assessment procedure, which might have accounted for the significant difference in questionnaire item 27 reported in this group. According to the obtained answers, in the course of the treatment the subjects appeared to notice that they can learn not only from the teacher but also from their peers. A limited number of collaborative tasks might have resulted in the fact that neither the questionnaire nor the researcher's observation revealed any other changes concerning collaboration in both research groups during the quasi-experiment.

Classroom observations in both research groups did not reveal any changes in the ability to establish learning aims and objectives (subscale 3) in the course of the treatment. Instructional planning and learning objectives were based on the course book and the syllabus. The learners were neither informed about the aims of the learning process nor encouraged to formulate any learning objectives; consequently, they based their language learning entirely on the sequence of lessons proposed by the teacher. This situation was also reflected in the data obtained in the questionnaires in both groups as the mean results on this subscale were relatively lower when compared to subscales representing other aspects of learner autonomy. A very low level of autonomy obtained both before and after the experiment in questionnaire item 1, in which the learners declared that the teacher should plan their learning and tell them exactly what to do, suggests that the subjects were generally pleased with the teacher-centred classroom. Moreover, as the mean values of standard deviation calculated for this item were the lowest in comparison with the remaining questions in the questionnaire, it can be stated that the learners were exceptionally unanimous in this assertion. Classroom observations did not expose any changes in the ability to establish aims and objectives throughout the experiment.

When asked about their engagement in outside classroom learning (subscale 4), the majority of learners admitted that they spent very little time on L2 learning at home and, if they did, it occurred mainly when they had to do their homework or prepare for a test. Such attitudes were particularly visible in the experimental group, in which the mean results in the autonomy questionnaire on subscale 4 were relatively low. Apart from the school-related activities, the interviewed subjects adopted different measures in order to improve their language competence also individually and without the teacher's supervision. It occurred that they applied diverse techniques, such as watching films in the original language version, reading magazines for English learners, translating songs into L1, looking for new words in the dictionaries or on the Internet. However, the application of these elements was incidental and did not constitute a coherent plan aiming at achieving a significant language gain. The learners' engagement in outside classroom learning did not seem to change during the experiment in the research groups.

Some changes, however, could be observed in the learners' ability to evaluate their own learning process (subscale 5). The observations revealed that, in general, the learners were not encouraged to self-assess their own performance or progress. It was the teacher who was responsible for providing feedback on all aspects of language learning. The researcher's observation of lessons during which feedback on the test results was administered indicated that the learners were more interested in the grades they obtained than in the progress they made. This tendency might have resulted in the fall in the mean results in item 31 in the peer assessment group in which the subjects stated that they would not engage in further work when, despite studying, they received a bad mark. This was confirmed in the interviews about the subjects' attitudes to the teacher (subscale 7), during which the learners admitted that they would study less if the teacher was less demanding because they generally tried to pass the subject at the least possible cost. Still, the monthly observation failed to provide data that would directly link this result with the administration of peer assessment.

Although the learners were generally not interested in the feedback provided by the teachers (e.g. after a test or a written task), they appeared to pay close attention to the comments they received from other learners in the process of peer assessment. It complies with the assertion made by Black et al. (2003) that learners do not mind receiving criticism from their peers; what is more, they are likely to pay more attention to the comments suggested by their friends rather than the teacher. Peer assessment allowed the learners to see and correct other learners' work, which enabled them to compare their own mistakes with those of others and, in the long run, helped them attend to their own language problems.

Asked to express reasons for their judgement, in most cases the subjects were able to provide justifications based on the criteria and scales provided by the teacher. However, there were a few learners (4 out of 22 subjects in the group) who tended to be highly subjective and conditioned their evaluation on the grade or opinion their work had received from other subjects. Another problem stemmed from the insufficient level of proficiency due to which some learners found it extremely difficult to attend to the accuracy criterion, and thus were unable to peer-assess their friends' work without the teacher's supervision. It must be underlined, however, that accuracy was only one of the criteria employed in peer assessment and the learners were encouraged to focus on a wide range of aspects.

Monthly classroom observations and interviews with the learners failed to yield evidence suggesting that the implementation of peer assessment affected the learners' efficient use of learning strategies (subscale 6). The results of the interviews indicated that the subjects used a wide range of language learning strategies; however, the conducted observations indicated that their effectiveness might be arguable. Memorisation of grammar rules, learning vocabulary in isolation, reading new words according to their spelling, reviewing all the material on one occasion – these techniques are hardly likely to contribute to the

development of communicative language competence. It must be underlined that such ineffective use of strategies might have resulted from the fact that strategy training was not implemented in the observed classrooms and, as it was reported in the interviews, the learners to a large extent relied on their own initiative in the choice of learning strategies.

Similarly, the results obtained in subscale 7 did not indicate any substantial change in the subjects' attitudes toward the teachers and their role in education. It appeared that even though the research groups were taught by two different teachers, their teaching styles, methods or approaches to the learners did not differ much. The whole teaching process was directed by the teacher who was responsible for all decisions in the classroom. Such a traditional approach to teaching was accepted by the learners in both research groups who almost unanimously agreed that the teacher should be in charge of the whole learning process, testing and taking decisions concerning, for instance, the choice of learning resources or particular classroom tasks.

## CONCLUSIONS

It is believed that peer assessment entails certain classroom procedures promoting autonomy, e.g. goal-setting, establishing assessment criteria, self-assessment, an increased amount of collaborative work or tasks requiring reference to additional materials. However, on the basis of the results obtained in this study it can be concluded that peer assessment does not affect the level of autonomy in lower secondary school learners in the selected context. Although this type of assessment is widely acclaimed for its formative value and significant role in developing autonomy, these qualities failed to occur in a fairly grade-oriented educational environment. It must be underlined, however, that this assessment technique did contribute to the emergence of some instances of autonomous behaviour pertaining to different aspects of autonomy selected for the purposes of this research. For instance, the learners were able to apply the assessment criteria in the process of peer assessment or be involved in cooperative learning. The observed autonomous actions, however, were usually of short duration and were not transferred to other tasks. It seems reasonable to assume that peer assessment can be successful in fostering autonomy only when it constitutes a part of a comprehensive and wide-ranging scheme that would incorporate various aspects of language learning. Autonomy training need to be implemented at all stages of the teaching process, such as goal setting, instructional planning, ongoing monitoring of work and evaluation of the final outcomes. The learners also need to be trained how to direct their own learning in self-study situations. Moreover, in order to benefit fully from peer assessment, learners need to be already equipped with certain autonomous behaviours, for instance, to be able to cooperate successfully with peers, evaluate their own progress, select appropriate learning materials or involve in self-assessment.

## REFERENCES

- Birenbaum, M. and Dochy, F. (1996). *Alternatives in Assessment of Achievements, Learning Processes and Prior Knowledge*. Boston: Kluwer Academic Publishers.
- Black, P., Harrison, C., Lee, C., Marshall, B. and William, D. (2003). *Assessment for Learning: Putting It into Practice*. Maidenhead: Open University Press.
- Boud, D. (1988). Moving towards autonomy. In D. Boud (ed.) *Developing Student Autonomy in Learning* (pp. 17-39). London: Kogan Page Ltd.
- Breen, P. and Mann, S. (1997). Shooting arrows at the sun: Perspectives on a pedagogy for autonomy. In P. Benson, and P. Voller (eds.) *Autonomy and Independence in Language Learning* (pp. 132-149). London: Longman.
- Brown, J. and Hudson, T. (1998). The alternatives in language assessment. *TESOL Quarterly* 32(4), 653-675.
- Cheng, W. and Warren, M. (2005). Peer assessment of language proficiency. *Language Testing* 22(1), 93-121.
- Council of Europe. (2003). *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Czura, A. (2010). *The Influence of Assessment Type on the Development of Autonomy in Lower Secondary School Learners*. Unpublished PhD dissertation. Wrocław: University of Wrocław.
- Dickinson, L. (1992). *Learner Autonomy 2: Learner Training for Language Learning*. Dublin: Authentik.
- Fox, J. (2008). Alternative assessment. In E. Shohamy and N. Hornberger (eds.) *Encyclopedia of Language and Education. Volume 7, Language Testing and Assessment* (pp. 97-108). New York: Springer Science.
- Holec, H. (1981). *Autonomy in Foreign Language Learning*. Oxford: Pergamon.
- Jarząbek, A. (2008a). Wokół pilotażowego egzaminu z języka obcego w gimnazjum. Problemy badawcze. *Języki Obce w Szkole* 1, 66-68.
- Kohonen, V. (1999). Authentic assessment in affective foreign language education. In J. Arnold (ed.) *Affect in Language Learning* (pp. 279-294). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Larsen-Freeman, D. and Long, M. (1991). *An Introduction to Second Language Acquisition Research*. New York: Longman.
- Legutke, M. and Thomas, H. (1991). *Process and Experience in the Language Classroom*. London: Longman Group UK.
- Little, D. (2003). Learner autonomy and public examinations. In D. Little, J. Ridley and E. Ushioda (eds.) *Learner Autonomy in the Foreign Language Classroom: Teacher, Learner, Curriculum and Assessment* (pp. 223-233). Dublin: Authentik.
- Little, D. and Perclová, R. (2001). *The European Language Portfolio: A Guide for Teachers and Teacher Trainers*. Strasbourg: Council of Europe.
- Michońska-Stadnik, A. (2000). Attitudes to learner autonomy. *IATEFL Research SIG. Special Joint Issue. June 2000*, 67-71.
- Pawlak M. (2004). Autonomia studenta anglistyki – deklaracje a rzeczywistość. In M. Pawlak (ed.) *Autonomia w nauce języka obcego* (pp. 173-191). Poznań-Kalisz: Wydział Pedagogiczno-Artystyczny UAM w Poznaniu.
- Sheerin, S. (1997). An exploration of the relationship between self-access centres: changing roles? In P. Benson and P. Voller (eds.) *Autonomy and Independence in Language Learning* (pp. 54-65). London: Longman.

Shohamy, E. (1996). Language testing: matching assessment procedures with language knowledge. In Birenbaum, M. and F. Dochy (eds.) *Alternatives in Assessment of Achievements, Learning Processes and Prior Knowledge* (pp. 143-160). Boston: Kluwer Academic Publishing.

Wilczyńska, W. (1999). *Uczyć się czy być nauczonym? O autonomii w przyswajaniu języka obcego*. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN.

**Anna Czura** (PhD) is an Assistant Professor in the Institute of English Studies at the University of Wrocław, Poland. In her research she focuses on evaluation and language assessment, CLIL, learner and teacher autonomy, motivation, European language policy and intercultural competence. Email: [aczura@uni.wroc.pl](mailto:aczura@uni.wroc.pl)



# WHAT IS THE MEANING OF THE SCHOOL/UNIVERSITY ESSAY AND RELATED TERMS IN ENGLISH AND LATVIAN?

---

MONTA FARNESTE

University of Latvia, Latvia

**Abstract.** In the constantly changing world, teachers and researchers of academic writing of English as a foreign language face the problem of differences in writing in the target language and the students' first language. They need not only to teach, but also to report on the contrastive research of writing in local and international conferences. Researchers encounter the problem of seemingly similar terms having a different meaning in the two languages. Thus, the paper aims at investigating the correspondence between the terms *school/university essay* writing in English (a foreign language) and their counterparts in Latvian (the native language) as used in theoretical literature. The analysis of the sources published in Latvia since the 1930s until today reveals that there is a tendency to introduce new terms, change the meanings of the existing ones and specify the conventions of essay organization under the influence of the English academic writing traditions. However, these new terms are applied somewhat differently, and the terms as such may vary depending on the personal views of the authors.

**Key words:** contrastive analysis, school/university essay writing in EFL and Latvian, genre, rhetorical patterns

## INTRODUCTION

The study was prompted by the fact that teachers of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) dealing with academic writing not only need to explain differences in essay writing traditions between the first (L1, i.e. Latvian) and the target language (English), but also to use appropriate terms when publishing their research papers on contrastive analysis in both languages.

One of the problems faced concerns the terms the meanings of which differ in the two languages. When reading sources on English essay writing, we can encounter two terms – the *composition* and the *essay*, while in Latvian three terms – *sacerējums*, *domraksts* and *eseja* – are used. In some Latvian sources, when discussing narrative, descriptive and expository essays, two different terms *sacerējums* and *domraksts* have been used with almost a similar meaning (Cf.: Pauliņš, 1978 and Lāce, 2011).

In order to find out the difference between these terms, the following research questions were posed:

1. What is the meaning of the terms *composition* and *essay* in English?

2. What is the meaning of the terms *sacerējums*, *domraksts* and *eseja* in Latvian?
3. How do the terms correspond to each other?

It should be noted that the term *essay* (or *eseja* in Latvian) may refer to 'a short piece of literature' (Dictionary of English Language and Culture, 1992). In English, it may also refer to non-fiction writing, such as a newspaper or magazine essay, a film essay, a photographic essay and others; however, the present paper will deal only with the structured essay used to develop text organization skills in lower-level courses designed for EFL students. Because of the limited scope of this paper, we will not discuss essay writing in Latvian as a foreign language either.

Before discussing the terms in both languages, it is expedient to define the difference between a *genre* and a *rhetorical pattern*.

## THE NOTION OF GENRE AND RHETORICAL PATTERN

Knowledge about a genre is important for pedagogical purposes (Kay and Dudley-Evans, 1998: 308, Andrews, 2010: 160-162). Research on academic essay writing demonstrates that EFL students need to master the use of different schematic structures to meet the reader's expectations (e.g. Kusel, 1992: 460; Grabe and Kaplan, 1996: 167; Paltridge, 2006: 43; Uysal, 2008: 197; Bacha, 2010: 229), because an unexpected structure of a text may slow down decoding of the intended message (Hoey, 2001: 168). This means that students need to master certain conventions for structuring written texts. The academic essay is mentioned among the commonly employed genres in different disciplines (see, e.g. Paltridge, 2004: 87; Gillett, Hammond and Martala, 2009: 8).

A genre is defined as belonging to 'a class of communicative events, the members of which share some set of communicative purposes [...] recognized by the expert members of the present discourse community' (Swales, 1990: 58). Some linguists (e.g. Grabe, 2002) view *narrative* and *exposition* as two different macro-genres, while others (e.g. Berkenkotter, 2002: 287) consider that some texts may contain both narrative and exposition (viewed, then, not as a genre but as text elements). Thus, there are linguists who suggest distinguishing between *genres* and *text types* or *rhetorical patterns* (e.g. Paltridge, 1996; 2002; Lee, 2001).

The four rhetorical patterns – narration, description, exposition and argumentation – are known since Aristotle's time. However, depending on personal views, there is a tendency to introduce other classifications of text types or patterns. For example, Beaugrande and Dressler (1981) consider that there are more than four text types: descriptive, narrative, argumentative, scientific, didactic, literary and poetic. This distinction seems to overlap as literary texts may contain elements of narratives, the same may refer to scientific texts which

may contain even several text types from the list, e.g. description, argumentation as well as narration. Grabe and Kaplan (1996: 352), in their turn, call definition, description, classification, comparison and contrast, problem and solution, cause and effect, analysis and synthesis *patterns of organization*. Paltridge (2002: 83-85) points out such text types as ‘description, compare and contrast, problem-solution, argument, discussion and cause and effect’. However, the proposed term ‘discussion’ when referring to writing a research report seems to be too general, as the writer may compare and/or contrast different views as well as provide arguments to support his/her ideas. Moreover, he/she can discuss causes and effects as well as problems and their solutions.

The choice of a genre is determined by the purpose of communication, the intended audience and an activity type (Lee, 2001) and a social context (Johns, 2002: 3). Different genres may employ elements from one rhetorical pattern (e.g. Paltridge, 1996, 2002; Hoey, 2001). For example, we can find elements from the problem-solution pattern (Problem, Solution, Evaluation and/or Conclusions) not only in the academic essay, but also in the research report (Flowerdew, 2000) and the letter of complaint, whereas the conventions for structuring these genres (i.e. the choice of moves) differ. Thus, when writing academic essays, students are expected to follow *moves* typical of this genre (see, e.g. Afful, 2006; Aviles, 2007; Farneste, 2012). Students need to know the basic characteristics of a particular genre in contrast to other genres, i.e. the type of information and its sequence in the introduction, body and conclusion in a particular communicative situation.

## THE COMPOSITION AND THE ESSAY

Narrowing the focus, it seems important to explain the difference between the meaning of the terms *composition* and *essay* in English and their application.

*Composition* is defined as ‘a piece of written work produced to practise the skills and techniques of writing or to demonstrate a person’s skills as a writer (Richards and Schmidt, 2010: 106). This term may refer to any piece of text which is composed by a student, but it may also be restricted to a text, demonstrating a student’s ability to apply grammar rules (Biaggini, 1962: 188), and thus a composition is used to develop his/her style (Hayakawa, ed., 1987: 105). School compositions may be classified into *controlled* and *free* (i.e. not guided) (Richards and Schmidt, 2010: 107). At the tertiary level, the term may also be used in such collocations as ‘a composition studies’ or ‘a freshman composition program’ (e.g. Graves, 1993), aiming at the development of writing skills in general. In regard to mastering a particular genre, the term *essay* (O’Rourke, Calvo, and McNamara, 2011) or *academic essay* (Paltridge, 2004) is employed.

The *essay*, however, may refer not only to writing done ‘as part of a course of study’, but also ‘for publication’ (ibid.: 203). The essay as a representative of non-fiction writing is expected to discuss the topic ‘in depth’ by demonstrating

the writer's viewpoint (Gillett, Hammond and Martala, 2009: 8). They may be classified into *school essays*, *university essays* (Lee, 2001; Andrews, 2010) and *scholarly essays* (Bazerman, 1989: 259; Kinginger, 2002: 240-241). The last type can refer either to articles (e.g. by Rex et al., 2005; Johns, 2011) or book-length research essays aiming at theory building (Varghese and Abraham, 2004). The school essay differs from the university essay in the level of formality and the content. While school essays may be personal, university essays are expected to be based on an objective and critical analysis of what has been read. While at higher levels (e.g. academic writing courses for native speakers in the USA) emphasis is laid on critical thinking and 'rhetorically effective' writing, 'deductively structured' five-paragraph essay dominates to help NNSs (non-native speakers) master 'native patterns' or 'native norms' in writing (see, e.g. Atkinson and Ramanathan, 1995: 563).

A structured essay is also employed in EFL classes of writing in Latvia to assess students' ability to express and link their ideas logically. In these classes students are trained to see that the choice of the rhetorical pattern is determined by the purpose of communication. They write narrative, descriptive, expository (e.g. definition, classification, comparison/contrast, cause/effect) and argumentative (also persuasive, problem-solution, opinion) essays (Farneste, 2012: 36-37). The latter two types are used at the upper secondary and tertiary level because they are more cognitively demanding. This approach to the classification of essays is convenient for pedagogical purposes, as EFL students become aware of the basic rhetorical patterns and their varieties that can be employed in different genres, such as letters, research papers and others.

In Latvia, essays are written in English to assess EFL student performance not only at the secondary level, but also included in some tertiary level study programmes. Essay writing in English is also included in several language courses, offered as additional language training to those who need to prepare for language tests (e.g. the Test of English as a Foreign Language, the First Certificate in English examination).

## SACERĒJUMS, DOMRAKSTS AND ESEJA

In contrast to the widespread essay writing in English, essay writing in Latvian is mainly taught at school; consequently, theoretical sources focus on school level writing exclusively. In these theories three terms (*sacerējums*, *domraksts* and *eseja*) dominate; however, in contrast to the clear distinction between the English terms, their meaning may differ depending on the personal interpretation of the author and the time of publication. As the development of essay writing theories in Latvia has been complex and even recursive (see Appendix 1), it seems important to describe it in a more detailed way.

In the 1930s, *domraksts* (literally 'putting down of thoughts') referred to texts in which students were expected to express their viewpoint. It was contrasted

to retelling of a text or a mere description of an event (Anševics, 1932: 7-9). According to Skuja, *domraksts* was not a scholarly paper, as its task was just to teach students to express their thoughts in a logical way (Skuja, 1938: 125). *Vēstījums* ('narration') and *apraksts* ('description') were written at the primary level, while *pārspriedums* ('exposition') was introduced at the secondary level, when students had to 'explain or prove' their ideas (ibid.: 125). At the same time their contemporary Ramāns used the term *sacerējums* ('composition') in the same meaning as *domraksts*: a text in which students are expected to express their ideas in a logical and clear way. He also specified that exposition may include definitions, comparison or contrast, proof or disproof of an idea, discussion of causes and effects (ibid.: 226-227). Thus, the terms *domraksts* and *sacerējums* referred to what is known as a *composition* in English – a product of a composing process, while *narration*, *description* and *exposition* were viewed either as types of *domraksts* (Skuja, 1938: 125) or as 'elements of a composition' (Ramāns, 1938: 225).

Similarly to Anševics and Skuja, Dziļleja (1947: 3) also defined *domraksts* as a reflection of students' thoughts and emotions. When assessing a text, the focus was on grammar and style (ibid.: 17). According to him, *sacerējums* implied a broader meaning than *domraksts* because in *sacerējums* students could write about their observations, adventures and experience, they could express their views and use images (ibid.: 3). Thus, *sacerējums* could refer to an imaginative piece of writing. According to Dziļleja, the meaning of *sacerējums* was closer to the German *Aufsatz*, the French *composition* and the Russian *сочинение* (ibid.).

Besides the basic types of *domraksts* – descriptions, narrations and expositions (used in the plural form – M.F.), Dziļleja (ibid.: 4) also distinguished several genres within each type. Narrations, for example, included the chronicle, the report, the minutes, the letter, the biography and other genres (ibid.: 6). Thus, *narration* was used to refer to the dominating structure in these genres. As the purpose of *domraksts* was to reveal students' thoughts and feelings, it may seem strange that such objective types of writing as reports and minutes were listed in this group.

His contemporary Kārkliņš (1947: 48-49), however, considered that the three basic types of *domraksts* – narration, description and exposition – are 'archaic', as they are commonly mixed in literary works. He stressed that more attention should be paid to *praktiski darbi* ('practical work') such as letters, applications, receipts and others.

In the Soviet times, most probably under the influence of the Russian composition writing traditions, the term *sacerējums* was frequently used instead of *domraksts*. For example, Pauliņš (1974: 5) defined *sacerējums* as a piece of writing where students had to demonstrate their ability to express their 'thoughts, independently, creatively and in an organized manner about the theme given or chosen using the grammar and style of literary language'. As seen from the definition, the idea about 'creativity' was introduced alongside with logical structuring of ideas.

Content-wise the types of *sacerējums* were classified into:

- compositions about literature (i.e. analysis of literary works),
- *nosacīti brīvie sacerējumi* ('relatively free compositions'), which were a combination of the analysis of literature and the expression of the writer's viewpoint,
- *brīvie sacerējumi* ('free compositions'), which were not linked with literature, but were based on the student's experience (Pauliņš, 1974: 20-21).

In the case of free compositions, students could also write literary essays.

As to the form, they were grouped into narrations, descriptions, expositions and 'a dialogic type of composition' (Pauliņš, 1974: 24). Referring to the first three types of *sacerējums*, we could use the term *school essay* in English.

Exposition included such subtypes as (1) definition, (2) classification, (3) comparison/contrast, (4) cause/effect, (5) statement-(counter) argumentation (Pauliņš, 1974: 42; 45; Pauliņš, Rozenbergs, Vilāns, 1978: 264). It should be noted that the fifth subtype is known as one of the pattern variations typical of English argumentative essays (see more in Farneste, 2012: 69-70).

Although Kārklis (1976: 6) also used the term *sacerējums*, he explained its relationship with genres. Similar to Pauliņš, Kārklis distinguished two large groups of types of *sacerējums*. However, he considered that the classification of the first group is based on the 'sources used', while of the other group, on 'the ways of narration' or the ways of telling. He included 'narration, description, characteristics, exposition and reflection' in the second group. Kārklis also distinguished several genres or 'outer forms' of composition, such as the letter, the diary, the monologue, the dialogue, the review and others. Additionally, he distinguished 'mixed genres'. Thus, in this case the term *sacerējums* refers to the process of composing.

In the same period, some other authors (e.g. Laure, 1975: 33-35) used *domraksts* as an umbrella term for *narration*, *description* and *exposition*. Concerning the last type, she noted that students should deal with the solution of a problem based on the knowledge of relevant notions and cause-effect relationships. In contrast to the English writing traditions, the problem-solution essay was viewed as a separate type of essay.

In the dictionaries of the Latvian language (e.g. Guļevska, ed., 1987), *domraksts* is treated as an equivalent of *sacerējums*. *Sacerējums* implies two meanings: (1) 'that what is composed' and (2) 'an extended creative piece of writing at school' (ibid.). When Latvia restored its independence in the 1990s, the previously widespread *domraksts* was reintroduced in schools for the reason that *sacerējums* implies also 'a negative shade of meaning' in the Latvian language (Blaua, 1999: 3). However, in contemporary dictionaries these two terms are still used interchangeably. In a dictionary of pedagogical terms (Beļickis et al., 2000: 151), the term *sacerējums* has two meanings: (1) representation of thoughts in words (poem, story, novel, paper, etc.), sounds (works of music), visual images (works of art), and (2) *domraksts*. Thus, in both dictionaries, the first meaning of

*sacerējums* refers to the product of the composing process that can be represented in different genres. *Domraksts*, meaning the expression of students' thoughts in writing, is translated as the *composition* and the *essay* in English (ibid.: 41). However, as discussed above, the English term *composition* may also refer to a controlled composition, which implies a completely different meaning than the *essay* in an EFL classroom.

Lately one more term – *eseja* ('essay') – has been introduced in school programmes. According to Beļickis et al. (2000: 50), it is defined as a composition written either at school or university at the end of a course or a theme. It may contain elements of research. In contrast to *domraksts*, *eseja* has a 'special structure of paragraphs and discussion of the theme', namely, the introduction is expected to provide 'the purpose of writing and the main ideas'; the body paragraphs should start with a topic sentence, and the conclusion should comprise a summary of ideas and provide solutions to the problem or further development of the main idea (ibid.). This definition of *eseja* corresponds to that what is understood by the problem-solution essay in English. It should be noted that this definition provides the necessary moves in writing. However, in English not only the problem-solution essay, but also expository argumentative essays employ similar moves in the introduction and the conclusion (see Farneste, 2012). Moreover, some earlier views on *domraksts* mentioned problem-solution as typical of expository *domraksts* (Laure, 1975); thus, it is confusing why two terms are needed to refer to seemingly similar writing.

In the theories on school writing, we can also encounter different interpretations of the term *domraksts* even within one source. For example, Felš-Milberga lists three types of *domraksts* – *the narration*, *the description* and *the exposition* (2002: 4), but she also points out that students may write it 'in different genres' (ibid.: 31). However, when listing such genres as 'stories, fairy-tales, poems, plays and legends', she writes that they may be written in addition to *domraksts* (ibid.: 4). Thus, the term *domraksts* refers not only to a representative of a genre, but is also used as an umbrella term for several genres of imaginative writing.

Milzere (2003), in her turn, distinguishes *eseja* and several types of *domraksts*. The term *eseja* is grouped with *pārspriedumi* ('expositions') and *tēzes* ('the theses') as short types of *domu raksti* ('writing based on thoughts'). The term *domu-raksti* was used by Laimiņš in 1894. It should be noted that *exposition* in the English tradition refers to the rhetorical patterns employed in several genres, essays inclusive. *The theses*, in its turn, may be grouped with 'research-process genres' such as abstracts, research articles, monographs, and others (see, e.g. Swales, 1990: 177-178).

Similarly to Laure (1975), Urževica (2010: 64) views *pārspriedums* as a problem-solution type of paper, which in English is grouped with the variants of argumentative and evaluative essays (e.g. Swales and Feak, 1994: 57) or is distinguished as a separate essay type (e.g. Paltridge, 1996; 2002). However, she also uses the term *argumentētā eseja* ('the argued essay'), where the student is supposed to 'discuss his/her opinion on the chosen theme' by supporting

the proposed thesis. In this case, the student should follow certain moves: a proposition – the main three arguments – the discussion of each argument – conclusions and a summary to prove the proposition (ibid.: 80). These moves could be found in the *opinion essay* in English; moreover, it is not the only possible organization of argumentative essays (see Farneste, 2012).

Lāce (2011: 5) has expanded the meaning of *domraksts* from the expression of thoughts to the inclusion of research elements in a text, thus to some extent it resembles the definition of the *essay* proposed some years ago by Beļickis et al. (2000). Lāce mentions such types of *domraksts* as narration, description, exposition and the review (ibid.: 12), the latter, however, could be viewed as a different genre. According to Lāce, expository writing may also employ argumentation and may comprise elements from the problem-solution pattern (i.e. problem – its analysis – conclusion) or the opinion essay (i.e. opinion/proposition – argumentation/support – conclusion) (ibid.: 26), which could be grouped with the subtypes of argumentative essay in English (Farneste, 2012).

Similarly to Urževica, Lāce also mentions the term *eseja* pointing out that its meaning has become broader nowadays as it refers not only to fiction, but also to student writing known as *argumentētā eseja* ('the argued essay'). Lāce stresses that the structure of the argued essay is similar to expository writing (ibid.: 37), without explaining either the similarities or differences.

The definitions of the two terms reveal that the main difference between *domraksts* and *eseja* is in bringing out the student's emotional attitude in the latter case. *Domraksts* is defined as 'a text where the author expresses his/her thoughts, views or conclusions that are the result of their thinking process' (ibid.: 5), but the *argued essay* is 'a composition where the author expresses his/her view about a definite theme and supports it as well as shows his/her *emotional attitude* to the problem or phenomenon under discussion' (Lāce, 2011: 37; italics by the author of the paper).

The analysis of the sources demonstrates that there exist different views as to the classification of essays and corresponding rhetorical structures in Latvian. There is a tendency to introduce new terms and change the meaning of the existing ones.

## CONCLUSIONS

Both in English and in Latvian, there is no single approach to the use of the term *genre*, the classification of genres and rhetorical patterns. The distinction between the terms *sacerējums*, *domraksts* and *eseja* in Latvian mainly depends on the personal interpretation of the authors of different theories.

In some theories both *sacerējums* and *domraksts* are viewed as a product of writing in general, while in others they may refer to what is understood by the school essay as a genre. In recent years, the term *domraksts* seems to replace its counterpart *sacerējums* in the sources on school writing. Like in English, there is a



tendency to classify *domraksts* types according to the form or ways of telling into a narrative, description and exposition.

The term *eseja* or *argumentētā eseja* has been lately introduced to refer to school and university argumentative essay writing that may also contain elements of research. At school level, this type of essay is expected to support the writer's proposition; it may also correspond to what is understood by the *opinion essay* in English.

As to the translation of the English terms into Latvian, the most appropriate translation of *composition* could be *sacerējums*, when referring to the product of composing. In contrast to essay writing in EFL classroom, there is no dichotomy between *guided* and *free compositions* in Latvian as L1. The term *brīvie sacerējumi* ('free compositions') in Latvian has a different meaning: 'essays written on a theme other than literary texts'.

Depending on the purpose of communication and the dominating rhetorical structure, the term *essay* might be translated into Latvian using either *domraksts* or *eseja*. The term *domraksts* could refer to the narrative essay and the descriptive essay. *Domraksts* could also refer to some subtypes of expository essays in English such as the definition, classification, comparison/contrast or cause/effect essay. When rendering the *domraksts* types employing the *problem-solution* or the *argumentative* pattern, the term *argumentative essay* or *problem-solution essay* could be more appropriate.

Like in English, students in Latvia should follow certain moves in the introduction, body and conclusion when writing *argumentētā eseja* ('the argued essay'). Although it is indicated that the organization of the expository essay and the argued essay in Latvian is similar, the basic similarities or differences, if any, are not explained (see, e.g. Lāce, 2011). In contrast to English, it seems that in Latvian the topic sentences are expected to be provided only in one essay type, i.e. the argued essay.

The present study has revealed the need for more thorough research on curriculum genres, essay writing inclusive, and for some unification of terminology. More research on the distinction between a genre and rhetorical patterns or text types and their varieties would help in designing methodological materials and course books and, consequently, would help students in developing their writing skills.

## REFERENCES

- Afful, J. B. A. (2006). Introductions in examination essays: The case of two undergraduate courses. *Across the Disciplines*, 3, February 21. Available from <http://wac.colostate.edu/atd/articles/afful2006.cfm> [Accessed on March 6, 2008].
- Andrews, R. (2010) *Argumentation in Higher Education. Improving Practice Through Theory and Research*. London: Routledge.
- Anševics, E. (1932) 5 par domrakstu! Šis tas par to, kā raksta labu domrakstu. Rīgā: Valters un Rapa.

- Atkinson, D. and Ramanathan, V. (1995) Cultures of writing: An ethnographic comparison of L1 and L2 university writing/language programs. *TESOL Quarterly*, 29 (3): 539-566.
- Avilés, H. H. (2007) A genre analysis of students' essay introductions, *Fonael*: 148-162. Available from <http://www.fonael.org> [Accessed on June 8, 2010].
- Bacha, N. N. (2010) Teaching the academic argument in a university EFL environment. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, 9: 229-241.
- Bazerman, C. (1989) *The Informed Writer. Using Sources in the Disciplines*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edit. Boston a. o.: Houghton Mifflin Company.
- Beaugrande, R. A. de and Dressler, W. (1981). *Introduction to Text Linguistics*. London and New York: Longman.
- Beļickis, I., Blūma, D., Koķe, T., Markus, D., Skujiņa, V., Šalme, A. (2000) *Pedagoģijas terminu skaidrojošā vārdnīca. Termini latviešu, angļu, vācu, krievu valodā*. Rīga: Zvaigzne ABC.
- Berkenkotter, C. (2002) Response(s) to William Grabe's 'Narrative and expository macro-genres' (pp. 285-288). In A. M. Johns (ed.) *Genre in the Classroom. Multiple Perspectives*. Mahwah, New Jersey and London: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Biaggini, E. G. (1962 [1936]) *The Reading and Writing of English*. London: Arrow Books.
- Blaua, G. (1999) *Man jāraksta domraksts*. Rīga: Zvaigzne.
- Dziļleja, K. (1924) Brīvie domraksti. Metodiska rokas grāmata skolotājiem ar 150 skolēnu darbu paraugiem. Rīga : Valters un Rapa,
- Dziļleja, K. (1949) Domraksti. Metodiska rokasgrāmata latviešu valodas skolotājiem. [Vācija: b.i.].
- Farneste, M. (2012) *The Academic Essay as a Basis for Research Paper Writing*. Rīga: LU Akadēmiskais apgāds.
- Felš-Milberga, A. (2002) *Domraksts sākumskolā*. Teorija, Pieredze, Prakse. Rīga: Raka.
- Flowerdew, L. (2000) Using a genre-based framework to teach organizational structure in academic writing. *ELT Journal*, 54 (4): 369-378.
- Gillett, A. Hammond, A. and Martala, M. (2009) *Inside Track. Successful Academic Writing*. Harlow: Pearson Longman.
- Grabe, W. and Kaplan, R. B. (1996) *Theory and Practice of Writing. Applied Linguistics and Language Study*. Harlow: Pearson Education.
- Grabe, W. Narrative and expository macro-genres (pp. 249-268). In A. M. Johns (ed.) *Genre in the Classroom. Multiple Perspectives*. Mahwah, New Jersey and London: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Graves, R. (1993) Composition in Canadian universities. *Written Communication*, 10 (1), January: 72-105.
- Guļevska, D. (ed.), (1987) *Latviešu valodas vārdnīca*. Rīga: Avots.
- Hayakawa, S. I. (ed.) (1987) *The Penguin Modern Guide to Synonyms and Related Words*. London: Penguin Books.
- Hoey, M. (2001) *Textual Interaction. An Introduction to Written Discourse Analysis*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Johns, A. M. (2002) Introduction: genre in the classroom (pp. 3-13). In A. M. Johns (ed.) *Genre in the Classroom. Multiple Perspectives*. Mahwah, New Jersey and London: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Johns, A. M. (2011) The future of genre in L2 writing: Fundamental, but contested, instructional decisions. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 20: 56-68.
- Kārklīņš, K. (1947) Domraksts taustkolā. (47.-51. lpp.) Kārklīņa redakcijā *Metodisko rakstu krājums*. Rīga: Fišbahas latviešu komitejas literatūras apgāds.

- Kārklis, R. (1976) *Sacerējumi – psihiskās darbības aktivizētāji*. Rīga: Zvaigzne.
- Kay, H. and Dudley-Evans, T. (1998) Genre: what teachers think. *ELT Journal*, 52 (4), October: 308- 314.
- Kinginger, C. (2002) Defining the zone of proximal development in US foreign language. *Applied Linguistics*, 23 (2): 240-241.
- Kusel, P. A. (1992) Rhetorical approaches to the study of composition of academic essays. *System*, 20 (4): 457-469.
- Lāce, R. (2011) *Padomdevējs domraksta autoram 7.-12. klasē*. Rīga: Zvaigzne ABC.
- Laimiņš, A. (1894) *Domu-raksti. Rokas grāmata skolotājiem*. Rīga: I. Brigadera apgādībā.
- Laure, A. (1975) *Radošie rakstu darbi latviešu valodā 4.-8. klasē*. Rīga.
- Lee, D. Y. W. (2001) Genres, registers, text types, domains, and styles: clarifying the concepts and navigating a path through the BNC jungle. In *Language Learning and Technology*, 5 (3): 37-72. Available from <http://lt.msu.edu/vol5num3/lee/default.html> [Accessed on December 20, 2001].
- Milzere, M. (2003) Domraksti un citi skolēnu domu raksti :domraksti, esejas, tēzes, anotācijas, reklāmtteksti. Rīga : Zvaigzne ABC.
- O'Rourke, S. T., Calvo, R. A. and McNamara, D. S. (2011). Visualizing topic flow in students' essays. *Educational Technology & Society*, 14 (3): 4–15.
- Paltridge, B. (1996) Genre, text type, and the language learning classroom. *ELT Journal*, 50 (3), July: 237-243.
- Paltridge, B. (2002) Genre, text type, and English for Academic Purposes. In A. M. Johns (ed.) *Genre Classroom: Multiple Perspectives* (pp. 73-90). Mahwah, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Paltridge, B. (2004) Academic writing. *Language Teaching*, 37: 87-105.
- Paltridge, B. (2006) *Discourse Analysis. An Introduction*. London: Continuum.
- Pauliņš, O. (1974) *Skolēnu sacerējumu teorija un mācīšanas metodika*. Rīga: Zvaigzne.
- Pauliņš, O., Rozenbergs, J. and Vilāns, O. (1978) Latviešu valodas mācības pamatkurss: palīglīdzeklis latviešu valodas apguvē. Rīga: Zvaigzne.
- Ramāns, V. (1938) *Latviešu valodas metodika pamatskolām*. 2. izdev. Rīga: Latvijas vidusskolu Skolotāju kooperatīva izdevums.
- Rex, L.; West Brown, D.; Denstaedt, L.; Haniford, L. and Schiller, L. (2005) Understanding and exercising one's own grammar: Four applications of linguistic and discourse knowledge. *English Teaching: Practice and Critique*, 4 (3), December: 111-140. Available: <http://education.waikato.ac.nz/research/files/etpc/2005v4n3art7.pdf> [Accessed on October 4, 2012].
- Richards, J. C. and Schmidt, R. (2010). *Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics* (4th edit.). Harlow: Pearson Education.
- Skuja, A. (1938) *Rakstniecības teorija (poētika) vidusskolām*. Pielikums: *Domraksti*. 2. izdev. Rīga: grāmatu apgāds A. Gulbis.
- Swales, J. (1990) *Genre Analysis*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Swales, J. M. and Feak, C. B. (1994) *Academic Writing for Graduate Students. A Course for Nonnative Speakers of English*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- Urževica, S. (2010) Rokasgrāmata latviešu valodā. Svarīgākais, kas jāzina latviešu valodas skolotājiem. Zvaigzne: ABC.
- Uysal, H. H. (2008) Tracing the culture behind writing: Rhetorical patterns and bidirectional transfer in L1 and L2 essays of Turkish writers in relation to educational context. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 17: 183-207.
- Varghese, S. A. and Abraham, S. A. (2004) Book-length scholarly essays as a hybrid genre in science. *Written Communication*, 21 (2), April: 201-231.

## APPENDIX 1

Table 1 Use of the terms *sacerējums*, *domraksts* and *eseja*

Sources	Sacerējums	Domraksts	Eseja
Anševics (1932)	–	+	–
Skuja (1938)	–	types: narration, description, exposition	–
Ramāns (1938)	elements: narration, description, exposition	–	–
Dziļleja (1947)	+	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• narrations (the chronicle, the report, the minutes, the letter, the biography, etc.)</li> <li>• descriptions</li> <li>• expositions</li> </ul>	–
Kārklīšs (1947)	–	types: narration, description, exposition, but mainly mixed	–
Pauliņš (1974) Pauliņš, Rozenbergs, Vilāns (1978)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• narration</li> <li>• description</li> <li>• exposition, which includes argumentation</li> </ul>	–	–
Laure (1975)	–	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• narration</li> <li>• description</li> <li>• exposition which discusses solutions of a problem</li> </ul>	–
Kārklis (1976)	narration, description, characteristics, exposition and reflection		
Guļevska (ed., 1987)	+	means the same as <i>sacerējums</i>	–
Beļickis et al. (2000)	+	means the same as <i>sacerējums</i>	with elements of research and a specific structure

Felš-Milberga (2002)	–	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• narration</li> <li>• description</li> <li>• exposition</li> </ul> May be written in 'different genres'	–
Milzere (2003)	–	+	belongs to the subgroup of <i>domu raksti</i> , alongside with <i>exposition</i> and the <i>theses</i>
Urževica (2010)	–	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• narration</li> <li>• description</li> <li>• exposition (i.e. a problem-solution paper)</li> </ul>	<i>argumentā eseja</i> (with a specific structure)
Lāce (2011)	–	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• narration</li> <li>• description</li> <li>• exposition (based on the problem-solution-conclusion pattern and the proposition-argumentation-conclusion pattern)</li> <li>• the review (could be with some elements of research)</li> </ul>	<i>argumentā eseja</i> (similar to expository writing; with a specific structure)

**Monta Farneste** (Dr. Paed., Assoc. Prof. in Applied Linguistics) is currently working at the University of Latvia. Her research interests include written communication and communicative grammar. Email: mfarneste@lanet.lv

# TESTING SPEAKING ABILITY AT ORAL EXAMINATIONS IN DEPARTMENTS OF ENGLISH STUDIES

---

MAŁGORZATA JEDYNAK

University of Wrocław, Poland

**Abstract.** The paper discusses the problem of assessing spoken English production starting from the theoretical deliberations on testing the communicative ability. In the empirical part, the author reports on the two approaches to testing the students' oral performance at the final oral examinations in the Departments of English Studies at the University of Wrocław and the Higher Vocational School in Nysa, both located in the south-west of Poland. The impact of preparation time, the examination format, and testing techniques on the students' oral performance were investigated in a qualitative study. Being an examiner the author examined the oral material collected during the two final examinations in the above mentioned Departments. The findings show that the two approaches to oral performance testing have an influence on the students' productions. The paper concludes with some recommendations for the examiners related to the introduction of a more complex testing system in which a versatile student-student and student-teacher format and at least two different testing techniques are used. Additionally, the allocation of a relatively short time for students to prepare at an oral examination is advocated for enhancing natural everyday communication which is a priority in the currently dominant communicative approach to foreign language learning and teaching.

**Key words:** speaking, testing, oral examinations, communicative ability

## INTRODUCTION

As Broadfoot (2005: 123) notices 'a world has been developed into a testing society' where 'standardized testing constitutes the main part of the assessment regime'. According to the author, testing starts in some countries as early as at the age of six or seven and lasts throughout the individual's university career or even professional life. In contemporary Europe, where mobility and language learning are stressed, testing speaking skills in a foreign language is of paramount importance. Furthermore, the intercultural component in oral communication is nowadays recognized as a priority since it allows people in Europe to function adequately and knowledgeably in intercultural contact situations (cf. Sercu, Paran 2010). The very title of the book by Sercu and Paran (2010) *Testing the Untestable in Language Education* suggests that everything we teach in a classroom, though may seem untestable at first glance, can in fact be tested, speaking being not an exception. A number of models of language competence such as Bachman's (1990) model or the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages:

Learning, Teaching, Assessment (2002) have an important effect in the field of testing and the assessment of speaking skill.

Testing speaking skill is necessary for both learners and teachers. In this way, they both acquire more profound knowledge on what has been assimilated in a practical English use course. According to the author of the article, administering an oral proficiency test regularly has a positive backwash effect, as more time can be spent in a course to develop students' speaking skill.

Teachers accept testing and evaluating students as a part of foreign language curriculum at all stages of teaching. Systematic evaluation of learners' progress and final achievement allows teachers to identify the errors students commit, diagnose their weak points and implement some forms of corrective feedback. Additionally, testing students enables teachers to evaluate to what extent the employed teaching materials, techniques or syllabi were effective. Another advantage of oral tests is that they may be motivational to students who speak well but have problems with reading or writing.

The problem is that it is predominantly reading or writing skill which is tested. Testing and evaluating the ability to speak is clearly neglected by many foreign language teachers. This happens for a number of reasons, one of the most significant being apparently the difficulty of its administering as well as evaluating its scores. Teachers testing oral production easily get discouraged by the fact that they are bound to appeal to their subjective judgments while assessing students' oral performance. In Poland, testing and evaluation are regulated by some external criteria established only for middle school or secondary school final examinations. At higher education level, testing and evaluation are more problematic since there are no formal principles for teachers to follow. Departments of English Studies in Poland decide individually on a structure of oral examinations and components of oral performance which are evaluated. For all these reasons, there is a need to have an insight into the nature of testing and evaluation applied at the university level. Consequently, the objective of this article is (1) to present the theoretical framework for testing communicative ability; (2) to sensitize university foreign language teachers and academics to the impact of various factors such as timing, the examination format and testing technique on the final attainment of the students in speaking on the basis of the empirical data collected at the oral examinations in two types of Departments of English Studies; (3) to recommend some changes in the current examination systems in these two departments.

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK FOR TESTING COMMUNICATIVE ABILITY

Prior to testing the ability to speak, the authors of tests and examiners should fully understand its nature. There is some confusion around the notion *ability to speak* since it is identified with oral proficiency and communicative competence.

One of the definitions of oral proficiency, probably the most traditional one, is provided by Lado (1961) who describes it as 'ability to use in essentially normal communication situations the signalling systems of pronunciation, stress, intonation, grammatical structures and vocabulary of the foreign language at a normal rate of delivery for native speakers of the language' (1961: 241). It seems, however, that viewing oral proficiency in this way is superficial. Nowadays the native speaker norm is a target only for some students, for example the ones studying at Departments of English in Poland who are trained to be translators, teachers or linguists. However, many learners and their teachers depart from RP accent and the British variety of English to the use of English as a *lingua franca* in Europe with its numerous varieties as Euro Englishes. The use of non-native pronunciation and grammar may give rise to a more effective communication with non-native speakers of English than sticking to the norms imposed by prescriptive grammars. For these reasons, it seems justified to separate oral proficiency from communicative language ability which nowadays should constitute a basis for the construction of tests, especially the oral ones. Researchers attempting to describe the concept of the communicative language ability agree upon the point that it refers to the use of language communicatively and involves the knowledge of or competence in the language as well as the capacity for implementing or using this competence (see for details Hymes, 1972: 269-29, 1973; Canale and Swain, 1980; Savignon, 1983; Widdowson, 1983; Candlin, 1986: 38-57). It is worth mentioning the contribution of Professor of Applied Linguistics Lyle Bachman (1990) to the previously outlined ideas of competence since he characterised the processes by which its various components interact with one another and also with the context in which language use takes place. Before Bachman's works Lado's (1961) and Carroll's (1961) framework for describing the measurement of language proficiency was used. It viewed proficiency as being incorporated in four skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) and the components of knowledge related to these skills. Unlike Bachman's framework, Lado's and Carroll's framework did not indicate in any way how these components are related. It was not clear whether the skills are just the manifestations of the knowledge components in different modalities, or whether they were different in some ways.

A much more profound conception of language proficiency has been provided in the works of Savignon (1983) and Kramsch (1986: 366-72) who reformulated communicative competence. The researchers recognised the importance of context beyond the sentence, which includes both the discourse of which separate utterances are part of, and the sociolinguistic situation which to a large extent governs the nature of discourse in form and function. Consequently, in the definition of communication by Savignon (1983: 8) the context is perceived as dynamic rather than static, dependent on 'negotiation of meaning between two or more persons', and 'context specific'. He notices that communication takes place in an infinite variety of situations, and its success in a particular role depends on one's understanding of the context and on prior experience of a similar kind' (Savignon, 1983: 9). The same viewpoint is held by Kramsch (1986: 367).



All these deliberations about the nature of communication bring us to the framework of communicative language ability (CLA) proposed by Bachman (1990). It is CLA that should be nowadays tested at various oral examinations. It basically comprises three components. The first one defined as *language competence* includes a set of specific knowledge components used in communication via language. The second one called *strategic competence* refers to 'the mental capacity for implementing the components of language competence in contextualised communicative language use' (Bachman, 1990: 105). The last CLA components are *psychophysiological mechanisms* related to 'the neurological and psychological processes involved in the actual execution of language such as sound perception and production' (Bachman, 1990: 106-107). These components interact with each other with the language use context and language user's knowledge.

In a discussion on testing the communicative ability, it is worth mentioning Canale and Swain's (1980) theoretical framework in which the fundamental distinction is made between *communicative competence* and *communicative performance*. The authors of the model suggest that 'communicative testing should be devoted not only to what the learner knows about the second language and about how to use it (competence) but also to what extent the learner is able to actually demonstrate this knowledge in a meaningful communicative situation (performance)' (Canale and Swain, 1980: 34).

As it has been already mentioned above, one of the characteristic features of recent frameworks of communicative competence is the recognition of language use as a dynamic process, which involves the evaluation of relevant information in the context and the negotiation of meaning on the part of the language user. This view of communication corresponds to another element of communicative ability called *strategic competence* which is defined by Tarone (1981: 288) as 'the mutual attempt by two interlocutors to agree on a meaning in situations where the requisite meaning structures do not seem to be shared'. In this interactional definition of strategic competence, she seems to include both linguistic and sociolinguistic rule structures in her notion of meaning structure. For Faerch and Kasper (1984: 45), however, her definition is too narrow since it only applies to a situation when the negotiation of meaning is a joint effort between two interlocutors. It is much more frequent to negotiate the meaning without a participation of another interlocutor which is visible in the communicative language use in writing or reading. Tarone does admit that there is also a place for production strategies which are distinct from the language user's language competence, yet, unlike communication strategies, they lack the interactional focus on the negotiation of meaning.

Undoubtedly, strategic competence plays an important role in oral performance testing since it enables us to make the most effective use of the available abilities in performing a given task and consequently achieving better results on an oral test. The students with the same or similar level of language competence may be perceived differently by examiners, namely one of them may be considered a more effective language user due to his or her ability to use

various strategies. For example, in an oral examination students are expected to describe a picture using some specific vocabulary. They may complete the task successfully without employing this vocabulary thanks to adopting various strategies such as ignoring all the elements of a stimulus and switching to a topic related to some aspect of a stimulus.

Apart from language competence and strategic competence one also needs to mention physiological mechanisms which are used in the execution phase of language use. As Faerch and Kasper (1983) claim they refer to the neurological and physiological processes. In receptive language use, 'auditory and visual skills are used' whereas in productive use 'the neuromuscular skills are employed' (Faerch and Kasper, 1983: 11). For example, a student in an oral test makes use of his/her linguistic competence to formulate correct utterances in a foreign language. She/he uses the visual skills to obtain the non-linguistic information from the picture stimulus, auditory skills to comprehend the examiner's instructions, and articulatory skills to provide correct stress, intonation and pronunciation of words (cf. Bachman, 1990).

## MAIN PROBLEMS WITH ORAL TESTING

There are many advantages of administering an oral test which have been outlined in the introduction to the article. Still, many teachers withdraw from testing the speaking ability substituting it with written tests. It is due to the fact that testing speaking skill is difficult in many respects. The first problem appears at the stage of *designing an oral test* that should be *valid, reliable, scorable, practical* (economical) and *administrable* (Lado, 1961). The three qualities that constitute the so called *sine qua non*, without which a test is not worth spending any time over it, are *validity, reliability, and practicality*. Let us have some insight into these three concepts which seem to be crucial for testing any skills, including speaking skills.

The validity of a test is the extent to which it measures what it is supposed to measure and nothing else (Heaton, 1988). In order to be able to regard the test as valid for our purposes, two questions have to be answered, namely: (1) *What* precisely does the test measure? and (2) *How well* does it measure? If there is enough evidence of a high correlation between the test scores and the student's actual ability in the skill tested, one may assume that the given test is valid.

There may be a problem with validity in an oral test if it measures not only the speaking ability but also external knowledge or other skills. For example, a student has limited vocabulary and extensive knowledge of a topic but still his/her overall oral performance is highly evaluated.

With regard to reliability, it refers to the stability of test scores (Harris, 1969). An oral test will be reliable if it produces essentially the same results consistently on different occasions when the conditions of the test remain the same and when there has been no instruction intervening. As Lado (1961) asserts, a reliable test will yield dependable scores in the sense that they will not fluctuate much if we

were to give the same test to the same student in another time, or if it was to be assessed by another competent scorer.

A highly reliable and valid instrument may not be at the same time practical or usable. Its practicality is related to economical factors (the time spent on its preparation), the ease of administration and scoring, and the ease of interpretation. Whatever scoring format a tester uses, he or she should remember to develop a scoring key precisely in order to avoid the approach of having a general idea what he/ she is looking for (Krypsin and Feldhusen, 1974). One way to derive the best scoring key is to take the test oneself, or have another tester to take it.

There are various types of scoring which may be implemented in an oral examination. Drawing up a precise banding system or rating scale seems advisable. This scoring method is commonly known as *analytic*. Clear and accurate description of the various characteristics of performance at each level makes it possible for a teacher to identify precisely what he or she expects for each band and assign the most appropriate grade to a student. In the table below, there is a sample of analytic scoring system.

**Table 1 Example of analytic rating scale related to pronunciation**

11-12 points	excellent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• native-like English pronunciation</li> <li>• no problems with understanding</li> <li>• no L1 interference of prosodic features and individual sounds</li> <li>• word-stress/rhythm always appropriate</li> <li>• individual sounds are unambiguous and well articulated</li> </ul>
10-8 points	good	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• almost native-like English pronunciation</li> <li>• at some points problems with understanding</li> <li>• noticeable L1 interference of prosodic features and individual sounds</li> <li>• word-stress/rhythm occasionally inappropriate</li> <li>• individual sounds may be sometimes ambiguous and not well articulated</li> </ul>
7-5 points	pass	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• far from native-like English pronunciation</li> <li>• frequent problems with understanding</li> <li>• many instances of L1 interference of prosodic features and individual sounds</li> <li>• word-stress/rhythm frequently inappropriate</li> <li>• individual sounds are frequently ambiguous and not well articulated</li> </ul>
4-0 points	poor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• very far from native-like English pronunciation</li> <li>• gross errors and a very heavy L1 pronunciation/rhythm make</li> <li>• understanding impossible</li> <li>• abundant instances of L1 interference of prosodic features and individual sounds</li> <li>• word-stress/rhythm always inappropriate</li> <li>• individual sounds are always ambiguous and not well articulated</li> </ul>

As one may notice, the analytic method ensures consistency of marking and avoidance of subjective considerations. Designing a rating scale may be time consuming, especially when it must be restructured in order to match students' proficiency level. The analytic scoring system may also entail a separation of various categories related to students' performance such as *Pronunciation, Fluency, Use of Vocabulary, Use of Grammar, Intelligibility, Repair Skills, or Task Completion*. Such a profile is suggested for example by Harmer (2001). Apart from the elements mentioned above, one may also wish to test other items which are tested by the English Speaking Boards such as *Voice* (its range, flexibility, tone accent), *Clarity, Vocabulary and Composition, Audience Control and Relationship, Imagination, Sincerity, and Spontaneity*. All of them may be assessed on a five point scale.

It seems that one of the greatest problems related to evaluating oral tests is the difficulty in defining the nature of the speaking skill itself and a lack of consensus among teachers as to what constitutes speaking ability. Examiners agree upon a division into such components as grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation. However, such aspects as fluency or appropriateness of expressions are equally important, although not frequently applied in oral production evaluation. Madsen (1983) also mentions some other essential elements of speaking ability which should be analyzed, namely *listening comprehension, correct tone* (e.g. sadness or anger), *reasoning ability, or initiative in asking for clarification*. As one may see, there are numerous ingredients of speaking and many of them are very difficult to identify. Even if one identifies them, it is still difficult to test them objectively. For example, fluency may be understood differently by different testers. For one rater, it is associated with quickness of response, whereas for another rater it is more related to the amount of information conveyed within one minute. Similarly, some doubts may appear while assessing the pronunciation component. A question arises whether a native-speaker standard should be looked for in students' performance or rather non-native standard which is more frequent as an effect of teachers' use of non-native pronunciation. For these reasons, it seems justified to standardize the descriptors referring to individual markers.

As one can see, there are many problematic issues related to evaluation of the analytic method. However, this type of scoring various features of the performance seems to be worth implementing because it may constitute an effective feedback for a student who is able to see how his or her particular skills have been graded (Heaton, 1988).

The *impression method* as opposed to the analytic method or guided judgment according to the CEFR, entails one or more markers awarding a single grade based on the total impression of students' performance as a whole. Since the method is highly subjective its application is disputable. However, even with the analytic method it is hard to say that it ensures complete objectivity. It is possible for two testers assign a different number of points for the same oral performance. It is generally acknowledged that the speaking ability is hardly possible to be tested in a systematic and objective way. This point of view is also shared by Lado (1961) and Komorowska (2002). One of the major problems is

inter-rater reliability which means that we can hardly count on reliable scoring unless we list specifically what the examiner is to listen for in a student's response. This is mainly because different examiners pay attention to different aspects of a student's oral performance. For example, one examiner attaches great importance to pronunciation while another to grammar. Furthermore, some testers are stricter in applying certain evaluating criteria while others are more lenient. For this reason, standardization of raters seems necessary.

Once a tester decides on an evaluation method and components to be tested he/ she needs to design a test bearing in mind the three basic features abovementioned, namely, validity, reliability, and practicality. Successful oral tests should provide a student with sufficient clues to generate certain responses containing language areas we intend to test. However, it is not as easy as it seems. The main objective of an oral test is to elicit a quick response from a student without actual saying what we wish to check. An interaction in such a test should be natural and resemble real life communication. Yet, a student may produce utterances which we did not intend to elicit. Thus, a tester needs to develop tests using such techniques and such test components which will check, in a relatively short time, what he or she wishes to test. There are numerous testing techniques which may be applied in an oral examination. One of them is the use of pictures by means of which a tester may elicit various utterances. However, a visual stimulus may evoke various associations in students and consequently it may happen that only brighter ones will provide a tester with utterances intended to be elicited. Thus, the selection of an appropriate picture seems crucial if the technique is to be fairly objective. Some testers prefer a language stimulus finding it more reliable than a visual one. However, a tester faces another problem here, namely, the language of a stimulus. For this purpose some examiners use exclusively the target language during an oral examination while others, in order to avoid students' anxiety, introduce the language stimulus in the students' native language.

Finally, there is a problem with oral test administration. Timing seems a crucial aspect here. Whether a student is allowed to have some time for preparation or not depends on examination procedures set by individual departments. If a tester decides on an examination format in which one student prepares his speech outline while another one is already involved in oral production, the latter may disturb the former. It seems that an ideal situation is when a test is administered individually for each student. There are various oral examination interaction patterns such as student-student, student-teacher, and finally students-teacher, all of which having obvious advantages and drawbacks.

The tester as a person is as important for the interaction pattern. Being an examiner (tester) and an interlocutor involved in a conversation with a student is a difficult task. Undoubtedly, such a situation negatively affects the evaluation process. Thus, it seems advisable to separate the interlocutor's function from the *assessor's* function. One of the solutions to the problem is having at least two testers on an examination board. Another one is the introduction of a recording system, which allows for post-examination evaluation of students' productions.

As it can be seen, there are numerous problems with designing oral tests, the evaluation of students' oral performance, and the administration of such tests. The most comprehensive work which provides extensive information on foreign language testing and assessment is the Common European Framework of Reference (CEF) (2002).

It provides a comprehensive description of what learners should learn to use a language in communicative situations and what knowledge and skills learners should develop to be able to act effectively. The description also takes into account the cultural context in which the language is set. The CEF also defines common reference levels (A1-C2) which allow learners to measure their language progress at subsequent stages of learning.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND DESIGN OF THE STUDY

The students of Departments of English Studies are a very specific group of learners. Since they are trained to become specialists in the English language, they are expected to represent almost native-like competence and performance. A graduate of the English philology programme should be at an advanced level of the target language.

As it has been already mentioned in the introduction, in Poland there are no formal procedures imposed by any supervising institutions for testing university, college or higher vocational school students aiming at becoming an English teacher, a translator of English, or an expert in various domains of the English language. The departments of English need to establish their own guidelines regulating the length of an examination, the examination format, and testing techniques. For the last decade, the author of the article has been involved as a tester in numerous oral examinations with university students. Hence, the primary aim of the study was to make a comparative analysis of two ways of testing the speaking ability practised at the Department of English Studies at the University of Wrocław and the Department of English at the Higher Vocational School in Nysa, both of which train foreign language teachers and translators. The study is qualitative in nature. The researcher did not entertain any hypotheses at the outset of a study, but she was just taking notes and making recordings of the students' productions during the observation. Since there was no *a priori* hypothesis which could be tested, the researcher felt free to discover any potential factors influencing the students' oral performance. It was during the study when the researcher realized that various factors contribute to different oral performances. Hence, the study may be referred as hypothesis-generating. The main hypothesis was that there is some relationship between a set of variables such as timing, the examination format, testing technique and the final attainment of the students in speaking. The concept of the final attainment is difficult to operationalise since the researcher relied more on her subjective non-participant observation of the oral performance and the notes taken during the examinations than on the final mark assigned by the examination board to a particular student.

The following variables were under investigation: preparation time, the examination format, and testing techniques, all of which were different in the two Departments of English Studies. The oral examinations gave rise to the following research questions formulated by the author:

- 1) What is the relationship between the preparation time and the students' final attainment?
- 2) What is the relationship between an examination format and the students' final attainment?
- 3) What is the relationship between a testing technique and the students' final attainment?

Although the study, unlike typical non-participation research, was a short-term one it allowed for collecting much data on the students' speaking ability. The subjects of the study were 26 undergraduate students of English: 12 from Higher Vocational School in Nysa (the HVS students) and 14 from the University of Wrocław students (the WU students). They were all enrolled in the third year of studies. The former represented B2/C1 level, while the latter C1/C2 level in accordance with the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. Their proficiency levels were established on the basis of the annual final proficiency tests. All the students attended regular practical classes on communication and language use with a division into the following components: practical English grammar, English phonology/phonetics, and finally conversations in English. There were, however, some differences in the intensity of the provided courses (the HVS students had by 50 percent less phonology/phonetics) and in the teacher's first language (the WU students had a native speaker teacher). In both departments, the students were provided with clear and detailed evaluation criteria so they could know what aspects of their oral production would be assessed. The students were also informed in advance on a testing technique used at the oral examination.

There were some similarities between the oral examinations practised at the two departments. In the Higher Vocational School and at the University of Wrocław there were always three testers at the examination boards. In both cases, only one tester was involved in the interaction with the student, whereas the others followed the student's speech and evaluated his/ her oral performance by means of assessment grids. At the same time the testers took notes of all the errors they noticed in oral productions to discuss them after the examination with other testers and to assign relevant ratings from the scale.

There were also some differences in the way the oral examinations were conducted. Although the analytic method was applied by the testers in the two departments, various components were considered while evaluating the oral performance. For the HVS students, the testers prepared just three categories for assessment such as pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary, while the WU students were rated for seven components such as grammar, vocabulary, fluency, cohesion, pronunciation, comprehension, and interaction.

The examiners at both universities relied on a five point Likert's scale. The final number of points was converted into the grades (2 being the lowest and 5 being the highest mark to obtain).

Different time was also allotted for the performance. The HVS students had no time for preparation but almost unlimited time for speaking, while in the case of the WU students timing was controlled and restricted to 20 minutes (10 minutes for preparation and 10 minutes for oral performance).

The examination format also differed. In the Higher Vocational School, one-to-one teacher-student format was practiced, whereas at the University of Wrocław a versatile student-student and students-teacher format was introduced. As far as testing techniques were concerned, the HVS examiners applied mainly conversation on the basis of the stimuli and role-plays, whereas the WU testers relied only on role-plays and a presentation of a topic. In a typical role-play, the examinee was requested to take on a certain role and act out a given real-life situation with the interlocutor. The role-play was usually initiated by the examiners. The role-play instructions may involve the technique of asking questions (e.g. asking the interlocutor about his/her plans), providing explanations or descriptions (e.g. telling what he/she is going to see in London), or making negotiations (e.g. encouraging the interlocutor to do something, suggesting some ways of doing something). Some role-plays resemble more monologues since the examinee needs to present extensively his/her point of view. The language of instruction was English; however in the Higher Vocational School the examiners occasionally switched to the students' native language. Table 2 below displays the similarities and differences between the two ways of conducting oral examinations at the departments.

*Table 2 Comparative analysis of oral examinations in the two English Departments*

	<b>HVS English department</b>	<b>WU English department</b>
<b>Number of testers</b>	three	three
<b>Components under evaluation</b>	pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary	grammar, vocabulary, fluency, cohesion, pronunciation, comprehension, and interactions
<b>Timing</b>	no time for preparation; almost unlimited time for speaking	20 minutes (at least 10 minutes for preparation and 10 minutes for oral performance)
<b>Exam format</b>	one-to-one teacher-student format	a versatile student-student and students-teacher format
<b>Oral performance testing technique</b>	conversation on the basis of the stimuli and role-plays	role-plays presentation of a topic
<b>Language of instruction</b>	the target language	the target language and native language



## FINDINGS

During the study, the researcher noticed that the way the oral tests were administered in the two settings had both positive and negative effects on the students' final attainment in the oral performance.

With regard to timing, it seems that the time allotted for preparation, as it was the case with the WU students, gave rise to more accurate and well-structured productions. The WU students committed fewer grammar mistakes. Their average score for grammar part was 4.5 points, while the HVS students score was only 3.5 points. The WU students also used richer vocabulary surpassing the HVS counterparts by 0.5 point. The former also seemed to organize more logically their speech than their HVS counterparts. This observation is not, however, supported with any reliable data since a component related to the organization of speech was not under evaluation. The researcher also noticed that the WU students' performance lacked spontaneity and naturalness. Once again these two elements were not evaluated by means of any scale. Yet, the recordings allow tracing spontaneity and naturalness of students' performance. Some students followed the outline of speech that they had prepared or even read out the whole sentences they had managed to write at the preparatory stage as exemplified in the recording extract below:

Student: It is generally acknowledged that (a pause) German or French are less widely taught languages. Therefore, it seems justified to pass a new law that would progressively introduce these languages in the foreign language curricula in a primary school replacing the dominant English. Undoubtedly, this scenario has a chance of implementation provided the lobby for this project ...

Examiner: But do you think it is possible?

The HVS students in turn, without prior preparation, used more informal language with idiomatic expressions characteristic of natural spontaneous everyday communication. They also reacted more naturally in various situations when the flow of discourse could be hardly predictable as exemplified in the speech sample below:

Student: This is a fact, upon my word.

Examiner (with disbelief): There's not the least doubt of it.

Student: I told you the naked truth... it was like...you know a kind of ... shock. I guess not just for me. But for my driving instructor as well! He was like 'Failed! Failed!' screaming at me. Can you believe I failed at the same instructor six times?

What may seem to be negative at first glance is the allocation of unlimited time for oral performance, yet all the HVS students found 10 minutes as

being sufficient for the oral presentation, which they communicated after the examination. From the psychological viewpoint, however, this awareness of having unlimited time may act for students as both a facilitator and an inhibitor.

It seems to the researcher that timing of the examination preparation should be short enough to allow a student just to familiarize with the instruction, or contents of the examination set, and to prepare a draft with bullet points reflecting the main issues to be discussed. From the researcher's experience as an examiner and the students' accounts it seems that an optimal time for efficient oral examination preparation is five minutes. It was supported by the results obtained during the two examinations described in the study. The students who prepared for their oral performance within five minutes committed more grammar mistakes than the students who were allotted more time for preparation (the average score for grammar was 3.5 and 4.0 points respectively). However, the former produced the speech which was more natural and resembled everyday life situations. The students who opted for a longer preparation time produced speech which was artificial and more formal.

The issue of time preparation should be considered by examiners. When an examination task does not entirely resemble situations encountered in everyday life, it seems advisable to allocate more time for preparation, for example, when a student needs to discuss the future of the English language or prevention of environmental problems. Without a prior preparation the examiner may expect to hear from the student 'I don't know' answer. A remedy to the problem may be discussing all the topics with the students prior to the oral examination so they know what to say and they only decide on the form of what they intend to convey.

As to the examination format, it was noticed by the researcher that the teacher-student format resulted in worse oral performance than the student-student and students-teacher format implemented at the University of Wrocław. The student-examiner format did not seem to meet entirely a condition of a good test, namely its reliability. An interaction with the examiner was an obvious emotional burden for all the students who reacted either with inhibition or nervousness. From the researcher's position, these were the poor students who were prone to experience high debilitating anxiety. Frequently, in the situations when being exposed to a more complex lexical item or grammar structure produced by the examiner, these students easily gave up without making any attempts to find out the meaning, to ask for clarification or repetition as exemplified in this speech sample recording:

Examiner: Do you think he commutes every day?

Student: I don't know this word. Sorry.

Examiner: Oh, we had this word so many times in our integral skills classes. Do you remember?

Students: No.

Examiner: Never mind. Please continue.

Student: Well, that's it. I have nothing more to say.

Examiner: Are you sure?

Student: Yes, I have a completely blank mind.

Since the student-examiner format leaves the undergraduate at an obvious linguistic disadvantage, it seems that a versatile format introduced at the University of Wrocław is more advantageous. The WU students displayed higher motivation and self-assurance at the oral performance stage. Comparing the mean ratings obtained by the two groups of students for their oral performance, it is evident that the versatile format results in fewer grammar errors (M for WU students=4.5 and M for HVS students= 3.7) and fewer pronunciation errors (M for WU students=4.2 and M for HVS students= 3.5). The versatile examination format also seemed to influence speech fluency; however, it cannot be supported with any objectively measured data since this component was not considered in the assessment grid at the Wrocław University.

Undoubtedly, the student's speaking ability depends to a great extent on a student with whom he or she is paired. From the researcher's observations and the analysis of the speech sample recordings, it is clear that the best pairing is when two students represent approximately the same level of language proficiency. It is disputable whether the personality factor should also be taken into consideration while matching students for oral examinations. It seems that if the objective of an oral examination is to allow a student to experience a real life communication in which speakers with various personality traits are involved, pairing students of a similar psychological profile is not recommended. In the study, the WU students were paired at random by a computer, which had an impact on their oral performance. Two students both of whom represented leadership and extrovert skills found the task too overwhelming. Despite having some time to prepare a draft of a dialogue in which they were supposed to persuade an interlocutor of one's arguments, they were only able to produce a very heated and unproductive discussion as exemplified in this interaction recording transcript:

Student A: So you are for the capital punishment and I am against.

Student B: What?! Adam, we agreed on something different. Miss (to the examiner) we drew lots and he was to be for it not me [...]

Student A: But I will not say something that is contrary to my personal beliefs!

Student B: Neither will I.

Examiner: Adam you are 'for'.

Students A: (in a native language) Ok, but Ladies first, let her start.

Nevertheless, sometimes pairing students both of whom are leaders may give rise to a very interesting and fruitful discussion. Currently, the WU students are allowed to choose an interlocutor for the oral examination. What can be observed

now is a tendency for the students to pair with the students of a similar level of proficiency and a similar personality profile.

It is difficult to evaluate which of the testing techniques are most productive since their effectiveness depends on a number of factors such as students' personality, preferences, prior experience with the presentation technique. From the researcher's observation, the greatest objection may be directed at a topic presentation technique which did not involve any interaction with another interlocutor. While presenting a topic, the WU students utilized conventional ideas and memorized chunks of vocabulary. Their speech did not resemble communication one may encounter in everyday life situations. However, the productions of the WU students contained fewer grammar mistakes in comparison to the HVS students.

A role play was a technique applied with both target groups. The author believes that it is effective for assessing oral performance. Its great advantage is high realism and real communication provocation. The WU and HVS students seemed to have positive attitudes towards being involved in the fictitious roles and situations which were highly realistic and encouraged real-life communication. This observation was supported by the very students who expressed their preferences for such tasks after the examination. The students had total freedom in the choice of vocabulary and grammar structures; however, they made more grammar errors than in the case of presenting a topic (the average score for grammar component was 3.5 and 4.5 respectively). They felt emotionally comfortable, especially if the oral examination was conducted in the student-student format. Furthermore, the technique is appreciated by the examiners since it allows eliciting functional language such as agreeing, persuading, complaining etc. Conversation on the basis of a stimulus is also a very effective technique that was introduced at an oral examination only with the HVS students after the role play testing technique. A discussion on the basis of a visual stimulus was apparently more effective than a role-play. First of all, it resulted in more ideas since the stimulus tapped some associations related to the topic. It was reflected in the vocabulary used by the students (the average rating for vocabulary was 4.75 in comparison to 4.0 in the presentation of a topic technique). Consequently, it initiated a more interesting discussion with the interlocutor. For example, a stimulus in a form of a flashcard with a spider's web was associated by one student with Katie Melua's song *Spider's Web* and gave rise to his discussion of the issue of tolerance in the world. However, similarly to a role-play technique, a discussion on the basis of a visual stimulus resulted in more grammar errors (the average rating was 3.5).

It is generally acknowledged that testing is inseparably connected with the concepts of reliability and validity, both of which have already been discussed. As concerns the oral performance testing in the present study an attempt was made to maximize testing reliability by minimizing the effects of a few factors which can be the source of measurement error. For example, both the WU and the HVS students could opt for a time of testing most convenient to them and had been provided with the precise testing procedures. As to the procedure

of assigning points for various components under evaluation, it might be questioned for its subjectivity. It is manifested by the fact that one student's oral performance may be evaluated in different ways by various testers. However, in order to ensure the reliability of testing the examiners at the two universities had detailed descriptions of students' oral performance assigned to particular points on a rating scale. For example, assigning 5 points for a pronunciation component meant that a student's pronunciation was always at a native-like level, both at the level of segment and suprasegment production, while assigning 4 points meant that a student's pronunciation was occasionally native-like. Still, divergent ratings might have appeared due to the examiners' various interpretations of the words 'occasionally', 'always' or 'never'. Another problematic situation observed in the oral examinations referred to the cases when a student had a limited vocabulary but very extensive knowledge of a topic. Again, the examiners had to stick to the precise descriptions assigned to the ratings and evaluated only the component under evaluation. For example, such a student would be assigned a rating of 3 points as his/her vocabulary was not sophisticated and did not correspond to the C1 proficiency level.

## CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

In the study, the researcher attempted to show that there is an impact of preparation time, the examination format and testing techniques on the students' final attainment in oral performance. Allocation of preparation time resulted in fewer grammar errors, richer vocabulary and logical organization of speech. Yet, it also gave rise to unnatural and artificial speech. As to the examination format, the versatile format proved to be more advantageous resulting in fewer grammar and pronunciation errors. Pairing students may also be a factor influencing oral performance. The issue of testing anxiety in the context of various examination formats was not formally investigated in the study, but it seems justified to give more insight into this problem in the future. The relationship between the testing techniques and attainment in oral performance was most difficult to show. Undoubtedly, there is a need to investigate this relationship more thoroughly in the future. Presentation of a topic, though not embedded in everyday life communication, resulted in fewer grammar errors. Role-play, in turn, enhanced students' freedom in the choice of vocabulary and grammar structures but resulted in numerous grammar errors. A discussion on the basis of a visual stimulus resulted in the richness of vocabulary but worse grammar.

As it can be noticed, testing the speaking skill is difficult in many respects. Taking into consideration the complexity and vagueness of the nature of speaking ability, it is hard to establish what expectations of language performance we should have when testing. For different examiners, various aspects of oral performance are important. Additionally, there are very many factors influencing the speaking ability such as proficiency level, speaking apprehension, or

extroversion/introversion dichotomy. In the study, the author as an examiner had an insight into just three variables, namely timing, the examination format, and testing technique.

On the basis of the study, the author is able to say that the oral examinations administered at the two Departments of English Studies have both advantages and drawbacks. The WU students would undoubtedly benefit if the technique of conversation on the basis of a stimulus was introduced. The HVS students, in turn, would benefit if a more versatile examination format was implemented.

Taking into consideration the study findings, the author feels tempted to propose an improved system of oral performance testing at a university level. First of all, it is advised to introduce a complex testing system in which a student is tested by means of at least two different techniques such as a role-play enriched with a free topic discussion on the basis of a stimulus such as a picture or a newspaper extract. The former would test a student's communicative ability in informal situations, while the latter would check it in formal situations. As to timing, the author advocates abandoning the idea of allocating some time for preparing a role play since natural and spontaneous everyday life communication is nowadays a priority. However, a free discussion on a given topic should always be preceded by maximum five minute preparation time to allow a student to draft his/her talk. Allocating more time for preparation is not advisable because as it is apparent at the oral examinations at the Wroclaw University, students may be tempted to write whole sentences and to read them out later for examiners. Finally, the versatile examination format (student-student and student-examiner) should be implemented to ensure that a student will fully use his/her communicative potential. As the study findings showed, the student-student format may lead to unproductive and meaningless oral performance which is difficult to evaluate and the help of an examiner is then necessary. In the student-examiner format, in turn, inhibition and reluctance to speak might appear that can be avoided if an examiner allows a student to talk to another student.

Finally, it should be considered whether too great a concentration in oral testing on phonology, vocabulary or grammar does not have a detrimental effect on the communicative teaching of the language. There is also insufficient knowledge about the weighting which should be given to specific language elements at various stages of learning a language.

Nowadays not only communicative ability but also intercultural communicative ability should be tested (Sercu and Paran, 2010). In the case of the WU and the HVS students, this element of communication was not taken into consideration. It seems advisable to introduce the intercultural component into assessment in the future.

With regard to future research, it is tempting to focus on other aspects related to the speaking ability as for example an impact of the native speaker versus non-native speaker examiner on students' performance, or examining attitudes of examiners to various evaluation grid components.

## REFERENCES

- Bachman, L. F. (1990) *Fundamental Considerations in Language Testing*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Bachman, L. F. and Palmer, A. S. (1982) The construct validation of some components of communicative proficiency. *TESOL Quarterly*, 16 (4): 449-65.
- Bachman, L. F. and Cohen, A. D.. (1998) *Interfaces Between Second Language Acquisition and Language Testing Research*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Broadfoot, P. (2005). Dark alleys and blind bends. Testing the language of learning. *Language Testing*, 22 (2): 123-141.
- Canale, M. and M. Swain.(1980) Theoretical bases of communicative approaches to second language teaching and testing. *Applied Linguistics*, 1: 1-47.
- Canale, M. (1983) On some dimensions of language proficiency. In J. W. Oller, Jr (ed.) *Issues in Language Testing Research* (pp. 333-42). Rowley, Mass.: Newbury House.
- Candlin, C. N. (1986). Explaining communicative competence limits of testability? In C. W. Stansfield (ed.) *Toward Communicative Competence Testing: Proceedings of the Second TOEFL Invitational Conference* (pp. 38-57). Princeton, NJ: Educational Testing Service.
- Carroll, J. B. (1961) Fundamental considerations in testing for English language proficiency of foreign students. In *Testing the English Proficiency of Foreign Students* (pp. 30-40). Washington, DC. Center for Applied Linguistics.
- Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment*. (2002) Council of Europe: Cambridge University Press.
- Faerch, C. and Kasper, G. (1984) Two ways of defining communication strategies. *Language Learning* 34, (1): 45-63.
- Harmer, J. (2001) *Writing English Language Tests*. Essex: Pearson Education Limited.
- Harris, D. P. (1969) *Testing English as a Second Language*. New York: Mc Graw-Hill.
- Heaton, J. B. (1988) *Writing English Language Tests*. Harlow, Essex: Longman.
- Hymes, D. H. (1972) On communicative competence. In J.B Pride and J. Holmes (ed.) *Sociolinguistics* (pp. 269-29). Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- Hymes, D. H. (1973) Toward linguistic competence. *Texas Working Papers in Sociolinguistics*, Working Paper, 16. Austin, Texas: Center for Intercultural Studies in Communication, and Department of Anthropology, University of Texas. Available from <http://azargoshnasp.net/languages/talyshi/TALYSHSUMGAYIT.pdf> [Accessed January 3, 2013].
- Hymes, D. H. (1982) *Toward Linguistic Competence*. Philadelphia, Pa. Graduate School of Education, University of Pennsylvania.
- Komorowska, H. (2002) *Sprawdzanie umiejętności w nauce języka obcego – kontrola – ocena – testowanie*. Warszawa: Fraszka Edukacyjna.
- Kramsch, C. (1986) From language proficiency to interactional competence. *The Modern Language Journal*, 70 (4): 366-372.
- Krypsin, W. J. and Feldhusen, J. F. (1974) *Developing Classroom Tests: a Guide for Writing and Evaluating Test Items*. Mineapolis, Minn: Burgess.
- Lado, R. (1961) *Language Testing*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Madsen, H. S. (1983) *Techniques in Testing*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Munby, J. (1978) *Communicative Syllabus Design*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Savignon, S. J. (1983). *Communicative Competence: Theory and Classroom Practice*. Reading, Mass. Addison-Wesley.

- Sercu, L. and Paran, A. (2010). *Testing the Untestable in Language Education*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.
- Tarone, E. E. (1981) Some thoughts on the notion of communicative strategy. *TESOL Quarterly* 15: 285-295.
- Widdowson, H. G. (1983) *Learning Purpose and Language Use*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

**Malgorzata Jedynak** works as an academic in English Studies Department, University of Wrocław in Poland. In 2004 she obtained her PhD degree in applied linguistics with the thesis entitled *Critical Period Revisited: the Impact of Age on the Final Attainment in L2 Pronunciation*. Her research papers are related to the acquisition of L2 aspects and skills by foreign language learners. The recent research she is involved in concerns different aspects related to the acquisition of L1 and L2 by the visually impaired learners: the choice and use of learning strategies, the role of autonomy in the learning process, teaching techniques implemented in a L2 classroom, the issue of giftedness in a foreign language. Email: gosiajedynak@poczta.onet.pl



# OUTSIDE MATTER COMPONENTS OF ENGLISH-LATVIAN DICTIONARIES COMPILED BEFORE WORLD WAR II

---

LAURA KARPINSKA

University of Latvia, Latvia

**Abstract.** The study focuses on the investigation of outside matter components included in the general English-Latvian dictionaries published before World War II (WWII). The first English-Latvian dictionary was published in 1924, six more dictionaries of various sizes and structural complexity were compiled before WWII which temporarily interrupted the development of the English-Latvian lexicographic tradition. Most of the dictionaries compiled during this period are small, only three of them contain 20-30 000 headwords, the others are considerably smaller. The goal of the study is to identify, classify and describe the functions of the outside matter components included in these dictionaries. The framework of the analysis was based on Svensén's (2009) classification of outside matter components focusing on the functions rather than the location of these components. The analysis revealed some typical features related to the scope and location of the outside matter components of various functions encountered in the front and back matters of the seven ELDs published before the outbreak of WWII.

**Keywords:** English-Latvian dictionaries, lexicographic tradition, megastructure of dictionaries, outside matter components of dictionaries

## INTRODUCTION

Apart from the main headword list dictionaries normally contain a number of outside matter components of various length, contents and function. These components can be located in the front, middle or back matter of the dictionary and, alongside with the main headword list, form the megastructure of the dictionary.

The study focuses on the investigation of the outside matter components in the English-Latvian dictionaries (ELDs) compiled in the initial period of the development of the English-Latvian lexicographic tradition. The tradition started in 1924 with the publication of the first general ELD compiled by Dravnieks (henceforth referred to as Dravnieks, 1924), six more dictionaries of various volume and complexity were published prior to WWII (Godiņš, 1929; Karlis Roze and Klaudija Roze, 1931; Curiks and Bangerska, 1937; Turkina, 1937; Akuraters, 1940; Pelcis, 1940). Most of these dictionaries are very small – only Dravnieks', Turkina's and Pelcis' dictionaries contain 20 000 to 30 000 headwords, the others fall in the category of small and very small dictionaries.

However, they play an important role in establishing some megastructural features of the whole lexicographic tradition.

It should be noted that the period from 1924 till 1940 or, roughly speaking, before WWII has been selected for the study because it constitutes the first period of its development which was disrupted by the outbreak of WWII. After the war several ELDs were published from 1945 to 1947 outside Latvia, mostly in the refugee camps in Germany. These dictionaries, despite being small and obviously limited in all possible ways, still write a very peculiar page in the history of English-Latvian lexicography. No new dictionaries were published in Latvia till 1948 when the first repeated edition of Turkina's dictionary appeared. The first newly compiled ELD published in Latvia was released only in 1957.

Thus, the goal of the study is to identify, classify and describe the functions of the outside matter components included in the ELDs published before WWII. To reach this goal the following research question was addressed: what outside matter components are encountered in the ELDs published during this period and what are their functions?

The following research tasks have been set to reach the goal of the study: to perform a review of the existing research in the field of the major structural levels of dictionaries with the focus on the megastructure and outside matter components; to collect samples of lexicographic material for the analysis of outside matter components encountered in the ELDs published before WWII; to specify the criteria of analysis and analyse the lexicographic material employing the selected criteria.

## THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

### 1 MEGASTRUCTURE AND OUTSIDE MATTER COMPONENTS OF DICTIONARIES

Metalexicographic literature distinguishes among three major structural levels of dictionaries: microstructure (the structure of the entry), macrostructure (the complete set of headwords) and megastructure (the whole dictionary from cover to cover). According to Hartmann (2001: 61) the megastructure of a dictionary is 'the all-embracing textual framework which in addition to the central macrostructure also includes front matter, middle matter and back matter'. The front, middle and back matter constitute the so called *outside matter* components of the dictionary (e.g. Cop, 1989: 761; Hartmann and James, 1998; Svensén, 2009). Only the front and the back matter components of the megastructural level of dictionaries will be further investigated in the present study since bilingual dictionaries (and also the English-Latvian dictionaries) traditionally do not contain any middle matter components described by Hausmann and Wiegand ([1989] 2003: 213) as 'those immediate constituents of the whole dictionary text which are inserted in the (central) word list but which are not part of this word list'.

It is relevant to note that the division of dictionary structure into three basic levels is not unanimously accepted by the whole lexicographic community. While, for instance, Hartmann and James ([1998] 2001), Hartmann (2001) and Svensén (2009) distinguish among three basic structural levels, such scholars as, for instance, Nielsen (1990), Bejoint (2000), Landau (2001), Jackson (2002), Atkins and Rundell (2008), single out two structural levels of the dictionary without employing the term megastructure when describing the overall structure of the dictionary. However, the three-tiered division, and the further subdivision of the megastructural level into separate outside matter components has been adopted for the purpose of this study.

It should be added that apart from the basic structural levels discussed above, some scholars (e.g. Hausmann and Wiegand, [1989] 2003; Bergenholtz and Tarp, 1995; Nielsen, [1999] 2003; Hartmann, 2001) refer also to several subsidiary structural levels, for instance, cross-reference structure (or mediostructure), access structure (or search path) and addressing structure, however, these structural levels will not be further investigated in this study.

Hausmann and Wiegand ([1989] 2003: 211) observe that in most dictionaries 'the front matter is not as a whole a functional part of the dictionary, but rather an arbitrary set of functional text types'. Cop (1989: 762) also underscores the heterogenic character of the outside matter as well as the fact that separate components can contain linguistic as well as encyclopaedic information. Only one component of the outside matter is generally viewed as indispensable, namely, the *user's guide* or the component informing the user about the structure and usage of the dictionary (e.g. Cop 1989: 761; Hausmann and Wiegand, [1989] 2003: 213; Gouws and Prinsloo, 2005: 57). The *preface* and the *table of contents* are also occasionally mentioned as relevant informative outside matter components (e.g. Nielsen, 1990: 55), though much less frequently. It can be concluded that in comparison to the main entry list (the macrostructure) and the information provided in each entry (the microstructure), mandatory for every dictionary, the front and back matters of the dictionary can contain various components of linguistic or encyclopaedic contents, or informative function; also they can be located either in the front or the back matter of the dictionary.

Distinction can also be made between *integrated* and *non-integrated* outside matter components (Kammerer and Wiegand, 1998 in Gouws and Prinsloo, 2005: 59–61). According to the scholars the outside matter component is viewed as integrated if it contains information that supplements the one provided in the central wordlist (e.g. personal names, grammatical data); however, if it does not present a direct link with the contents of the central headword list, it is considered to be non-integrated (e.g. lists of weights, measures, symbols, etc.). Opinions differ about the necessity of the non-integrated outside matter components. Gouws and Prinsloo (2005: 58) acknowledge the optional character of these outside matter components, but still maintain that they can 'play an important

role to enhance the quality of the information transfer to which the dictionary is committed'. Nielsen (1990: 55–57), on the contrary, holds that if an obvious link between the headword list and these components cannot be established, they can be excluded from the outside matter of the dictionary.

## 2 SVENSÉN'S CLASSIFICATION OF OUTSIDE MATTER COMPONENTS

The distinction into integrated and non-integrated outside matter components is too general to serve as a basis for the analysis of the megastructural components of ELDs. A more detailed and comprehensive classification of outside matter components is provided by Svensén (2009: 379–386). Stressing the irrelevance of the physical location of these components (in the front, middle or back matter), Svensén suggests a classification according to their function which contains four main categories:

- 1) components providing information on the language(s) described in the dictionary;
- 2) *metafunctional* components providing details about the dictionary and its use;
- 3) components constituting the access structure;
- 4) components with some other function.

The outside matter components belonging to the first category (components providing information on the language(s) described in the dictionary) in general terms provide similar information to the one offered in the central headword list. These components fall in two subgroups, namely, the components containing information that could have been distributed among separate entries, but still have been concentrated in survey entries, inflectional paradigms or simply outside the headword list (e.g. geographical and personal names); and components providing 'general linguistic information' and having a more independent function like, for instance, pronunciation, word formation and grammar rules (ibid.: 380).

The *preface* and the *user's guide* are the most relevant metafunctional outside matter components providing details about the dictionary and its use. The preface, according to Svensén (ibid.), should include information about the purpose, the intended user group, etc. The user's guide which is often viewed as an indispensable metafunctional component of the dictionary according to Landau (2001: 149) has 'to describe as clearly as possible all the kinds of information included in the dictionary, show the reader how to interpret the data given'.

The third category: components constituting the access structure contains various kinds of indexes which 'offer an additional entry point to the material contained in the lemma list' (Svensén, 2009: 383) and make the dictionary poly-accessible. Also the table of contents, the so called *running heads* (the first and/or the last word or part of the word provided on the top of the page) can be mentioned as components of the dictionary access structure.

The last category of Svensén's classification (components with some other function) comprises outside matter components of various, often not very clearly identifiable functions. These components are predominantly of encyclopaedic contents. Some samples mentioned by Landau (2001: 149–151), Cop (1989: 163–164) and Svensén (2009: 386) include biographical names, colleges and universities, a list of US presidents, signs, symbols, etc. According to the scholars, such components are more frequently found in American general purpose dictionaries. Svensén (*ibid.*) also notes that the back matters of small bilingual dictionaries can also contain small phrasebooks as well as information on currency, climate, geography, culture, etc. The functions of some of these components, their link to the subject matter of the dictionary and, accordingly, their necessity has been questioned by several scholars (e.g. Nielsen, 1990: 55–57; Svensén, 2009: 386).

## METHOD

The framework of the analysis of the outside matter components of the ELDs compiled before WWII is based on the classification suggested by Svensén, however, some changes have been introduced. Two new categories have been employed instead of Svensén's category 'components providing information on the language(s) described in the dictionary', namely, 'components providing linguistic information' and 'components providing encyclopaedic information'; the category 'components with some other function' is extended to include all the outside matter components without a clear function and, possibly, also not clearly linked to the subject matter of the general bilingual dictionaries discussed in the study.

The framework of the analysis is based on five major categories (presented here with some typical samples of outside matter components):

- I. *Metafunctional* components providing details about the dictionary and its use (*preface, user's guide* or its separate elements)
- II. Components providing encyclopaedic information (*lists of personal names, geographical names, nationalities, etc.*)
- III. Components providing linguistic information on the language described (*grammar, word-formation rules, lists of irregular verbs, etc.*)
- IV. Components with some other (or unclear) function (*lists of measures, signs, symbols, etc.*)
- V. Components belonging to the access structure (*the table of contents, the running heads, thumb indexes, etc.*)

It is relevant to note that the list of the concrete components associated with each of the categories is intentionally left open-ended since the descriptive analysis of the outside matter components of the selected dictionaries is intended to reveal the whole scope of components belonging to each of the categories.

It will also be traced if the components have been included in the front or back matter of the dictionary to detect some typical tendencies concerning their location in the outside matter of the dictionaries.

Thus, the analysis of the outside matter components is composed to reveal:

- 1) the scope of the outside matter components included in the dictionaries;
- 2) the typical set and functions of the outside matter components found in the ELDs published during the first stage of the lexicographic tradition;
- 3) the typical position of the components (the front (FM) or the back matter (BM)).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Seven general ELDs were published from 1924 to 1940. Only three of them contain twenty to thirty thousand headwords, the others are much smaller, but all of them, even the smallest ones, contain some outside matter components. The Appendix presents the data collected and structured according to the framework of the analysis.

The data show that not all the general ELDs compiled during this period contain such clearly distinguishable metafunctional components as the *preface* and the *user's guide*. Only four out of the seven dictionaries contain a *preface* (Godiņš, 1929; Roze and Roze, 1931; Curiks and Bangerska, 1937; Pelcis, 1940) and two contain a *user's guide* (Dravnieks, 1924 and Turkina, 1937). However, it should be noted that both components may be presented without a distinct title. Often the dictionaries contain either the *preface* or the *user's guide*, besides, their contents and functions can overlap and be hard to distinguish. For instance, the information on the word-stock or the types of lexical items included in the dictionary (typically provided in the *preface*), in these dictionaries may appear in the *user's guide* (or a cluster of separate components which could be viewed as the *user's guide*). Notably, all the dictionaries, even those without a distinct *user's guide*, provide a *pronunciation key* and five out of seven a *list of labels* used in the dictionary. The systematic inclusion of the *pronunciation key* obviously indicates that pronunciation has been viewed as a relevant aspect of the description of the English language. This interest in phonetics and accordingly the phonetic description employed in the ELDs is linked to the fact that in the 1920s phonetics specialists from London University were invited to Latvia to train phonetics teachers (e.g. Reinholds, 1922: 87). As a result of this educational programme which established the tradition of adherence to the International Phonetic Alphabet in English-Latvian lexicography, this phonetic transcription has been applied in the ELDs published since 1931, namely, Roze and Roze (1931), Curiks and Bangerska (1937), and Pelcis (1940), i.e. during the period discussed in the present study, as well as in all the ELDs published in Latvia since 1940.

The information provided in the *prefaces* of the four dictionaries containing this component, is mostly quite scanty and fragmentary. Only occasionally the *preface* presents some relevant information about the purpose of the dictionary, the components of the outside matter, the target user group, etc. Five dictionaries provide a *list of labels*, but a closer scrutiny of the lists reveals that most of them contain grammar labels and metalinguistic abbreviations, e.g.:

*acc.* (accusative), *aux.* (auxiliary), *gr(am).* (grammar), *indic.* (indicative), *m.* (masculine), *nom.* (nominative), *pl.* (plural), *sk.*(skaties [see]), *v.refl.* (verb reflexive) (Turkina, 1937).

The other types of labels – regional, domain, register, temporal, etc. appear only in three dictionaries. The two largest dictionaries, namely Dravnieks (1924) and Turkina (1937), include the longest list of these types of labels, for instance,

*angl.* (English), *Lo.* (London), *artill.* (artillery), *phls.* (philosophy), *surv.* (surveying), *sl.* (slang), *poet.* (poetry) (Dravnieks, 1924),

*Amer.* (Americanism), *elect.* (electricity), *mus.* (music), *jur.* (law term), *fig.* (figuratively), *bibl.* (biblical) (Turkina, 1937),

*Engl.* (England), *U.S.A.* (United States of America) (Pelcis, 1940).

It should be added that some of the domain and temporal labels in Dravnieks' dictionary (1924) are presented by symbols, for example, crossed swords (military term), a flower (botanical term), a book (scientific term), a cross (obsolete word).

This review reveals that the distinction between the *preface* and the *user's guide* as two separate metafunctional components of megastructure is not yet established at this initial stage of the English-Latvian lexicographic tradition. However, the location of the *preface* and the *user's guide* (or the cluster of separate components functioning as the *user's guide*), is uniform: they are always provided in the front matter of the dictionary.

The outside matter components providing encyclopaedic information which could be incorporated in the general headword list are very scarcely presented in the ELDs published during this period, but if included, they always appear in the back matter, thus establishing a typical megastructural feature characteristic of the whole lexicographic tradition. Only three dictionaries provide such lists of lexical items: *numerals* (cardinal and ordinal) are provided by Dravnieks (1924); a list including various types of *abbreviations* (e.g. A. B., B.C., Adm., cur., Dr., Fri., etc.) is included in Turkina's dictionary (1937); but a small dictionary compiled by Akuraters (1940) provides the longest list of encyclopaedic outside matter components, namely, *days of the week*, *months*, *continents*, *countries and nations of Europe*. It is obvious that during this period the outside matter components of encyclopaedic contents are not viewed as relevant. Partly it could be explained by the small (and often due to practical considerations intentionally limited) volume of most ELDs published before WWII. Also worth noting is the fact that the most

relevant vocabulary items found in such lists (e.g. numerals, days of the week, months, the most common abbreviations) can be found in the macrostructure of even the smallest dictionaries. The compilers might have chosen to avoid some (perhaps, unnecessary) repetition in these dictionaries of limited volume. It might be added that in the ELDs published during the Soviet period and after regaining of independence in 1991, the amount of such components has grown considerably.

The components providing linguistic information on the language described (English in all the cases because all the ELDs discussed in this study are targeted at the Latvian speech community) are encountered much more frequently. These components almost always appear in the front matter of the dictionary, *pronunciation rules, lists of principal forms of irregular verbs and the rules for conjugation of verbs*, which appear in most of the dictionaries, can be listed as the most widespread ones. Turkina (1937) presents the widest scope of this type of components, including the *list of principal forms of irregular verbs, conjugation of verbs and auxiliary verbs, plural of nouns, gender of nouns and degrees of comparison of adjectives*. Noteworthy is also the information on word-formation (by affixation) provided in the front matter of Pelcis (1940). It includes lists of prefixes and suffixes classified by meaning or part of speech of the derivatives, some explanatory notes and examples are provided as well, e.g.:

-**able** “ko var”, “kas iespējams”, pm. **eat** ēst; **eatable** ēdams (ko var ēst),

-**ion** “-ība” pm. **protect** aizsargāt: **protection** aizsardzība,

-**er (superlative)** superlatīvā pakāpe **quickest** (tā pat kā īpašības vārdam).

Another interesting example of linguistic outside matter components is a list of collocations (verbs+prepositions) provided in the dictionary by Curiks and Bangerska (1937). This is also the only representative of the whole group of components that is located in the back matter.

The reasonably wide scope of the outside matter components containing linguistic information on the English language encountered in these ELDs reveals that the compilers tried to adjust the dictionaries to the needs of the intended users, obviously, learners of the English language (however, language learners as the intended users are mentioned only in three dictionaries). Their typical location in the front matter of the dictionaries also underlines their relevance in the view of the compilers.

Very few components with some other function can be found in the ELDs analysed in this study. In fact, only two dictionaries contain components which could fall in this category, namely, *correction of mistakes* (Turkina, 1937) and *reading of numbers in English* (Pelcis, 1940). The former is self-explanatory, while the latter, providing some short instructions for the Latvian learner on how to read and understand dates, years and telephone numbers in the English language, obviously also attempts to meet the needs of a learner of a foreign language.



Apart from the alphabetic arrangement of headwords in all the general ELDs, the only other component of access structure in four of the dictionaries is the *running heads* or the first and/or the last headword or its part provided at the top of the page targeted at the facilitation of the lookup process.

## CONCLUSIONS

The analysis of the outside matter components in the ELDs published before WWII reveals some typical features of the scope and functions of these components as established by the first seven dictionaries of the lexicographic tradition. However, it is also obvious that the megastructure of the ELDs is still in the process of formation.

Not all the ELDs compiled during this period contain such relevant metafunctional components as the *preface* and the *user's guide*, a clear distinction between these components is also not yet established and their contents may overlap. However, the inclusion of the *pronunciation key* in all and the *list of labels* in nearly all the ELDs published during this period reveals a clear tendency towards a certain group of elements forming the *user's guides* of the ELDs.

The outside matter components providing encyclopaedic information are very scarcely presented in these ELDs, but if included, typically appear in the back matter. One of the possible reasons for the exclusion of such components could be the small volume of the dictionaries.

The components providing linguistic information on the language described are encountered much more frequently and almost always appear in the front matter of the dictionary. The comparatively wide scope of these components reveals the compilers' willingness to adjust the dictionaries to the needs of language learners.

These early ELDs still do not show any signs of being supplemented with some, possibly, unnecessary outside matter components of unclear function. This tendency unfortunately develops in the later stages of the development of this lexicographic tradition.

It can be concluded that the analysis reveals the scope, some typical sets and location of the outside matter components of various functions, some typical megastructural features can already be traced, but unfortunately the further development of the lexicographic tradition was deeply affected by the outbreak of WWII.

## REFERENCES

- Atkins, B. T. S. and Rundell, M. (2008) *The Oxford Guide to Practical Lexicography*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Bejoint, H. (2000) *Modern Lexicography*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Bergenholtz, H. and Tarp, S. (1995) *Manual of Specialized Lexicography: The Preparation of Specialized Dictionaries*. Amsterdam, Philadelphia: Benjamins.
- Cop, M. (1989) Linguistic and Encyclopedic Information Not Included in the Dictionary Articles. In F. J. Hausmann, O. Reichmann, H. E. Wiegand, L. Zgusta (eds.) *Wörterbücher. Dictionaries. Dictionnaires. International Encyclopedia of Lexicography*. Vol. 3 (pp. 761-767). Berlin, New York: Walter de Gruyter.
- Gouws, R. H. and Prinsloo, D. J. (2005) *Principles and Practice of South African Lexicography*. Stellenbosch: SUN PreSS.
- Hartmann, R. R. K. (2001) *Teaching and Researching Lexicography*. Essex: Pearson Education Limited.
- Hartmann, R. R. K. and James, G. (2001) *Dictionary of Lexicography*. London: Routledge.
- Hausmann, F. J. and Wiegand, H. E. (2003 [1989]) Component Parts and Structures of General Monolingual Dictionaries: A Survey. In R. R. K. Hartmann (ed.) *Lexicography. Critical Concepts*. Vol. 3. *Lexicography, Metalexicography and Reference Science* (pp. 207-254). London, New York: Routledge.
- Jackson, H. (2002) *Lexicography. An Introduction*. London, New York: Routledge.
- Landau, I. S. (2001) *Dictionaries: The Art and Craft of Lexicography*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Nielsen, S. (1990) Lexicographic Macrostructures. *Hermes (Journal of Language and Communication Studies)* 4: 49-66.
- Nielsen, S. (2003 [1999]) Mediostructures in Bilingual LSP Dictionaries. In R. R. K. Hartmann (ed.) *Lexicography. Critical Concepts*. Vol.3. *Lexicography: Lexicography, Metalexicography and Reference Science* (pp. 270-294). London, New York: Routledge.
- Reinholds, A. (1922) Angļu fonetika latviešu skolās. *Izglītības Ministrijas Mēnešraksts* (3): 86-87.
- Svensén, B. (2009) *A Handbook of Lexicography: The Theory and Practice of Dictionary-Making*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

## ENGLISH-LATVIAN DICTIONARIES ANALYSED

- Akuraters, L. (1940) *Angliski-latviska vārdnīca*. Rīga: Roze.
- Curiks, J. and Bangerska, I. (1937) *Angliski-latviskā vārdnīca*. Rīga: Valters un Rapa.
- Dravnieks, J. (1924) *Angļu-latvju vārdnīca*. Rīga: Valters un Rapa.
- Godiņš, E. (1929) *Angļu-latvju vārdnīca*. Rīga: Ikdiēna.
- Pelcis, V. (1940) *Praktiskā angļu-latviešu vārdnīca*. Rīga, Jelgava: Biogrāfiskā archiva apgāds.
- Roze, K. and Roze, K. (1931) *Angliski-latviska vārdnīca*. Rīga: Austra.
- Turkina, E. (1937) *Angliski-latviska vārdnīca*. Rīga: Valters un Rapa.

## APPENDIX

### Outside matter components in the ELDs compiled from 1924 to 1940

	Dravnieks (1924)	Godiņš (1929)	Roze, Roze (1931)	Curiks, Bangerska (1937)	Turkina (1937)	Akuraters (1940)	Pelcis (1940)
<b>I. Metafunctional components</b>							
preface		+	+	+			+
user's guide	+				+		+
- pronunciation key	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
- list of labels	+		+	+	+		+
<b>II. Components providing encyclopaedic information</b>							
abbreviations					BM		
numerals	BM						
days of the week						BM	
months						BM	
continents						BM	
countries and nations of Europe						BM	
<b>III. Components providing linguistic information</b>							
alphabet	FM						
pronunciation rules	FM	FM	FM				FM
grammar rules:	FM		FM		FM		FM
- conjugation of verbs	FM		FM		FM		FM
- conjugation of aux. verbs					FM		
- plural of nouns					FM		
- gender of nouns					FM		
- degrees of comp. of adj.					FM		
lists of irregular verbs	FM		FM	FM	FM	FM	
word-formation (affixation)							FM
list of verb + preposition				BM			
<b>IV. Components with some other function</b>							
reading of numbers in English							FM
correction of mistakes					BM		
<b>V. Components belonging to access structure</b>							
'running heads'	+			+	+		+

**Laura Karpinska** (Dr. Philol., Lecturer) is currently working at the University of Latvia. Her research interests include lexicography, lexicology and corpus linguistics. Email: [laurak@apollo.lv](mailto:laurak@apollo.lv)

# GENRE ANALYSIS OF QUALITY ASSURANCE (ISO 9000) DOCUMENTATION

---

JANA KUZMINA

University of Latvia and Riga Technical College, Latvia

**Abstract.** The paper presents the results of cross-sectional empirical research exploring the network of genres in the quality assurance domain. The theoretical basis for this research has been to a large extent grounded in the English for Specific Purposes (ESP) genre school. The empirical research method is a two-staged discourse analysis. During the first stage the data collection tools were semi-structured interviews with four Lloyd Register Quality Assurance (LRQA) auditors aimed at identifying the recurrent genres pertinent to the domain and describing the social context in which they occur. The second stage involved the genre analysis, namely, moves and steps analysis, in order to define the communicative aims and rhetorical organization of assessment reports. The obtained results highlight the significance of the social context for conducting the genre analysis in the quality assurance domain. They reveal that the genres in the network have hierarchical relations, with the quality standard being the dominating one. Moreover, discursive practices facilitate uncovering constitutive intertextual relations and rhetorical organisation. The topicality of the theme is determined by the scarcity of previous research in the quality assurance domain and the needs to train managers to develop their communicative language competence.

**Key words:** quality assurance, genre analysis, moves and steps, intertextuality

## INTRODUCTION

In highly competitive market conditions, quality assurance has infiltrated most business domains aiming not only at product quality but also at developing, implementing and monitoring a quality management system within an enterprise which, in turn, considerably increases the target audience of the present research. All level managers are involved in the quality assurance genres processing which is required for documenting the procedures, ensuring knowledge management and improving performance. The empirical findings of the present study reveal that the existing research in the domain mostly focuses on the implementation of the quality management in a certain business domain or entity, listing the pertinent genres. However, their intertextual relations, rhetorical organisation and typical linguistic features have not been explored. The interviewed assessors (auditors) admit that they use sample papers and the existing forms to create new reports after audits and do not have conventions for documentation compilation.

Thus, the abovementioned circumstances have determined the twofold aim of the research which is:

- to describe the social context of the quality assurance domain;
- to conduct a genre analysis of the assessment reports in order to identify their communicative purposes, intertextual relations and specify the rhetorical organization patterns.

As stated by the research participants, the research findings may be applicable to improve the professional communicative competence of quality assurance managers and specialists by designing a course and materials for in-house training to enable acquiring communicative language competence and successful functioning in a meaningful job-related context.

## GENRE SCHOOLS

In contemporary linguistics, the development of the genre concept has significantly been facilitated by the Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), New Rhetoric School and the ESP movement. The founders and supporters have shaped the approach from sentence-based through discourse-based and rhetorical to social by analysing the communicative event and linguistic features pertaining to it, which is reflected in the present study.

The SFL genre theory or Australian genre theory emerged roughly at the same time as the ESP and New Rhetoric studies; however, the three theories have developed independently having different background and implications at their basis. According to SFL researchers, systemic functional linguistics reflects the relationship between forms and their functions in social settings. The linguistic forms are mutually influenced by the social context, defined by Halliday as field (the activity or the domain), tenor (the participants involved) and mode (the channel of communication) (Halliday, 1978; Halliday and Hasan, 1989). The recent SFL research activities (Rose, 2012) propose a framework of stages and phases in genre analysis, resembling the one suggested by Swales (1990, 2004), e.g. *Create A Research Space (CARS)* model or moves and steps framework for genre analysis which proves the fact that the boundaries between the tenets of these schools are vague (as presented by Acevedo in the 2nd LinC Summer School in Systemic Functional Linguistics Workshop in Cardiff School of English, Communication and Philosophy).

Researchers in ESP, in their turn, have been interested in genre as a tool for analyzing and teaching spoken and written language required of non-native speakers in academic and professional settings (Bhatia, 1993; Flowerdew, 1993; Dudley-Evans, 1988; Swales, 1990). The scholars highlight the significance of the communicative events driven by their communicative purposes and characterised by typical formal structures recognised by other discourse participants.

Hyland (2002) finds similarities between ESP and New Rhetoric School in terms of Bakhtinian *dialogism* and Kristeva's *intertextuality*. Moreover, Bloor (1998) claims that with its emphasis on the communicative purpose and formal properties of texts, the ESP approach might be seen as an application of SFL (cited in Hyland, 2002: 115). Similar to SFL, the ESP scholars are driven by applied implications.

Being an ESP practitioner, the author of the paper adheres to the views of the ESP School as the guiding principles complementing the theoretical framework with Martin's (2000) concepts since social context and functional language use within formalised structures are equally important for the present research allowing one to look not only into contextual relations, but also into recurrent structural elements and the textualisation processes of the genre.

## 1 THE CONCEPT OF GENRE

The definition of *genre* from the point of view of applied linguistics, seminal for this study, was first crystallised by Swales, who correlated genre to its communicative event expressing a set of communicative purpose(s) and perceived by the discourse community (Swales, 1990). Later definitions do not differ much, for instance, Roseberry (1997) asserts that genre as a property of a text is identified as a sequence of moves or segments where each move accomplishes some part of the overall communicative purpose of the text.

Bruce (2008) summarised the twofold approach to genre and genre analysis and distinguished (a) *social genre*, and (b) *cognitive genre*, the former relating to communicative purposes, the latter focusing on the internal organization. For the present study, both the genre communicative aims and rhetorical organization are of equal importance, thus the theories arising from different genre schools should not be regarded in isolation.

Bhatia highlights the complexity of genre analysis by noting that 'genre studies range from a close linguistic study of texts as product' to a dynamic manifestation of professional discursive processes (Bhatia, 2002: 14).

Therefore, a thorough and consistent exploration of wider linguistic context and context modeling should be provided and genre intertextual relations have to be investigated.

## 2 GENRE ANALYSIS

To deal with the emerging genres in the rapidly developing business domains to which quality assurance belongs, Bhatia proposes to place the given genre in a *social context*, involving the discourse community, i.e. the subject matter experts, users, writers of these and related genres (Bhatia, 1998: 22-24). Afterwards, the situational/ contextual analysis has to be further refined by defining the speaker/writer of the text, their relationships and goals, identifying occupational placement of the community and the network of surrounding texts that may form

the background to this particular genre. Moving on to lower levels, he subdivides the linguistic analysis into three levels: analysis of lexico-grammatical features, analysis of text-patterning or textualisation and structural interpretation of the text-genre.

Considering the external features of genre and placing genre in the situational context, Swales (2004) attempts to systematize concepts and processes related to it and proposed several terminological clarifications, the umbrella term being '*genre constellations*'. They include *genre hierarchies*, *genre sets*, *genre chains*, *genre networks/ systems*, and *sub-genre*.

According to Swales (2004: 13-14), *hierarchy* implies ordering different genres in the order of importance and prestige, 'their perceived quality differences and rankings' (ibid.: 18). The ranking may differ in various spheres and geographical locations.

Placing genres in the logical order of occurrence, 'their chronological ordering, especially if one genre is antecedent for another' (ibid.: 18) forms *genre chains*. Temporary or individual ordering combines into *genre sets* (ibid.: 23), with communicative event(s) being central. Other scholars (e.g. Berkenkotter, 2001) use the term '*system*', applying it to the intermediate level of units of institutions.

The concept of genre networks has been grounded in the Bakhtinian notion of *dialogism*, which is a vivid example of the fact that genres do not stand in isolation. As Swales (2004) writes, 'they turn out to be the totality of genres available in a particular sector' (ibid.: 22).

The concept was further developed by Kristeva (1980) and the term *intertextuality* was proposed. She refers to texts in terms of two axes: a horizontal axis connecting the author and the reader of a text, and a vertical axis, which connects the text to other texts (ibid.: 69). She argues that rather than confining our attention to the structure of a text we should study its 'structuration' (how the structure came into being). This involves locating it 'within the totality of previous or synchronic texts' (ibid.).

Fairclough (1992) mentions two types of intertextuality, i.e. *manifest*, where the source is explicitly mentioned, and *constitutive*, where the source is kept hidden, the latter being of importance for establishing extra-textual connections among genres.

The description of the social context of genre is followed by identifying its *communicative aims*. Bhatia (2001: 81) notes that they can be 'specified at various levels based on an increasingly delicate degree of specificity, which makes it possible for genres to be identified either narrowly or more broadly, depending upon the objectives of the investigation', thus explaining the nature of moves and steps in rhetorical analysis.

Next line of research, according to Hyland (2002: 116), is to explore lexico-grammar and discursive patterns to identify the 'recognisable structural identity' of genre, i.e. '*generic integrity*' (Bhatia, 1999: 22).

Each genre may consist of smaller parts with an independent communicative purpose, i.e. sub-genre. Based on the exploration of the introductions of research articles, Swales (1990, 2004) developed and later modified his moves theory, the move corresponding to a single communicative event with a certain communicative purpose and steps being structural objectives to achieve it within one sub-genre or genre. He proposed a structural framework, commonly known as *CARS model* (Swales, 1990), consisting of the following moves:

- establishing a territory;
- establishing a niche;
- occupying the niche. (cited in Bhatia, 1998: 83)

Exploring the generic integrity further, Martin relates the communicative aims with texture, claiming that 'genre is concerned with systems of social processes, where the principles for relating social processes are to do with texture- the ways in which field, mode and tenor variables are phased together in a text' (Martin, 2000: 12). Following Halliday's theory, Martin (2000) proposes to identify metafunctions with *field*, *mode* and *tenor*, i.e. ideational, textual and interpersonal respectively, claiming that texture is linked with discursive processes. His rhetorical organisation patterns are associated and aligned with metafunctions as well. The basic division is between *particulate*, *prosodic* and *periodic* structure within the genre, of which particulate will be further considered revealing the relations between the communicative aims and rhetorical organisation (*ibid.*).

*Particulate structure* corresponds to ideational meaning. It organises a text segmentally into orbital or serial patterns, which is a modification of thematic progression, i.e. orbital has one theme and several rhemes, or constant theme progression (Danes, 1974; Firbas, 1974; Halliday and Hasan, 1976; Halliday, 1993), whereas serial ideally has one theme and one rheme and progresses linearly (Martin, 2000).

To conclude, presently there are three main schools involved in genre analysis, i.e. SFL, ESP, and New Rhetoric Studies. Their tenets overlap and all of them are driven by various applied implications. The joint definition of genre considers it as a social event with clearly distinct communicative purposes, rhetorical structure and lexico-grammatical means accounting for generic integrity, recognised by the members of discourse communities. Although conventionalism is the key principle in this definition, genre dynamism, hybridity and embedding should not be disregarded as it is dictated by a dynamic complexity of discursive practices of professional and workplace communities. Genre should be distinguished from a text type by recognizing the external features of a text. In genre analysis, linguists propose to undertake a holistic approach and consider a number of perspectives in an integrated manner. The author intends to describe the social context of the genre in question, proceed with identification of the communicative aim and move and step analysis, and unveil textualisation processes pertinent to them.



## METHODS

The present research is of qualitative nature as it is aimed at describing systematised language use in a professional setting, emphasising the wider linguistic and local situational (social) contexts.

In order to address the aims set prior to commencing the research activities, i.e. to describe the social context in which the quality assurance genres occur and identify their communicative purposes, intertextual relations and rhetorical organization, a two-staged discourse analysis was conducted. The first stage comprised semi-structured interviews with three assessors and one lead assessor at LRQA Riga and enabled the author to describe the discursive processes in the domain implementing Bhatia's (1998, 2002) theoretical considerations, identify the recurrent genres, organize them into a hierarchical network employing Swales (2004) framework and trace their intertextual relations applying Kristeva's (1980) and Fairclough's (1992) concepts. The second stage involved Swales' (1990) moves and steps analysis as well as Martin's (2000) rhetorical pattern analysis.

Sampling of the research is characterized as *homogeneous* and *typical* (Dornyei, 2007: 127) and was determined by feasibility. The interviews contained one iteration. The obtained data determined the corpus composition for further genre analysis. It comprised ISO: 9001 Quality Assurance Standard, 5 quality manuals, 5 quality policies, 5 assessment reports. The Quality Assurance Standard, manuals, policies (designed in software development, road building and metalwork companies in Latvia) and assessment reports were used to describe the social context. Genre analysis of assessment reports consisting of 14,887 tokens was undertaken; other genres were eliminated due to corporate non-disclosure policies. Moreover, the abovementioned genre was selected since it is used by the discourse community participants at all levels, i.e. by external assessors, company top management, quality manager and heads of relevant departments on-site.

## DISCUSSION AND RESULTS

### 1 DESCRIBING SOCIAL CONTEXT OF GENRE

Summarising the results of the semi-structured interviews and describing the situational context, the assessors claim that quality assurance (QA), in its broadest sense, is any action taken to prevent quality problems. In practice, this means devising systems for carrying out tasks which directly affect the product, service or management system quality. ISO 9000 is a series of QA standards issued first in 1987 to systematize quality requirements and reduce the number of audits, thus ensuring further research activities. The interviewed assessors state that in order to implement a quality system for an organization, firstly, it has to be developed; secondly, it has to be appropriately documented (in the form of quality manual, policies, procedures, and reference information); thirdly, the staff

has to be informed, instructed, and adequately trained to use it. Finally, it has to be certified and afterwards recertified by an external authorized body to ensure the system efficiency. Refining the situational context, the key documentation drawn up in the process of quality system design and implementation is a quality standard, a quality manual, policies, procedures, external auditors' report (AR) and a certificate of approval.

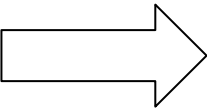
A quality standard is issued by the International Organisation for Standardization and is available through national standards bodies. Its target audience is quality managers, chief operational officers, chief executive officers, quality consultants, internal and external auditors. The overall communicative aim is to set requirements for a company to comply with while implementing a quality management system within the frames of management responsibility, resource management, product realization, measurement, analysis and improvement (Standard ISO 9001, sections 4-8). The standard predefines the creation of a quality policy (QP) and quality manual (QM) with the following sub-genres: control of documents (4.2.3), control of records (4.2.4), internal audits (8.2.2), control of nonconforming product/ service (8.3), corrective action (8.5.2) and preventive action (8.5.3). The quality policy is a long-term strategic document jointly devised by top management and quality consultants to set the quality aims and objectives of the organization and define the roles of departments and personnel as well as quality benchmarks ensuring quality. It has to be communicated throughout the company and understood by personnel at all managerial levels.

Quality procedures are developed jointly by a quality manager and responsible staff (heads of departments, team leads, specialists) to detail work processes and provide clear instructions or action points. Record-keeping and documenting enable one to reduce errors through the clarity of instructions and revisit the information for further reference, ensure knowledge management within the organization in case of personnel turnover, act as a management tool for control and planning.

An external assessor's report is written after the audit when a company seeks to obtain the certificate of approval and is sent to an independent expert within the certification body and the company top management under consideration.

Organising the above mentioned genres and sub-genres into a hierarchy, quality standard is undoubtedly a dominating one, with other being subordinate, as it predetermines the communicative purposes and content of other genres as well as guides their development.

Table 1 Hierarchy of genres in QA domain

Quality Standard (e.g. BS EN ISO 9001:2008)		Quality manual
		Quality policy
		Quality procedures
		Assessor's report

When ranking the genres chronologically in order to form a genre chain, the following is obtained:

1. Quality standard is issued and explored by the stakeholders of the discourse community.
2. Quality policy is developed by the top management with the help of quality experts and consultants.
3. A more elaborate description of the company vision and activities regarding quality is prepared in the quality manual.
4. Quality procedures reflect consistent actions of the personnel in certain job related situations.
5. External assessor's report is drawn up to review the quality management system operation and overall efficiency as well as the state company's compliance with standard requirements and non-conformances.

Considering the company individual ordering and forming a genre set, control of documents (4.2.3), control of records (4.2.4), internal audits (8.2.2), control of nonconforming product/service (8.3), corrective action (8.5.2) and preventive action (8.5.3) may exist as separate sub-genres (QM 1, QM4) or a part of quality manual depending on the size of the company (QM 2, QM 3, QM 5).

Commenting upon the genre *manifest intertextuality*, the quality assurance documentation is mutually interrelated with the company's internal documentation, e.g. job descriptions, reports, agendas, minutes, and logs as these genres serve as audit evidence to track the system efficiency (e.g. 'Audit trails and sources of evidence: fire system technical inspections registration journal (from 01.01.2011, supplier SIA xxx), quality and environmental manual (03.01.2011), quality and environmental manual chapter 04 (03.01.2011), organization chart (03.01.2011), work rules, training plan for 2011, amendment No5 to internal training protocol, iekšējo komunikāciju organizēšana/internal communication management'). (AR 3) If the company undergoes additional certification, other documentation systems, e.g. environmental management system (ISO 14000), occupational health and safety management system (ISO 18000 or OHSAC) are easily integrated (e.g. 'Audit trails and sources of evidence: environmental program for 2011 (05.07.2011), identification and evaluation of work environment factors, environmental risks evaluation policy, emergency evacuation training log, contract for infrastructure modernization No KPFI-6/40 in order to reduce emissions'). (AR 4)

*Constitutive intertextuality*, which is not explicitly expressed by linguistic means, can only be identified after the situational context has been investigated. For instance, the intertextual relations between internal documentation, i.e. job descriptions, reports, agendas and minutes are not reciprocal, so it is not possible to identify the intertextual dependence of the abovementioned genres on quality assurance documentation. For instance, analysing training logs

or minutes outside the situational context, the intertextual relations cannot be traced. However, having explored the situational context, it has become apparent that they are used to ensure knowledge transfer among peers and are used by HR management to control the competence level. Thus, human resource documentation is treated as an integral part of quality assurance documentation, and intertextual relations are established.

2 DESCRIBING GENRE RHETORICAL ORGANISATION

Turning to the genre structural description, text-patterning and lexico-grammatica features, the author intends to describe the assessor’s report in detail as it contains an intertextual reference to the above mentioned genres and reflects on their efficient implementation and operation. Five assessment reports created by the LRQA assessors were analysed. Each report consists of four sub-genres, i.e. an executive report (having the most complex rhetorical structure), an assessment findings log, an assessment schedule and an assessment plan. (AR 1-5) Conducting the moves analysis, the following moves and steps were singled out in all the reports under consideration:

Table 2 **Move and step analysis of assessor’s report**

<b>Executive report</b>
Move 1: Establishing a territory Step 1: claiming the assessment outcome Step 2: claiming the system effectiveness and continual improvement
Move 2: Establishing a niche Step 1: Outlining the assessment scope Step 1a: Outlining the assessment activities and persons involved
Move 3a: Occupying the niche (x4 covering different spheres) Step 1: Reviewing the audit trails and sources of evidence Step 2: Evaluating the audit trails and sources of evidence and outlining conclusions Assessment Findings Log
Move 3b: Occupying the niche Step 1: Claiming the assessment finding Step 2: Reviewing the corrective action
<b>Assessment schedule</b>
Move 3c: Occupying the niche Step 1: Outlining the process or status Step 2: Outlining details of the next visit
<b>Assessment plan</b>
Move 3c: Occupying the niche Step 1: Outlining the assessment routines

When analysing the rhetorical organization patterns of each step and observing how ideational meaning was created, the predominant pattern turned out to be serial in almost all steps. (AR 1-5) The orbital pattern was observed only

in move 3a, step 2 outlining conclusions due to the causal nature of the content. (AR 1-5) Interpersonal meaning was traced in move 3b, step 2: reviewing the corrective action, but the nature of social relations was performative as some corrective actions were required from the company. Textual meaning is achieved by organizing information considering the logical, chronological and causal patterns, with the chronological one dominating, creating coherence. This phenomenon is explained by the nature of the communicative event and the communicative aim. (AR 1-5)

## CONCLUSIONS

The following conclusions have been drawn, resulting from the present research. Genres in the quality assurance domain constitute a wide network in predominantly written mode, the key being a quality standard, a quality manual, policies, procedures, an external assessor's report and a certificate of approval. The genres in the network possess hierarchical structure with the standard being the dominating one. They are identified on the basis of conventionalised features together with the analysis of wider linguistic and social context. Exploring the situational context enables us to describe discursive practices and establish the manifest and constitutive intertextual relation, organise the genres chronologically and observe the organization of genre set which is influenced by the size of the company. The move and step analysis revealed the identical genre organization that may be explained by high conventionalism and rigid requirements. Identifying the communicative aims at different levels helps to trace typical rhetorical patterns bound to these aims and the manifestation of textual metafunction. The serial rhetorical pattern to express the ideational language metafunction dominates since the activities in the communicative event unfold sequentially. The orbital pattern is observed to disclose causal relations in only one step. The interpersonal relations between the members of discourse community are traced in two steps, when reviewing the audit trails and outlining the corrective and preventive actions; however, the nature of the communicative event and these relations is performative.

A similar research procedure may be undertaken to analyse other genres in the domain after signing non-disclosure agreements with the stakeholders to make the corpus more representative. Further research activities might also comprise a detailed analysis of lexico-grammatical features of each move and step to demonstrate their connection with the manifestation of language metafunctions.

## REFERENCES

- Bhatia, V. K. (1993) *Analysing Genre*, Harlow: Longman.
- Bhatia, V. K. (2002) Applied genre analysis: a multi-perspective model, *Iberica* 4: 3-19.
- Bhatia, V. K. (2004) *Worlds of Written Discourse: a Genre-Based View*. London: Continuum International.
- Bruce, I. (2008). *Academic Writing and Genre: a Systematic Analysis*. New York: Continuum.
- Dudley-Evans, T. and St John, M. J. (1998) *Developments in English for Specific Purposes: a Multi-Disciplinary Approach*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Fairclough, N. (1992) *Discourse and Social Change*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Firbas, J. (1974) Some aspects of the Czechoslovak approach to the problems of functional sentence perspective. In F. Danes (ed.) (1974) *Papers on Functional Sentence Perspective* (pp. 11-37) Prague: Academia.
- Halliday, M. A. K. and Hasan, R. (1976) *Cohesion in English*. London: Longman
- Halliday, M. A. K. (1994) *An Introduction to Systemic Functional Grammar*. London: Edward Arnold.
- Halliday, M. A. K. and Mathiessen, C. (2004) *An Introduction to Systemic Functional Grammar*. London: Hodder Arnold.
- Hyland, K. (2002) *Teaching and Researching: Writing*. London: Pearson Education.
- Kristeva, J. (1980) *Desire in Language: a Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art*. (trans.) A. Jardine, L. S. Roudiez and T. Gora. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Martin, J. R. and Christie, F. (eds.) (2000) *Genre and Institutions*. London: Continuum.
- Martin, J. R. and Christie, F. (2007) *Language, Knowledge and Pedagogy: Functional Linguistic and Sociological Perspectives*. London: Continuum.
- Rose, D. and Martin, J. R. (2012) *Learning to Write, Reading to Learn: Genre, Knowledge and Pedagogy in the Sydney School*. London: Equinox.
- Swales, J. M. (1990). *Genre Analysis: English in Academic and Research Settings*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Swales, J. M. (2004). *Research Genres: Exploration and Applications*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

**Jana Kuzmina** (MA in Philology, lecturer) is currently working at the University of Latvia and Riga Technical College as well as doing her PhD studies in Applied Linguistics. Her research interests include genre and discourse analysis of technical and business documentation. Email: jana.kuzmina@lu.lv

# REALITY IN J. K. ROWLING'S *THE CASUAL VACANCY*

---

ANTRA LEINE

University of Latvia, Latvia

**Abstract.** After the success of Harry Potter series, in 2012 Joanne K. Rowling published her first novel for adults that received mixed criticism in public sphere. The novel provides an eloquent depiction of contemporary England. Though intended to be a comic tragedy it more likely resembles a gloomy melodrama, and is written in a realistic and 'true to life' manner. While hardly providing pleasant emotions, the novel truthfully reflects numerous emblematic social problems of provincial life, like neglect and abuse of children, domestic violence, lack of likeable characters – the representation of which are further analysed in the present paper paying attention also to the first critical reviews the novel has received.

**Key words:** Joanne K. Rowling, *The Casual Vacancy*, reality

After the financial success of Harry Potter that has become the best-selling book series in history, Joanne Rowling can afford to write a book in which she does not yield to any literary clichés and widespread norms of how reality should be depicted to create a bestseller. Though in her interview with Decca Aitkenhead on September 22, just before the release of the novel, Rowling admits that she is a little bit scared of what the reception of her book is going to be, she openly admits: 'it feels great that I can choose' and also confesses that it is a pleasure to know that actually, even if no-one would like the book, then 'the worst that can happen is that everyone says, that's shockingly bad' (Aitkenhead, 2012). Indeed, nothing Rowling could ever create is going to rub out the fame and influence of her *Harry Potter* series, and she does not need to write to support herself and raise her income. Even more – despite the fact that her first book for adults *The Casual Vacancy*, though written with insight and talent, will hardly become a long term bestseller, the first week of the sales showed that it was just enough to be its author to make it popular. As Mark Brown, *The Guardian* arts correspondent, writes Rowling's new novel 'went easily to the top of the fiction charts on Tuesday with *The Casual Vacancy* notching up first week sales of 124,603', making it 'number one in the year to date hardback fiction table' (Brown, 2012).

Though Rowling is aware that her novel may receive negative criticism, this is not going to stop her from writing what she wishes. When reminded by Ian Parker, a journalist of *The New Yorker* magazine, in an interview before the publication of *The Casual Vacancy* that her novel is likely to receive 'scandalized objections to the idea of young Harry Potter readers being drawn into such material', Rowling

has stressed: 'there is no part of me that feels that I represented myself as your children's babysitter or their teacher. I was always, I think, completely honest. I'm a writer, and I will write what I want to write' (Parker, 2012). Thus, it is reasonable to believe that Rowling has allowed her imagination to create a novel in which she has depicted life as she sees it not worrying about meeting the audience's expectations that could have made the novel more widely acceptable as well as ignoring any literary traditions in case these did not fit her purpose. The aim of the present paper is to discuss some aspects of Rowling's novel, scrutinizing the representation of gloomy realism involving abused children and lack of likeable characters, at the same time providing evaluation of some of the first critical reviews of the novel.

Though in the fundamental edition *The Complete Handbook of Novel Writing: Everything You Need to Know About Creating and Selling Your Work* (2010), prepared by the editors of *Writers Digest* and including guidelines provided also by Margaret Atwood, Kurt Vonnegut, John Updike and other literary celebrities, it is clearly stated that 'reality is not a good plot' Rowling's novel is very realistic and provides typical and believable characters of a country village. Decca Aitkenhead, a British journalist of *The Guardian*, says that 'Pagford will be appallingly recognisable to anyone who has ever lived in a West Country village' (Aitkenhead, 2012). Though Rowling considers the novel to be a 'comic tragedy' which provides a detailed depiction of a local parish with the structure typical 'of the nineteenth-century: the anatomy and the analysis of a very small and closed society', Parker defines it as 'a rural comedy of manners that, having taken on state-of-the-nation social themes, builds into black melodrama' (Parker, 2012). Though disagreement may arise whether the novel is a dark comedy or a mild tragedy, it realistically depicts subjects of social concern of the contemporary English society.

Since Jane Austen and Charles Dickens, it has been rather emblematic of English writers to be obsessed with the delineation of reality. A contemporary of Rowling, the English anthropologist Kate Fox, explains that the interest in and the necessity to observe the life of 'people who might easily be their next-door neighbours' lies in realism that is 'deeply rooted in the English psyche, and our related qualities of down-to earthiness and matter of factness, our stubborn obsession with the real, concrete and factual, pure distaste for artifice and pretension' (Fox, 2004: 213). At the same time, as Fox stresses, the English privacy rules require to 'know very little about the personal lives and doings of people outside our immediate circle of close friends and family' which hardly satisfies 'the extreme nosiness' of an average Englishman (ibid.: 213-214). Probably this is one of the reasons why Rowling's novel has received better critical response in the UK than in the USA as it gives the British audience a believable insight into the fictional lives of their contemporaries. Though Fox writes it about soap operas, also Rowling's novel lets the reader 'peer through a spyhole into the hidden, forbidden, private lives of' neighbours and social peers (Fox, 2004: 214), thus letting the English readers break the social norm which



requires minding one's own business and getting an insight into the murky secrets of Pagford citizens.

It is obvious that the reality of a typical English village, according to Rowling, is rather dark, gloomy and hopeless, or, as stated by Parker: 'this is a story of class warfare set amid semi-rural poverty, heroin addiction, and teen-age perplexity and sexuality' (Parker, 2012). At the very beginning of the novel, J. K. Rowling is rather straightforward about the fact that someone is going to die, most likely – very early in the plot. The epigraph, a quotation from the Local Council Administration guide book, explains the term 'casual vacancy' as 'deemed to have occurred [...] on the day of his death' (Rowling, 2012: 1), thus making the readers suspect that some death is inevitable. Already on the first page of the book the readers meet Barry Fairbrother, a man suffering from 'a thumping headache', and to reduce any doubt whether this is the character destined to die, Rowling with a slight touch of dramatic irony makes his fate clear pointing out that, as it often happens in real life, three out of four Barry's children will not even throw the last glance at their father at the moment of their last parting before he disappears from their lives forever: 'Barry and Mary's four children [...] were watching television when he said goodbye to them for the last time, and only Declan, the youngest, turned to look at him, and raised his hand in farewell' (ibid.: 1).

Rowling is not only aware that in real life people hardly manage to say the last good-bye to each other, but also foreshadows the general alienation between parents and children which is characteristic of all families described in the novel. In this dismal setting the readers learn that due to *casual vacancy* caused by the death of Barry Fairbrother, there are three candidates running for the post at the Parish Council: the paedophile teacher Colin Wall who works hard to overcome his sexual drive; Miles Mollison – a narrow-minded and snobbish son of the present Chair of the Parish Council; and the sadistic husband and father Simon Price who believes that a position at the Parish Council would provide wonderful opportunities for bribery and corruption.

Further on readers get a realistic insight into the lives of more than twenty Pagford citizens, none of whom is truly likeable. Though in an interview with Ian Parker Rowling has stated that *Casual Vacancy* 'is a book about responsibility [...] – how responsible we are for our own personal happiness, and where we find ourselves in life – but in the macro sense also, of course: how responsible we are for the poor, the disadvantaged, other people's misery' (Parker, 2012), it seems that actually the novel is about the loneliness and daily abuse of children which, sadly enough, is still a prevalent feature of the contemporary British society. As claimed by Fox, English generally have 'a certain cultural apathy towards children' and do not 'seem to value children as highly as other cultures do' (Fox, 2004: 360-361). Thus, the whole plot of the novel develops around the major turmoil, caused primarily by neglected adolescents who use the Parish Council's website to publish damaging posts about their parents, either candidates for or members of the Council. The first to apply his computer skills acquired during regular school classes is Andrew who, recurrently beaten by his father Simon

Price and seeing the daily physical and emotional violence towards his mother and brother, has a reason to hate:

‘Don’t hit her,’ he said, forcing himself between his parents. ‘Don’t—’ His lip split against his front tooth, Simon’s knuckle behind it, and he fell backwards on top of his mother, who was draped over the keyboard; Simon threw another punch, which hit Andrew’s arms as he protected his face; Andrew was trying to get off his slumped, struggling mother, and Simon was in a frenzy, pummelling both of them wherever he could reach (Rowling, 2012: 803).

The daily brutality teaches Andrew to distrust his vulnerable mother and detest his father. The author writes that ‘Andrew indulged in a little fantasy in which his father dropped dead, gunned down by an invisible sniper. Andrew visualized himself patting his sobbing mother on the back while he telephoned the undertaker. He had a cigarette in his mouth as he ordered the cheapest coffin’ (ibid.: 60), but instead of taking a gun, Andrew takes care that after his publication of nasty facts on the parish website, his father has no chance to win the election and his career is ruined. Though domestic violence is widespread in all societies throughout human history and Rowling is neither the first nor the last to describe it, definitely her depiction of reality is bitterly truthful – according to the *Daily Mail* the official crime figures provided by the European Commission prove that the violence rate in Britain is higher than in any other country in the European Union (Slack, 2009).

Andrew is just the first to strike – a subsequent attack is directed at the success driven Sikh doctor Parminder Jawanda, a member of the Parish Council who has always unyieldingly supported Barry Fairbrother. Her daughter Sukhvinder, being constantly abused by her peers and neglected by her mother, on the verge of emotional breakdown hardly being able to handle her daily life any more, is desperately looking for support from her mother, but has to listen to abusing, angry tirade:

What’s wrong with you? Are you proud of being lazy and sloppy? Do you think it’s cool to act like a delinquent? [...] I’m disgusted by you, do you hear me? [...] What is wrong with you, Sukhvinder? (Rowling, 2012: 902)

Though coming from a culture in which children are traditionally more appreciated, Paraminder Jawanda has adopted the English customs that ‘not only forbid boasting about one’s offspring, but specifically prescribe mock-denigration of them. [...] English parents must roll their eyes, sigh heavily, and moan to each other about how noisy, tiresome, lazy hopeless and impossible their children are’ (Fox, 2004: 362) even if they do not believe in that. It is not surprising that after these accusations are thrown at the unhappy girl ‘the dark lake of desperation and pain that lived in Sukhvinder and yearned for release was in flames’ (Rowling, 2012: 905), making her wish for revenge and deciding to

post an anonymous message about the actual feelings between her mother and Barry Fairbrother.

Also Stuart Wall (Fats), the adopted son of Colin Wall, Deputy Head teacher of the local comprehensive school, follows suit and betrays his adoptive father by stating that he is a paedophile. His main motivation, like for all other kids who denounce their parents in Pagford, is the lack of love and support in his family mixed with obsessive necessity to discover his own 'true authenticity' (ibid.: 2012: 1210). Though the tragic of Stewart's accusations lies in the fact that Colin Wall has always been fighting his desires, Stewart is right, suspecting that Colin has never also dared to love him:

Your father's spent his life facing up to things he never did. I don't expect you to understand his kind of courage. But,' her voice broke at last, and he heard the mother he knew, 'he loves you, Stuart.' She added the lie because she could not help herself. Tonight, for the first time, Tessa was convinced that it was a lie (ibid.: 2012: 1338).

These and other troubling events involving adolescents described in *The Casual Vacancy* point at serious problems of the contemporary English society. Thus, ignorance, neglect, lack of love and support tarnish the lives of almost every character in Rowling's novel and it seems that a bunch of skeletons is hidden in every cupboard of Pagford. Ian Parker who was among the first literary critics to read the novel considers that the central figure of the novel Barry Fairbrother 'remains the story's moral centre – had the same virtues, in his world, that Harry had in his: tolerance, constancy, a willingness to act' (Parker, 2012), but still he is not safe from criticism. Actually it seems that Parker, comparing Fairbrother to Harry Potter, has missed the point that there are at least two rather considerable drawbacks in this character: while taking care of everyone else, he neglects his family; and he chooses his goals poorly, and puts in a lot of effort where actually the results he expects cannot be achieved. After his death, his wife Mary summarizes on both issues:

'He thought Krystal Weedon was like him, but she wasn't [...] She got more of his time and his attention than his own daughters,'

'He thought everyone was like him, that if you gave them a hand they'd start bettering themselves.'

'Yeah,' said Gavin, 'but the point is, there are other people who could use a hand – people at home...'

'Well, exactly!' said Mary, dissolving yet again into tears (ibid.: 302).

One of Barry's basic aims in life has been to save Krystal Weedon, to give her the same opportunities he himself has got. The problem here lies in the fact that Krystal – Barry's wishful example of a scum made into man – actually is not made of the same fabric as Barry has been. While Barry himself 'had been a living

example of what they proposed in theory: the advancement, through education from poverty to affluence, from powerlessness and dependency to valuable contributor to society' (ibid.: 248), Krystal has not got such aspirations, and is dreaming of only getting pregnant so that she could get a new house from the Council and would be provided by the kid's grandparents:

When they rehoused her, because of her pregnancy, they were almost certain to give her another Fields house; nobody wanted to buy them, they were so run down. But Krystal saw this as a good thing, because in spite of their dilapidation it would put Robbie and the baby in the catchment area for St Thomas's. Anyway, Fats' parents would almost certainly give her enough money for a washing machine once she had their grandchild. They might even get a television (ibid.: 298).

Krystal, about whom Rowling says that she 'could barely read, who could not have identified half the vegetables in a supermarket' (ibid.: 291), does not crave for education and status in society, she will never even attempt to reach the goals Barry finds important. Barry Fairbrother, like many well-wishing people, mistakenly believes that if only he would give a chance to Krystal, she would become another person. This hardly could have been Rowling's idea, as in the interview with Decca Aitkenhead, Rowling stresses:

So many people, certainly people who sit around the cabinet table, say, "Well, it worked for me" or, "This is how my father managed it" – these trite catchphrases – and the idea that other people might have had such a different life experience that their choices and beliefs and behaviours would be completely different from your own seems to escape a lot of otherwise intelligent people. The poor are discussed as this homogeneous mash, like porridge. The idea that they might be individuals, and be where they are for very different, diverse reasons, again seems to escape some people (Aitkenhead, 2012).

It is a praiseworthy fact that in *The Casual Vacancy* these ideas are just implied, there is nothing like obvious moralizing. At the same time the common wish of the public to find at least one pleasant character may force the audience fail to notice that also Barry Fairbrother in his wish to settle Krystal's life is one of those intelligent people who does not understand that other people neither want nor are able to achieve the same goals as he has.

Though the first reviews of the novel range between mildly positive and strikingly negative, even Jan Moir, the *Daily Mail* columnist who is among the fiercest critics of the new novel, does not deny that the novel is realistic and reflects the reality of contemporary society, though rightly stresses that it provides 'bleak and rather one-sided vision of life in modern England' (Moir, 2012). This is a rather typical approach – instead of praising the author for what has been created and providing analysis whether it has been done with skill and taste, the criticism is aimed at what the author has decided not to portray.

Readers, contemporaries or Rowling, may wonder whether indeed Joanne Rowling, the richest writer in the world, sees life as being very gloomy. One could also study which tragedies experienced by the author may have caused such negative perception. But, whatever Rowling's reasons could have been, she definitely has the rights to choose her themes and the fact that many of her readers would have enjoyed 'a sprinkle of magic' and as beautifully formulated in the Holy See's official newspaper *L'Osservatore Romano* (Pontara Pederiva, 2012) it neither decreases nor increases the value of the novel.

It seems that Jan Moir has been so proud of her own bravery to openly admit that she does not like the novel written by 'the most successful author in the world' (Moir, 2012) that in her rush to express her view, she has missed several rather important aspects of the novel. Obviously, Moir has understood that the novel is about responsibility: 'Amid this relentless portrayal of unkindness, any saplings of hope or renewal in the Fields are smothered by the dung of middle-class indifference. It's all our fault!' (ibid., 2012), but definitely she is not happy about such a reminder, as if it were herself, her parents and neighbours, 'more prosperous characters' for whom, as Moir says, 'Rowling reserves a special venom' making them 'obnoxious to a ludicrous degree' (ibid., 2012). Here for an outsider it is difficult to understand Moir's anger. If Rowling has depicted the reality untruthfully, then her failure of doing it should be brought out. If she has depicted the problems of real life in a condensed way – probably these problems should be addressed and solved so that the next novel Rowling writes could be about how happy life has become for all Pagford and British citizens. It is useless to criticise an author just for the fact that the darkest sides of middle-class lives have been revealed – if that has been the author's intention. Indeed the novel would have gained if such criticism were counterbalanced with more optimistic twists of the plot and more pleasant characters – but, alas, to portray such has not been the author's intentions.

In her wish to defend the middle-class which appears in a negative light, Moir fails to notice that actually Rowling does not idealize the lower-class life: 'From start to finish, J.K. Rowling's main area of conflict is between the selfish middle-class villagers and the noble savages on the poverty-stricken estate' (ibid., 2012). Actually, Rowling with equal sharpness reveals also the downbeat traits of the lower classes in no way treating them as 'noble' or concentrating on conflicts only between classes. Her brightest lower class representative is Krystal Weedon – a nasty girl with limited understanding, sexually provoking, promiscuous, rude and ignorant. Capable of improvement – that is true, but not beyond her own limits. Her only positive trait of character is her commitment to her three year old brother Robbie – when she is not busy elsewhere, like having sex with Andrew Wall, which eventually leads to a tragedy. Probably, what Rowling wants to stress is that it is very difficult to solve the problems of lower class people with the methods currently available to society. Thus, the greatest enemy of Krystal and Robbie is Kay, the social worker who cares too much for them – she is able to destroy the only family these kids have got, removing Krystal from her brother

and placing him in a foster family – which might be more harmful for those kids than the present situation: ‘Krystal had visited Robbie regularly at his foster parents during the month he had been away from them. He had clung to her, wanted her to stay for tea, cried when she left. It had been like having half your guts cut out of you and held hostage’ (Rowling, 2012: 316). At the same time Rowling makes it clear that with the drug addict mother Terri who is constantly tempted by her dealer and boyfriend Obbo, Krystal and Robbie should not be left alone to fight with their lives – neither of them is capable to scrape through without assistance. Still, Rowling does not give a readymade recipe of how to settle the problem. She just implies that the present approach is wrong as it allows intrusion and improvement of the lives of lower classes against their wishes while neglecting their attachments and often causing more pain than the initial problem.

It is interesting that Moir bitterly claims that no one can like the book except ‘you happen to be, like J.K. Rowling herself, the kind of blinkered, Left-leaning demagogue quick to lambast what she perceives to be risible middle-class values, while failing to see that her own lush thickets of dearly held emotions and prejudices are riddled with the same narrow-mindedness she is so quick to detect in others’ (Moir, 2012), thus admitting that, indeed, Rowling has managed to display the nastiest traits of middleclass and implying that by doing this, she has seriously injured those who find something too similar in the pages of her book. What Moir fails to see is that Rowling does not criticise the middle-class as a unified organism. Vice versa – Rowling stresses that the middle-class, like any other class, consists of individuals, thus these are the choices of those individuals to make their lives better or worse.

Joanne Rowling does not idealize the contemporary society and describes the present day Britain as a place of hopelessness – none of her characters is truly happy, none feels safe, none hopes for any justice. The novel opens with the death of Barry Fairbrother, a man of at least some ideals, and ends with the funeral of Krystal and Robbie – two children who could have been saved. Though some positive lines are devoted to the Sikh family, it is also characterized by the ugliness of strive for success at any price, neglect of those children who fail to excel, and gender inequality that let males be accepted while females are despised. Like William Thackeray claimed more than a hundred years ago about *Vanity Fair*, *The Casual Vacancy* is another novel without a hero, though Rowling has created vivid, plausible heroes making sympathetic readers care for all of them. Still the lack of truly pleasant characters and optimism may diminish the popularity of the novel, as probably most of the readers will at least hope that besides the realistic despair depicted by J.K. Rowling there are also other shades of life and that, in general, life is more fulfilling and promising.

## REFERENCES

- Aitkenhead, D. (2012) *The Casual Vacancy* by JK Rowling – full review. *The Guardian*, September 22, online edition. Available from <http://www.guardian.co.uk/books/2012/sep/28/casual-vacancy-jk-rowling-review> [Accessed September 29, 2012].
- Brown, M. (2012) JK Rowling's *The Casual Vacancy* tops fiction charts in first week. *The Guardian*, October 2, online edition. Available from <http://www.guardian.co.uk/books/2012/oct/02/jk-rowling-casual-vacancy-fiction-charts> [Accessed October 2, 2012].
- Fox, K. (2004) *Watching the English. The Hidden Rules of English Behaviour*. London: Hodder and Stoughton.
- Moir, J. (2012). Where's the magic in this tale of middle-class monsters? First review of J.K. Rowling's VERY grown-up novel. *Daily Mail Online*. September 26. Available from <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2209165/J-K-Rowlings-The-Casual-Vacancy-review-Wheres-magic-tale-middle-class-monsters.html> [Accessed September 29, 2012].
- Parker, I. (2012). After Harry Potter: JK Rowling's Novel for adults. *The New Yorker*, October 1. Available from [http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2012/10/01/121001fa\\_fact\\_parker?currentPage=all](http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2012/10/01/121001fa_fact_parker?currentPage=all) [Accessed October 2, 2012].
- Pontara Pederiva, M. T. (2012) Holy See newspaper gives Harry Potter's 'mother' single thumbs down for latest book. *Vatican Insider, Online edition*, November 6. Available from <http://vaticaninsider.lastampa.it/en/world-news/detail/articolo/rowling-osservatore-romano-19464/> [Accessed December 18, 2012].
- Rowling, J. K. (2012) *The Casual Vacancy*. London: Little, Brown and Hachette Digital.
- Slack, J. (2009) The most violent country in Europe: Britain is also worse than South Africa and U.S. *Daily Mail Online*, July 2. Available from <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1196941/The-violent-country-Europe-Britain-worse-South-Africa-U-S.html> [Accessed October 2, 2012].
- The Complete Handbook of Novel Writing: Everything You Need to Know About Creating and Selling Your Work* (2010) Cincinnati: Writer's Digest Books, Kindle edition.

**Antra Leine** (Assist. prof., Dr. philol.) is currently working at the University of Latvia. Her research interests include Anglophone literature, culture and film studies and contemporary literature. Email: [antra.leine@lu.lv](mailto:antra.leine@lu.lv)

## RIKKI DUCORNET REVISITS HAWTHORNE: *THE STAIN* OR A TIME FOR ‘SEXTS’

---

ARISTI TRENDL

University of Maine, France

**Abstract.** Among Rikki Ducornet’s strongest intertextual bonds in her first novel *The Stain* is certainly Nathaniel Hawthorne’s *The Scarlet Letter*. Her main character Charlotte unmistakably points back both to Hester Prynne and her daughter Pearl. In this dialogic enterprise Ducornet attempts to show what Hawthorne gives secondary focus to: the construction of the heroine’s identity. Whether a precocious feminist or a covert phallogocentric, as the majority of feminist critics maintains, Hawthorne centres the dramatic conflict on his male characters. Contrary to his patrilineal filiation, Ducornet displays a matrilineal one and places her female character centre stage. Albeit subtly ironic and overtly comic, *The Stain*’s relation to the *The Scarlet Letter* seems to be complimentary and complementary. Although Rikki Ducornet refutes being a feminist, some of Hélène Cixous’s concepts such as the feminine, the gift, the feminine libidinal economy could enlighten the American author’s text.

**Key words:** intertextuality, identity, femininity, Ducornet, Hawthorne

‘I like to start with an image and slowly shift its place in time and space: put it to the light, [...] stroke it, it gets hard, it gets hot, it weeps, it grows scales, and claws, it bleeds, it ejaculates, it gives birth, it takes roots [...]. And so it happens with words,’ says Rikki Ducornet in an interview (Hancock, 1982: 21). Indeed, it is with a highly eroticised image that the American author takes the reader by surprise in *The Stain*, which was born out of an encounter with a golden hare in the French countryside and the dream of a disfigured baby. This first novel and first part of Ducornet’s tetralogy on the four elements manifests not only the author’s sensual relations to words but also her loving rapport with other texts skilfully incorporated in *The Stain*, namely *Alice in Wonderland*, *The Little Red Riding Hood* and, above all, *The Scarlet Letter*. As it has been observed, ‘Rikki Ducornet fully understands that writing fiction is essentially the rewriting of other texts’ (Williams, 1998: 181). Like H.D. she could have safely entitled her novel *Palimpsest* to point to her text of election and predilection that marks the parchment of *The Stain*. A literary classic then constitutes the strongest intertextual bond of an established author’s novel.

If Hawthorne opted to call *The Scarlet Letter* ‘a romance’ for the latitude this former category provided, Ducornet refers to *The Stain* as ‘prodigy literature’ (Ducornet, 1999: 3), and like Hawthorne, but to a far greater degree, displays a penchant for the marvellous and the supernatural. Both writers, although they belong to two different eras, need some distance from realistic fiction for their



imagination to expand and flourish, while dealing in their respective novels with conflicts between repressive societies and defiant individuals. They prefer settings far from their own time – the seventeenth century Puritan New England and late nineteenth century rural France.

In *The Stain* Ducornet takes the reader through the follies in *La Folie*, the appropriately-named village where Charlotte was born and grew up, the fruit of lust and trophy of trespass. An abominable birth-mark etched upon her cheek in the form of a leaping hare is the testimony of her dead mother's original sin. Brought up by her great-aunt Edma, a figure of matriarchal authority and repressive religion, the stigmatised girl goes through the dark maze of her step-mother's crippling precepts, and at the Convent, where she seeks salvation through the Sisters' deadening dictates; at every corner the Minotaur-like village Exorcist and witch-doctor, who caters to villagers' superstitions, tracks her steps. He considers Charlotte to be his betrothed sent as a gift by Abraxas, the demon, the witch-doctor's chosen master. Two male figures assist the girl in her search for selfhood, Emile, Edma's hen-pecked husband, and Poupine, the village tramp.

Ducornet defines *The Stain* as a novel 'about the Christian idea of sin – the world and the body seen as Satanic vessels' (Gregory and McCaffery, 1998: 132). In a dialogic enterprise, then, she could find no better partner than Hawthorne who was haunted by Puritan ontology and the moral imperatives of Puritanism. The idea of good and evil is carried out by the two writers' female characters who carry a red badge of shame and courage, different in hue and form but very much alike in fashioning their identity. It is mainly in the construction of the heroine's identity and the representation of femininity that Hawthorne and Ducornet converge and diverge.

*The Scarlet Letter*, a major work of the American Renaissance, has been widely discussed. Feminist reception has not been unanimous. From the admiring Antebellum feminists to a defensive Nina Baym and an offensive Louise DeSalvo, critical views diverge. In T. Walter Herbert's essay 'Nathaniel Hawthorne, Una Hawthorne and *The Scarlet Letter*: Interactive Selfhoods and the Cultural Construction of Gender,' the American writer comes across as a confused male supremacist. It may not be illegitimate to wonder in the light of Ducornet's contribution to a revival of Hester-related subjects whether Hawthorne's novel does not belong to those texts that Helen Cixous denounces in her manifesto 'The Laugh of the Medusa' as repressive and guided by a typically male libidinal economy and culture. On the other hand, we should keep in mind that Ducornet is no radical feminist. 'Power does not belong to the phallus,' she states (Gregory and McCaffery, 1998: 130) and proves it. In her denunciation of power she will make no discrimination between patriarchy and matriarchy.

But let's catch our hare first and discuss the Stain as it appears in Ducornet's text with the capital S. The capitalisation making it a proper noun changes its status in the discourse. In the economy of the novel it is no longer a generic notion but a fully-fledged operating concept. Its grammatical mobility is a prelude to its

semantic mobility and introduces the reader into the hermeneutics of the stain. As the title indicates, the novel heavily relies on the central image of the leaping hare 'sprawled across' the heroine's cheek (Ducornet, 1982: 12), which might have made Henry James find the same fault with Ducornet's novel as with *The Scarlet Letter*, i.e. 'an abuse of the fanciful element – a certain superficial symbolism' (cited in Bell, 2005: 455). However, Ducornet's eclecticism and the generic affiliation of *The Stain* with the fairy-tale and Gothic fiction provide ampler room for her leaps of fancy, which are undoubtedly given some impetus by her qualities as a graphic artist. The Aztec deity Teccuciztecatl who was thrown a rabbit across his face and was exiled on the moon, is behind Ducornet's image.

Branded for life by her mother's sin, Charlotte is banished from the society in which she lives. Her birthmark is an offense to the eye and makes her virgin and frigid aunt do her utmost to have it removed. The schoolteacher suggests that she wear a veil. The stain gives rise to a similar fascination as it entangles its viewer in the infernal duality of attraction/repulsion. 'Plum in colour' (Ducornet, 1982: 12), hot and furry, obscene, frightening, obscure in broad daylight, the stain is puzzling and begs for interpretation. It is God's signature according to Edma and the Devil's according to the village witch-doctor who is the one to voice the stain's open secret: 'For did not the hare symbolize [...] the female pudenda?' (ibid.: 17).

Thus femininity makes an explosive entry into the arena of representation, and the female body enters the discourse writing itself. A constant playing with this image takes place in the narrative. The stain leads a life of its own, records and then responds to what is going on. It is always hot and throbbing when it becomes the centre of attention and on the defensive when threatened with tactile proximity and aggression. In the course of the narrative, the stain will be established as a token of femininity, a hieroglyph of desire and an emblem of fulfilment.

If Hester has her letter A to grapple with, Charlotte has her stain. Right at the outset, the former is the sign of the law, the latter the sign of femininity. Both are seen as signs of transgression, but their proud bearers are bound to alter their significance, transforming themselves in the process. Hawthorne and Ducornet seem to capitalise on the instability of signs and the fluidity of meaning. Both signs hide and reveal, but the letter A relies on obliquity and indirectness, while the stain on exposure and immediacy. The letter A appears at the beginning of the Puritan alphabet spelled out in Hawthorne's text. As Millicent Bell suggests, 'The Puritans regarded reality textually; a long tradition of Christian thought which spoke through them analogized the world as a book which might be compared to scripture as an act of divine writing' (Bell, 2005: 454). 'The capital letter A seems to be in Hawthorne the seal of both human and divine law.' (Ducornet, 1982: 61) Upon the immutable adulterer's verdict Hester Prynne works a change. A brief overview of her trajectory will highlight the polarised properties of the letter A.

At the beginning of the novel Hester Prynne is the sinner, the freak of the market-place exposed on the scaffold, 'the token of infamy' burning upon her breast. Hester cools 'this 'red hot iron' (ibid.: 62) of a letter, transforming it into an aesthetic object: 'in fine red cloth, surrounded with an elaborate embroidery and fantastic flourishes of gold thread appeared the letter A' (ibid.: 80). From the gloominess of sin to the phantasmagoria of form Hester appears the free-willed beauty nurturing impulses of flight and hence revolt. But when she settles into her outcast life, the vista of martyrdom opens up: 'the torture of her daily shame would at length purge her soul, and work out another purity than that which she had lost; more saint-like, because the result of martyrdom' (ibid.: 105). While Hester's challenging élan fades, Pearl's blooms. As the mother's former mirror the child becomes an object of strong disapproval and apprehension. She is an elf-child, 'perverse' and 'malicious' and for others 'a child of the Lord of Misrule' (ibid.: 132), 'a demon offspring' (ibid.: 122).

By the middle of the novel, Hester is totally absorbed by the letter of the law, as her distorted reflection in the convex mirror at the Governor's Hall indicates: 'the scarlet letter was represented in exaggerated and gigantic proportions, so as to be greatly the most prominent feature of her appearance' (ibid.: 128). When the letter comes to mean 'Able' (ibid.: 180), even 'Angel' (ibid.: 177), as it is suggested, Hester's transformation is complete: 'Some attribute had departed from her, the permanence of which had been essential to keep her a woman' (ibid.: 182). All the more so as the A also stands for 'avenger', having done justice to Hester's wronged husband (ibid.: 90). Hester is now the sexless 'angel in the house' (in Virginia Woolf's famous phrase), the sacred virgin holding onto her 'cross' (ibid.: 181).

Nevertheless, Hawthorne does raise the question of his heroine's abandonment of femininity and of her happiness and gives a prescriptive answer:

As a first step, the whole system of society is to be torn down, and built up anew. Then, the very nature of the opposite sex, [...] is to be essentially modified, before woman can be allowed to assume what seems a fair and suitable position. Finally, [...] woman cannot take advantage of these preliminary reforms, until she herself shall have undergone a still mightier change; in which, perhaps, the ethereal essence, wherein she has her truest life, will be found to have evaporated. (ibid.: 184)

The ethereal essence is the angel's identity Hester assumes and lives by to survive. In the middle of the novel the die is cast. Her future is predetermined. All she can build on is her 'ethereal essence', which excludes happiness. The other option, the witch, has already been rejected. Hester had declined Mistress Hibbins's offer to 'sign her name in the Black Man's book' (ibid.: 139), when she won the battle of Pearl's guardianship.

It has been maintained that it was Margaret Fuller who inspired Hawthorne in his construction of Hester's character. Although there is no proof for such an assumption, the following passage from Fuller's diary is echoed in *The Scarlet*

*Letter*: 'I love best to be a woman; but womanhood is at present too straitly bounded to give me scope' (cited in Chevigny 1976: 63). Nevertheless, a revival of femininity and a new impulse of revolt are in store for Hester in the forest scene where she challenges her former lover: 'What hast thou to do with all these iron men and their opinions?' (Ducornet, 1982: 215). Her hair released, her letter discarded, her beauty returned, she asks Dimmesdale to elope with her, but the 'free atmosphere of an unredeemed, unchristianized lawless region' is uncongenial to Hawthorne (ibid.: 219). The law is temporarily suspended but ultimately restored. It is as a missionary that Hester returns to Boston and remains until the end of her life. Hawthorne upholds the nineteenth-century image of the woman who falls within the paradigmatic polarities of the angel and the monster. She is 'the ideal woman that male authors dream of generating', as Gilbert and Gubar put it (Gilbert and Gubar, 1979: 20), but remains so as long as social and cultural conditions are still unchanged.

In *The Scarlet Letter* there is a movement away from the body, which is finally crushed by the law. Hester does not submit to the law, since with her needlework she becomes the author of her imposed letter: the letter A no longer signifies the deadly sin at the end of the novel. Nevertheless, she does not transform the law; she transforms herself to adapt to the law made by 'the iron men'. A mutilating operation is in progress throughout the narrative. On the Procrustean bed of the law Hester lies to be forgiven and accepted by the community. On the altar of motherhood and society she is the sacrificial victim.

On the contrary, there is movement towards the body which escapes the law in *The Stain*, where the main focus is the female conquest of identity. 'Identity is rooted in our sexuality, as is our hunger for being and becoming,' states Ducornet in an interview (Hancock, 1982: 21). In her essay, 'The Death Cunt of Deep Dell', the writer discusses the idea of the 'Death Cunt' as it is embodied in works of literature and art, while in her novels she constantly explores this theme. In *The Stain*, particularly, she subverts this 'gnostical perception of the female body as a lethal detour of the spirit leading to enslavement [...] as snare, prison and coffin' (Ducornet, 1999: 82). If in *The Scarlet Letter* Hester's survival and modulation of identity involves the denunciation of the body as a source of evil and the destruction of femininity, in *The Stain* the construction of identity entails the affirmation of femininity. While Hester's femininity fades away in the course of the narrative, in spite of the forest interlude, Charlotte's comes into full bloom, as the young girl threads her way through death, abjection and alienation.

The Gnostic vision of the eternal duelling good and evil informs *The Stain*. It is the power who are enlisted in the forces of evil and attempt to annihilate the body. Charlotte who bears her mother's name and its programmatic sensuality – 'like the way it fills the mouth,' says the witch-doctor (Ducornet, 1982: 23) who thus enacts the wolf – finds herself in a state of siege from the enemy forces, namely Edma, the destructionist, the Exorcist, the appropriator and the Convent Sisters, the despisers of the body. 'Were it not for relentless hunger, they might have forgotten they had bodies' (ibid.: 128), says the narrative voice about the

young nuns. Charlotte is ugly and unclean for Emma whose wasted femininity tolerates no feminine signs around her. As Cixous makes clear in her discussion of Clarice Lispector's confrontation with the unclean, the 'ugly' is the subject in exile, the outsider, the subversive feminine writer (Cixous, 1993: 113). Like Hester in Hawthorne's iconography of the scarlet letter (cf. Jean Fagan Yellin's '*The Scarlet Letter and the Antislavery Feminists*'), Charlotte still in captivity is depicted as a slave under Edma's domination. When the woman gives the girl a bath attempting to rub the stain off, the birthmark is likened to 'a scrap of dark velvet pressed beneath a very hot iron' (Ducornet, 1982: 84). In Edma's yard, where Charlotte plays, the furry rabbits are lascivious, diseased and frightening. Likewise, the stain has been placed by the exorcist under the sign of Belial, the demon of lechery. He constantly dreams of and lusts for her femininity: 'She's electric. I've touched her, I know' (ibid.: 87); 'He wanted [...] to caress the Stain and feel its velvety fire beneath his fingers' (ibid.: 104). Sister Malicia, too, the perverse practitioner of the will to power, 'salivates when she says the words official, officially, officer, authority' and then caresses the stain. (ibid.: 149).

Charlotte is born and grows up in a world marked by decay and death where sexuality and love are either distorted or absent. The opening chapter, which simultaneously recounts her birth and her parents' first encounter, sets the tone. Charlotte's father and mother are victims of the dominant culture and cannot rise above alienation. The father living in constant fear of femininity is the hunted hunter, the mother living in constant fear of society is the hunted game. There is no romance in *The Stain*. As in *The Scarlet Letter* the love story precedes the time of the narration, but if in Hawthorne it never loses its romantic aura and nobility, in Ducornet it is depicted in crude colours and recounted in terms of power.

Moreover, while in Hawthorne family is upheld as a value, as the third scaffold scene consecrates Hester, Dimmesdale and Pearl's reunion, in Ducornet family is falling apart right from the start. The only instance Ducornet brings the trio together is in the first chapter where the mother is dead in a hellish childbirth, the father dead drunk and the new-born caked in blood. It is the father's law epitomised by his kill, the 'fat hare, firm fleshed and golden, hung by his ears from his belt' (ibid.: 12), that seals this unfortunate childbirth: 'And then she saw him. And she saw, dripping blood by his side the dead hare. And as the baby spilled from her body she screamed [...]' So Charlotte was born. Born with the creature's image slapped to her face' (ibid.: 12).

After a gory, violent birth marked by the supernatural, Charlotte's life will oscillate between the Scylla of the maternal sin and the Charybdis of the paternal law. A freak and an 'invalid' (ibid.: 82) and betrothed by birth to a fallen sage who tries to decipher her future in her 'bedchamber's dirt' (ibid.: 67), Charlotte's life seems predetermined. Yet unlike Hawthorne, Ducornet answers positively the question of a felicitous existence for women at the end of the novel. She is equally concerned by the attainment of happiness but has her character follow another path.

As *The Stain* is marked by alchemical imagery, which is unearthed by M. E. Warlick in 'Fantastic Metropolis', the great work in the novel seems to be the construction of identity. Although Charlotte is initially tempted by sainthood just like Hester, she will not finally fall into the trap of martyrdom on her meandering course towards selfhood. While the heavenly father is in the centre of *The Scarlet Letter*, it is an earthly mother that stands Charlotte in good stead. Ducornet's filiation is resolutely matrilineal. Unlike Hawthorne whose image of God is very similar to the Byzantine iconography of the Pantocrator's face split into two distinct parts of austerity and wrath, tenderness and forgiveness, Ducornet beheads the Universe. In Charlotte's childish game God is the bucket that is covered with rags and rejected as a witness of her life. Likewise, in her dream of a triangle of rotting flesh the Death Cunt is dismissed as the House of God (ibid.: 58).

Charlotte's search for self-definition is guided by her search for a maternal figure as the paternal figure has been discredited. Even the Heavenly father is represented as 'a monstrous wing that would blot out the sky' (ibid.: 44). We shall see that the divine mother in the Christian sense, the Good Mother in the psychoanalytic sense, and the Great Mother in the anthropological sense replace Charlotte's mother to lead the girl out of the maze of evil, while in the maternal locus, par excellence, the forest, the identity-building work-in-progress is intensified.

*The Stain* enacts the drama of enclosure and escape that, according to Gilbert and Gubar, characterises the nineteenth century women's fiction. Although Charlotte is soon aware of her stain as a sign of exception in a life mapped by 'the weekly celebrations of marriage and death' (ibid.: 59) – marriage in chapter 8 is depicted as the death of woman – the only escape seems through the anorexic control of her own body, experienced as abjection. As Julia Kristeva states, 'Le dégoût alimentaire est peut-être la forme la plus élémentaire et la plus archaïque de l'abjection' (Kristeva, 1980: 10). Furthermore, as Gilbert and Gubar maintain, anorexia is a distinctively female disease associated with enclosure and escape (Gilbert and Gubar, 54). However, Charlotte's act of eating the glass pieces of the clock when she finds herself threatened by time not only enacts the Cronus myth but also confers upon her the provisional identity of a fairy-tale heroine: 'She thinks of the Princess who weeps diamonds; she, Charlotte, swallows glass. She knows her deed is the greater' (Ducornet, 1982: 62). The body as both enclosure and escape becomes the site of rebellion. Charlotte loses her voice in the bargain but gains access to visions of the Virgin Mary that will sustain and guide her.

The quest for identity is now magnified by the quest for the lost voice, robbed in Ducornet's incisive irony: 'she can no more say holy' (ibid.: 66). Edma is consequently dismissed as a madwoman in the pyramidal puzzle starting with M for mother that Charlotte contrives. If Edma is the figure of the Kleinian bad mother, according to Melanie Klein's analysis of object relations, the Mother Superior is a parody of the good mother figure. It is her, though, who gives Charlotte the sugar egg that triggers a divine epiphany: 'Like her visions, the egg's

window afforded a new image of the world. And all at once *Charlotte knew God*' (ibid.: 71). Ironically this new *Weltanschauung* is intimidated by maternity; what she sees inside the Easter egg is a hen and its chicks. *The Stain* is a carefully plotted novel. In the chain of identity-building events a specular image comes next. It is in 'The Poor Devil', the local café renamed 'The Dancing Hare' to her honour, that Charlotte goes through her mirror stage. Her imagination is stirred by the picture of a woman, she discovers in the café mirror; she is Wet Winnie, for the café's old timers, an image of the Great Mother emerging from the earth as the picture suggests.

In the course of the narrative Charlotte's mother, Wet Winnie and the Virgin Mary blend into one single earthly and celestial being and remain her unfailing guides. Some significant developments ensue the discovery of Wet Winnie's picture. The stain is established by Poupine as a source of luck, acquires radiance. Charlotte's budding beauty is constantly underlined by the narrative voice and in her first excursions of freedom, she scales the Devil's Finger, the stone menhir, where she was conceived. This symbolic act follows an equally symbolic itinerary 'past the church, the cemetery, past the fountain where the brawny laundresses washed the scrawls of conception, death and infidelity' (ibid.: 111).

In this search for identity the appeal of purification, expiation and abnegation constitutes the strongest intertextual strand in the narrative. 'I want to be a saint' (ibid.: 115), states Charlotte in the middle of the novel. Two main loci, the Convent and the forest, shelter and propel the quest. Villains or the semi-villains orchestrate the girl's entry into the Convent. It is Charlotte herself who engineers her exit.

Ducornet hides her madwoman in the Convent's attic. Unlike the mad character, who as its author's double, was created to be destroyed, in the nineteenth century women's fiction, Eulalie, the rebellious novice not only escapes from the cuckoo's nest but brings about Charlotte's liberating epiphany, 'I am flesh! And when the terrible image of the suffering Eulalie flashed across her mind, Charlotte nearly shouted out: 'Both God and Satan despise flesh! Both are the enemies of man!' (ibid.: 134)

Both girls are endowed with supernatural powers, Charlotte with telekinesis, Eulalie with levitation, which allow them to defend themselves in the Convent. Ducornet thus subverts the figure of the witch associating it with the victimised, innocent girls.

Another specular image that emerges in the text is the golden hare that thwarts Charlotte's sainthood projects, taking her to the maternal felicitous space, the forest. The encounter is described as another epiphany: 'He [the hare] run to the setting sun; it floated in the sky like an egg of sugar. Charlotte sat awestruck, her hands and teeth pressed to the glass, the Stain twitching violently as if it would tear itself free' (ibid.: 195). It is here that the stain becomes the hieroglyph of desire. Consequently, Charlotte leaps from the train that takes her to the Convent of the Thorny Agony and like Alice follows the hare, instead, to the wonderland of selfhood, the forest where she escapes.

There are still two dangers lurking in her shelter, an internal and an external one. Kristeva's remark is quite relevant here: 'L'excrément et ses équivalents (pourriture, infection, maladie, cadavre etc.) représentent le danger venant de l'extérieur de l'identité [...] Le sang menstruel, au contraire, représente le danger venant de l'intérieur de l'identité' (Kristeva, 1980: 86). The menstruating body is brought into focus as a menace to Charlotte's newly acquired freedom: 'Charlotte feels between her thighs with her hand (...) and tentatively tastes with the tip of her tongue. The *stigma* here in the forest! What can that mean?' (Ducornet, 1982: 196, emphasis added). The text answers her alarmed question with the synaesthetic memory of her writing and reading lessons based on Emile's gardening catalogues: 'How strange, she thinks, that the taste of blood should bring back the smell of pastel, of ink and musty paper!' (ibid.: 197). The recollection acts as a prolepsis that announces Charlotte's coming to painting. In Poupine's womb-like, troglodyte dwelling, an unmistakable sign 'of the return to the mother' according to Bachelard's interpretation of symbols (Bachelard, 1948: 6), and 'a place of female power, the *umbilicus mundi*, one of the great antechambers of the mysteries of transformation' in Gilbert and Gubar's words (Gilbert and Gubar, 1976: 95). Charlotte like a prehistoric person paints everything on the limestone walls of the cavern and finally the dancing hare. If 'the walls are all eyes' (Ducornet, 1982: 207), her paintings are the materialisation of the new eyes she is about to acquire and point to the transformation in progress. Gilbert and Gubar significantly note that 'eye 'troubles' seem to abound in the lives and works of nineteenth and twentieth century literary women' (ibid.: 58), and Ducornet who sets her novel in the nineteenth century does not fail to put herself on the record and set it straight.

She does the same with her rewriting of *The Little Red Riding Hood*. It is Charlotte who unmasks and exposes the Exorcist's madness and perversion. Unlike Roald Dahl's *Little Red Riding Hood*, in the eponymous poem, built on a masculine model, Charlotte has no 'pistol in her knickers' but only her intuition and cunning in her showdown with the wolf-cum-exorcist. She does not use his skin as a furcoat, her act is only profitable to the community which assists her along with Poupine. Just like Pearl Charlotte has two fathers. Contrary to Hawthorne's, Ducornet's fathers are socially powerless, withdrawn from society, figures of laughter. Besides, being effeminate, they are closer to maternal foster-figures.

However, the major difference between the two novels lies in their closure. Both works in their integration of hope appear open-ended. Yet Hawthorne seems to deliver his final blow on femininity. Hester's sacrificial femininity is followed by Pearl's tamed one in a Snow-White, live-happily-ever-after marriage. Pearl, rich and wed to a noble man is frozen in the glass coffin of matrimony, while Hester becomes the defeated prophetess of a liberated womanhood, 'a new truth would be revealed in order to establish the whole relation between man and woman on a surer ground of mutual happiness' (ibid.: 275). Hester cannot be 'the angel and apostle of the coming revelation' (ibid.: 275) because she is neither pure



nor joyful. Hawthorne bases his hope on a wrong foundation once again, on an angelic woman, untouched by suffering.

Hope in *The Stain* is immediate, visible, tangible. Ducornet's ending is marked by what Cixous calls 'l'impératif d'espoir' (Cixous, 1996: 103), the feminine mobilised against repression and death. Neither the glass coffin of martyrdom which is reserved for the Exorcist's victims, the Teton twins, in a hilarious epilogue, nor the one of matrimony is set up for Charlotte. The looking-glass that Ducornet holds up for her heroine helps her through the other side of the mirror, the side of life. As Cixous puts it, 'To begin (writing, living) we must have death... We need to lose the world, (...) and to discover that there is more than one world and that the world isn't what we think it is' (Cixous, 1993: 10).

It is a March hare that Charlotte meets in May, the one she has been waiting for:

They are both startled, and as she leans above him, nearly swooning with excitement, he crouches in the wood-violets, evoking the treasure at the rainbow's end – a mound of gold and cinnamon and snow – his obsidian eyes transporting her to a swifter, more triumphal star. He is enchantment. He casts a spell from which she will never entirely awaken, not even when the years will have carried her far from this time and place. And when at last he moves, it is with short, hesitant bounds, as if knotted to her heart by an invisible thread. The witchery is such that when in an arc of fire, he is gone, she is still leaning (Ducornet, 1982: 221).

The novel comes full circle opposing life and death in the ineluctable juxtaposition of the paternal kill and the maternal revival. The stain, no longer internalised as a disfigurement, appears only in its symbolic avatar. The hare as a specular image, in consonance with the reflected subject, points to the liberation of desire. It is the representation of *jouissance*, this eruption into the Symbolic from the Imaginary, transgressing the father's law. The subject appears as a process of becoming rather than fixed by social and familial structures or diverse categories. Both present and future carry the pledge of Gnosis, the knowledge of the world's mystery and of the self. The body becomes the site of rebirth. Ducornet intimates the subtle opening into the vastness of consciousness through her key term, spell, enchantment which evokes a sense of wonder and the response to the call of things. Cixous hears this call in the prose of Clarice Lispector: 'Lispector makes us hear things calling. The call there is in things: she gathers it back' (Cixous, 1991: 60). Calling and gathering form what the French writer terms as 'an opportunity for wonderful expansion' (ibid.: 42), part and parcel of the feminine libidinal economy. With the liberation of desire and its circulation through the image of femininity *The Stain* seems deep in the heart of Cixous's country. Ducornet depicts a bleak, cruel world. The flash of hope comes precisely from a victorious and promising femininity that seems to be absent from the Gothic tales of Edith Wharton, Carson McCullers or Flannery O'Connor.

An intimation of the sublime seems to inform the philosophical subtext of the novel. According to Bachelard 'l'image littéraire nous donne l'expérience d'une création de langage' (Bachelard, 1948: 7). Ducornet's seminal image of the stain, as a signifier of femininity calls to mind a rhetorical concept, *deinosis* which appears in Longinus, the advocate of the sublime in language. *Deinosis* refers to the terrifying and the marvellous, the capacity of the orator to stun the audience with an extraordinary, exaggerated image that verges on the scandalous. It seems that Ducornet relies on this concept in her attempt to encode femininity in an image that creates a language whose aim is ultimately the reconstruction of Eden. As she says, 'All my books investigate the end of Eden and the possibility of its reconstitution' (Ducornet, 1999: 3). Hawthorne's nostalgia for a pre-lapsarian world, embodied in an idealised image of femininity, also makes all the more salient the loss of Eden. Ducornet's constant play with the garden motif that runs through the novel and her faith in the female body, in the ability of the maternal to bestow life to what is seemingly death-bound, in her author's capacity to dissociate evil from the female genitals underpin her reconstitution of Eden. As Giovanna Covi advances, 'The reconstitution of Eden, indeed is the language of the voiceless and the damned who speak outside the logic of the domination that has previously emarginated and silenced them. In this sense Ducornet's Eden is what I call the feminist subject, a subject who is at home with the unattainable, enigmatic nature of the world' (Covi, 1998: 207). This is precisely Cixous's conception and representation of the feminine. Just like the French writer, Ducornet uses femininity as an antidote to alienation, and invites a straight-on look at the Medusa's face. Her Medusa, too, is beautiful and she is laughing. In *The Scarlet Letter* the body is stifled by its denial whose agent is the capital letter A, in *The Stain* the leaping hare becomes the symbol of a body that transcends its own limits to reach out to the enchanting mystery of the world.

*The Stain* could be fruitfully compared to John Updike's novel *S.* (1988), another rewriting of *The Scarlet Letter*. Updike was self-avowedly inspired by Hester in his attempt to create a strong female character in her own voice, as an answer to feminist claims that the American author never featured emancipated women. Sarah Worth oversteps the Hester model as she asserts her womanhood through her sexuality. *S.* stands for Sarah and for Siva, since Sarah, in the ashram where she seeks a new home, bears his serpent's name Kundalini, source of sexual and spiritual energy. *S.* also stands for sex and the US dollar, as Sarah is part and parcel of the American society Updike relentlessly satirises. Yet, neither Hester nor Charlotte is the target of any satiric intent, which confers some import upon the feminist subtext. Updike is a writer who forges in his texts the consciousness of his sex. It might be reckless to advance, though, that Hawthorne or Ducornet do the same.

Nevertheless, there is little doubt that Ducornet, having taken 'the garden path of intuition' (Ducornet, 1999: 4), serenely confronts the achievement of her predecessor without any 'anxiety of influence' (in Harold Bloom's famous phrase). Hawthorne does make an attempt towards the affirmation and liberation

of femininity before he finally succumbs to the domestic ideal of the nineteenth century. He writes within the limitations of his age and sex but whether voluntarily or not, he does open a breach, which Ducornet widens, ushering the reader into the open air of femininity. In his impulse for romance he makes a step toward what he calls 'anew truth' about the sexes (Ducornet, 1982: 275), which Ducornet takes into account in her own fable of femininity. From this point of view we could consider that her relation to Hawthorne might be complimentary and no doubt complementary.

If *The Scarlet Letter* can be read as a novel about the dismantlement of femininity, *The Stain* can certainly be approached as a text about the reconstruction of femininity, speaking anew in Ducornet's novel. For *The Stain* reminds us of the work of un-forgetting, un-silencing, un-earthing un-blinding that women have to keep in progress. To Gilbert and Gubar's playful question, 'if the pen is a metaphorical penis', as some male authors seemed to imply, 'with what organ can females generate texts?' (Gilbert and Gubar, 1979: 7), Ducornet seems to answer jocularly, by creating a character with a symbolic pudendum on her cheek, and a Janus-like face looking backward to her literary forefather, and forward to a revived image of woman set in the nineteenth century, yet informed by the gains of the twentieth. Mothering her own text Ducornet creates Charlotte out of the rib of Hester/Hawthorne. If Hawthorne pores over the unbearable gravity of being, it is over the unbearable lightness of being that Ducornet reflects.

## REFERENCES

- Bachelard, G. (1947) *La terre et les rêveries de la volonté*. Paris: José Corti.
- Bachelard, G. (1948) *La terre et les rêveries du repos*. Paris: José Corti.
- Bell, M. (2005) The obliquity of signs. P. S. Leland (ed.) *The Scarlet and Other Writings*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company.
- Cheigny, B. G. (1976) *The Woman and the Myth: Margaret Fuller's Life and Writings*. Old Westbury: The Feminist Press.
- Cixous, H. (1978) Le rire de la Méduse. A. Maité and A. Daniel (eds.) *Le Grief des femmes*. Paris: Editions Hier and Demain.
- Cixous, H. (1991) 'Coming into Writing' and Other Essays trans. S. Cornell, D. Jenson, A. Liddle and S. Sellers. Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press.
- Cixous, H. (1991) *L'Ange au secret*. Paris: Des Femmes Publisher.
- Cixous, H. and Clement, C. (1991) *The Newly Born Woman*, trans. B. Wing. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.
- Cixous, H. (1993) *Three Steps on the Ladder of Writing*, trans. S. Cornell, and S. Sellers. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Cixous, H. (1996) *Messie*. Paris: Des Femmes.
- Ducornet, R. (1982) *The Stain*. Normal, IL: Dalkey Arhive Press.
- Ducornet, R. (1999) *The Monstrous and the Marvellous*. San Francisco: City Lights.
- Covi, G. (1998) Gender derision, gender corrosion, and sexual differences in Rikki Ducornet's materialist Eden. *The Review of Contemporary Fiction*, Vol. XVIII (3): 205-216. Fall, Normal IL: Dalkey Arhive Press,.

- Gilbert, M. S. and Gubar, S. (1979) *The Madwoman in the Attic*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press.
- Gregory, S. and McCaffery, L. (1998) At the heart of Things Darkness and Wild Beauty: An Interview with Rikki Ducornet. *The Review of Contemporary Fiction*, Vol. XVIII (3): 126-145. Fall, Normal Il: Dalkey Arhive Press.
- Hancock, G. (1982) An Interview with Rikki. *The Canadian Fiction Magazine*, 44: 13-32.
- Hawthorne, N. (1970) *The Scarlet Letter*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- Kristeva, J. (1980) *Pouvoirs de l'horreur*. Paris: Seuil.
- Sellers, S (ed.), (1997) *The Hélène Cixous Reader*. London and New York, Routledge.
- Williams, R. L. (1998) Ducornet and Borges. *The Review of Contemporary Fiction*, Vol XVIII (3): 180-183. Fall, Normal Il: Dalkey Arhive Press.

**Aristi Trendel** (Dr., Assoc. Prof.) is currently working at the University of Maine, in Le Mans, France. Her field of research is modern American literature. Email: [aristi.trendel@sfr.fr](mailto:aristi.trendel@sfr.fr)

# PHRASEOLOGICAL UNITS AND IDIOMS, EAST AND WEST AND WHERE DO WE STAND

---

ANDREJS VEISBERGS

University of Latvia, Latvia

**Abstract.** Phraseology has come a long way since the beginning of its studies. While many issues have been resolved, others expanded, the essence of the basic units – phraseologism idiom are still contested. The variety of approaches to the concept of the phraseological unit (PU), its categorical features and scope as well as various classifications create a never ending controversy. This paper attempts to draw together the main viewpoints of Eastern and Western schools as well as determine the basic features of the PU without an attempt to create a rigid framework. It views the PU as a stable unit with a fully or partially figurative meaning. The author considers that attempts at establishing a universal classification are doomed to failure as all features of PUs are relative, scalar and flexible.

**Keywords:** phraseology, idiom, figurativeness, phraseological unit, definition, classification

There has been a steady growth of scholarly interest in phraseology in Europe over the last decades. Phraseology was long regarded as a peripheral issue, but it is now taking the centre stage in many domains of linguistics. The beginnings of phraseology, both practical (Knappe, 2004: 4) and theoretical (Charles Bally's *Locutions phraséologiques* (Bally, 1950)), can be traced back earlier, as a branch of linguistics in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, it was mostly developed in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union (Häusermann, 1977). This is where the concept of *phraseological unit* (PU) was defined and elaborated. Germanic studies usually operate with the term phraseologism (Burger, 1998a, 2007) which is broadly equivalent to a PU. Anglophone studies have tended to use the term 'idiom' and 'fixed expression'. The issue of the scope and domain of phraseology and the precise meaning of the terms 'phraseological unit' and 'phraseologism' are the central questions of phraseology, still not fully resolved to this day. As Cowie points out (2001: 210), 'phraseology is bedevilled by proliferation of terms', and, 'categorization is notoriously difficult in phraseology because of the bristling array of variables – syntactic, pragmatic, stylistic, semantic'. Although solving this issue is not our task, a brief consideration is required by this study.

History reveals two approaches to fixed collocations. The first mainly addresses word-like combinations (collocations and composites (Cowie, 1981; Steyer, 2008, Bergenholtz, 2008; Konecny, 2010); as opposed to sentence-like (Finkbeiner, 2008) phraseological combinations and expressions (Chernisheva, 1964; Schindler, 1993; Lueger, 1999), propositions (Glaeser, 1986), phraseological

expressions, pragmatic phrasemes (Mel'čuk, 1988), functional expressions (Cowie, 1988; Howarth, 1996), communicative formulas ('kommunikative, Formeln') (Fleischer, 1997: 125). Both these categories are generally viewed as subcategories of the larger concept of PUs, alias phraseologisms, set phrases, or set or stable word combinations.

The second approach focuses mainly at **motivation** aspects (Vietri, 1990; Dobrovol'skij, 2001; Dobrovol'skij and Piirainen, 2010) and figurativeness, and was pioneered by Vinogradov (1947). A combination of the two approaches has historically led to three different understandings of the concept of PU. However, the degree of motivation is not clear-cut but somewhat subjective, depending on the linguistic competence and cultural experience of the user (as well as the linguist).

The first concept within this approach was based on a narrow understanding of a PU as an opaque, invariable unit (Amosova, 1963) related to the word and its syntactic function (Babkin, 1970; Larin, 1977; Molotkov, 1977) in the Russian school, often referred to as 'idiom' in Anglo-Saxon linguistics (Horn, 2003) or occasionally as phraseme in German (Palm, 1997). Yet one must agree with Čermak (2001) who talks of 'perennial problems' with the substance of idioms, and Moon (1998: 3) who considers idiom as 'an ambiguous term used in conflicting ways'. It generally tends to mean a fully idiomatic unit, a 'fossilized collocation' (Saeed, 2002: 60), but also occasionally refers to any fixed phrases and sometimes includes even simple or complex words or any metaphorical expression (Oxford, 1992: 495-496). Moreover, the term 'idiom' is polysemantic in English and can refer to specific usages or vocabulary characteristic of a group of people or an individual, style, manner of speech, etc. As these meanings also refer to the sphere of linguistics, the term is rather unwelcome in research. This is one of the reasons we find the concept inconvenient. The second, broader argument against it is that the concept of a PU as an idiom (when we do manage to define it) is too narrow as it omits the majority of stable units with low or medium degrees of idiomaticity. Aristova (1979) believes that phraseology should cover language facts, united by the title 'the science of the phrase'. This can retrospectively be seen in the attempt of Anglophone linguists to define the domain of phraseology as consisting of idioms and fixed phrases and later accepting the term phraseologism or PU (Cowie, 1981, 1998). In addition, the boundary between a fully idiomatic phrase and a partially idiomatic phrase is vague as the phraseological stock normally consists of a varied set of expressions, starting with idioms and then gradually decreasing in idiomaticity to stable, non-idiomatic combinations on the periphery of idiomatic microsystems. Idiomaticity is scalar, ranging from strong to weak idiomatic constructions (Gibbon, 1981: 22). The gradation and transition of units with varying degrees of idiomaticity represents a universal feature of phraseology (Makkai, 1978: 415), and it seems wrong to restrict some of the range artificially. Besides, some studies and linguists argue that there is much more regularity underlying most

idioms, which we are normally not aware of when focusing on the arbitrariness of idiom semantics (Cassadei, 1996).

The particular vector of this study also argues against separating full idioms from partially figurative phrases. This is because borrowing takes place across the entire range of PUs, and the borrowing process is the same for all units, regardless of idiomaticity. Further, considering the evolution of phraseology, i.e. taking a diachronic perspective, we notice that PUs are often the developmental result of stable collocations; besides, many PUs lose their motivation when borrowed, and some lose it in the course of assimilation. However, there is no denying that there are differences between idioms and the rest of the PUs. Idioms have their own characteristics, but 'no artificial restriction of a phraseological research with a category of stable verbal varieties, even if it is central and the most specific, can be justified in terms of functional value of different types of language signs in social communication' (Chernisheva 1977: 42).

According to the second understanding, developed by Kunin (1970: 210), a PU is a stable word combination with a fully or partially figurative meaning. It thus differs from the other stable word combinations (collocations) of non-phraseological character in being at least partially transformed semantically. It can semantically relate to both a word and a sentence, and has at least minimum stability. This is the general and most widely accepted definition of the PU (Orlovskaya 1968, Chernisheva, 1977; Raihstein, 1980; Gläser, 1986; Veisbergs, 1986, 1989a, b, 1996, 1999, 2012; Naciscione, 2001, 2010 and others). Since we adhere to this concept, it will be discussed further in detail. Of late there have been attempts to introduce another term – phraseme – to substitute phraseologism or PU, having the same meaning (Burger, 2007: 11).

The third and broadest understanding defines a PU as a word combination, collocation or fixed phrase with or without any semantic transformation, having separate nomination powers (Arkhangelsky, 1964; Shansky, 1969; Benson, 1989; Moon, 2001; Hausmann, 2004; Philip, 2008). This concept actually comprises all complex stable items of nomination: fixed phrases, including terms, extended time fillers, pragmatic phrases, etc. The concept is not usually described in terms of phraseological units, e.g. in Italian it is called complex lexemes (*lessemicomplexi*) (De Mauro, 1996), in English occasionally multiword units (Coffey, 2001), set phrases or phrasemes (Mel'čuk, 1995) but presumes the inclusion of PUs. From our point of view, such a concept is too broad, because it lacks a number of a PU's categorical features and overemphasizes the feature of stability. On the other hand, it may for some specific purposes (lexicographic analysis, corpus linguistics) make sense to view all fixed expressions as one stock, where idiomaticity (always somewhat subjective) is a less appealing feature than measurable criteria, like frequency or co-occurrence. This aspect can be seen in the following definition by Gries (2008: 6): 'a phraseologism is defined as the co-occurrence of a form or a lemma of a lexical item and one or more additional linguistic elements of various kinds which functions as one

semantic unit in a clause or sentence and whose frequency of co-occurrence is larger than expected on the basis of chance'. Yet, as with idiom, producing a non-controversial definition of collocation seems to be impossible (Fontenelle, 2001: 191). The modern corpora studies have shown frequency distributions and variation (Sinclair, 1991; Moon, 2001; Stubbs, 2002; Fellbaum, 2004, 2006; Huemmer, 2006; Hanks, 2006) which reveal a different picture from the simple enumeration of PUs in various languages. Attempts have also been made to limit corpus investigations to idiomatic multiword units which invariably produce the traditional problem of delimitation of idiomaticity which is scalar (Grant, 2003). When contrasting stocks of phraseology in various languages, one cannot help but notice that similarities are more pronounced in colourful, metaphoric expressions of all types, but hardly in idiosyncratic (Benson, 1989) frozen collocations – functional expressions which dominate the scene of collocations in the language statistically (Moon, 2001). Functional expressions are very much source-language system related.

In our opinion, the second approach, defining a phraseological unit and phraseologism as a relatively stable combination of words with a completely or partially figurative meaning, is both theoretically and practically most appropriate. According to this definition there are three main features of a PU:

- 1) it consists of at least two components (separability);
- 2) it is (relatively) stable;
- 3) at least one component is used figuratively.

What are these main and secondary features characteristic of a PU?

Figurativeness, or semantic transfer, is the main feature of a PU. Figurative meaning consists in deviation from the literal meaning of the word combination or the components of a PU as a result of a semantic shift (Kunin, 1972: 72). The figurative meaning of a PU can be determined by comparing it with an identical literal counterpart (the non-figurative phrase, collocation or sentence) or, in the absence of a counterpart, by comparing the meaning of the PU with the literal meaning of its components.

Figurativeness as a feature of PU was first mentioned by Larin (1977), although he saw it only in idioms, i.e. in the narrow sense. The term 'idiomaticity' is similarly treated as a feature characteristic of idioms (Zhukov, 1986), i.e. of one group of PUs. Figurativeness is a broader concept than idiomaticity (Fernando, 1981, 1996; Gill, 2011) which is usually interpreted as a statement that the meaning of the whole cannot be derived from the meaning of the parts. There are authors who use other terms, e.g. metaphoricity (Degut, 1973, Vakurov, 1981) which is by and large identical to figurativeness. Towards the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, when the metaphor studies took a turn for conceptual and cognitive approach (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980; Lakoff, 1987), these were also partially transferred into idiom study (Dobrovol'skij, 1997, 2004; Omazić, 2008). Yet other researchers have pointed out that not all idioms



are metaphoric (Burger, 1998b) and not all metaphorical idioms can be traced back to general conceptual metaphors. Thus, figurativeness seems to us the preferable term. This approach to figurativeness resolves the issue of the range of phraseology.

Creating specific subtypes of PUs on the basis of their figurative meaning (which is scalar and not clear-cut) seems to be inexpedient, although the term 'idiom' is used to designate fully figurative PUs in this paper. Figurativeness may be complete or partial depending on whether it affects the entire phrase or a part of it. Figurativeness is a categorial property of PUs that distinguishes them from stable non-phraseological phrases (Naciscione, 2010). Most other features of PUs ultimately derive from this basic feature (Rey, 1973: 98).

**Multicomponentiality.** The general understanding of a PU implies the exclusion of simple complex word combinations (compounds) from the stock of phraseology. Nevertheless, this can be an issue in many concrete cases as there is a pronounced tendency in various languages for idiomatic compounds to turn into a phrase. Some PUs also fluctuate diachronically and synchronically between the form of a compound and the PU, English occasionally admits hyphenation: *fare-thee-well*, *jack-of-all-trades*; *up-to-date*; and hyphenation is rife in attributive use: *blue collar*: *blue-collar*. In some languages, like German and Latvian, the structural principle of clear juxtaposition of a multiple word unit versus compound resolves the issue; in other languages, such as English, the borderline might be less distinct. The upper boundary of a PU is a complex sentence, i.e. proverbs, sayings and winged words, if they are figurative in nature. The relation between the concept of PUs and proverbs is far from resolved. Many linguists include proverbs in phraseology (Shansky, 1969; Chernisheva, 1970; Kunin, 1970; Teliya, 1996; Burger, 1998a, b, 2007: 11), while others separate these concepts (Babkin, 1970; Kopylenko, 1973; Zhukov, 1986; Palm, 1997). It is, however, problematic to deny a concrete proverb its phraseological character solely because of its length. Besides, many extended PUs have quantitative variants and elliptical expressions; and denying the status of a PU to the full form while recognizing it for an elliptical one does not seem to make sense, e.g.

*(it is easier for a camel) (to go through) **the eye of a needle** (than for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of Heaven);*

*(to draw/pull) **a red herring** (across sb's path / track)*

**Stability** of PU. By stability or fixedness of a PU, we mean reproducibility of the phrase as a finished product which is based on the integrity of the nomination of the word combination and which predominates over separability in the mind of the user (reader or listener). Another term occasionally used is non-compositionality; yet, as Svensson shows, it seems to envelop several elements: non-motivation, opacity, unanalysability and figurativeness (Svensson, 2008: 82), which in our opinion makes it too cumbersome and broad. Stability or fixedness (Álvarez, 2008) is a measure of the resistance of a PU to its prototype free word combination. Stability is one of the main features distinguishing PUs from

free phrases. Kunin (1970: 88) treats PU stability as ‘the amount of invariance of various aspects of the phraseological level’ and distinguishes between the structurally-semantic, semantic, lexical and syntactic stability of use. However, it would be incorrect to treat stability as a static feature. PUs, like any living manifestation of language, are characterized by both stability and instability. These properties closely interact and ensure the functioning and dynamics of phraseological stock (Mokienko, 1980: 39). A PU is flexible, despite its stability, and this flexibility can be both language-based or linguistic and occasional or nonce. Phraseological instability as a language phenomenon (in Saussurian terms) is well expressed in the diachronic aspect as well in synchronic variants of the PU. Studies show that about 20% of Latvian PUs have variants (Orlovskaja, 1973: 27). Taking into account that many of these units have numerous variants, the total rate of variety is much higher. The speech or textual instability can be seen in the occasional, nonce or instantial (Naciscione, 2001, 2010) use of PUs – both on diachronic and synchronic level. In addition, modern corpus studies (Fellbaum, 2007; Huemmer, 2009) show a great variability in PUs in many languages. Thus, stability and variability are relative properties, although stability is a categorical feature of PUs (Rey, 1973).

Apart from these categorical properties, most PUs possess other properties.

Separability (a term proposed by Smirnitsky in 1956) broadly designates the presence of at least two words within the unit. Although the components of a PU actually are represented with words, though specifically used, this is only a superficial understanding of separability. As Arnold (1973: 166) points out, the separability of a PU does not only mean its multicomponent nature, but also presumes the syntactic relations that remain within the PU and can be activated by the use of PU in speech. Syntactic relations between the components may be interrupted if the user so wishes. Components are partially mobile (less so in idioms). Separation of words and deformation or transformation of units are possible. We cannot agree with a relatively widespread and old view (Molotkov, 1965: 78, 79) that words within a PU lose their features, their lexical meaning, grammatical category, syntactic function, links and relationships, and connections between elements (or components) of a PU stop being connections between words. According to Molotkov, the constituent parts of a PU should not be identified with a word. One could ask what a PU does consist of, being separable? How are transformations possible? We believe that, although the words in a PU lose some of their nature, a PU consists of words. To some extent, some idioms and pragmatic expressions might correspond to Molotkov’s concept, but they form only a small part of the stock of phraseological language and even idioms are transformable: their components can often be changed and substituted.

Semantic integrity in a way runs counter to its separability. Yet, this is only a potential contradiction, although it may become real under transformations. Separability exists on the level of formation and structure, but integrity and

inseparability on the level of semantics. Semantic integrity is sometimes designated as solidity, cohesion (Naciscione, 2001: 20), idiomaticity, or the integrity of the nomination. Semantic integrity presumes inner semantic unity of a PU, its holophrastic nature (fully evident in idioms proper). Semantic integrity is a relative feature of a PU as some PUs possess it to a greater extent than others, for example, idioms.

Figurativeness and the metaphorical nature of a PU are often associated with PU properties of secondary relevance, such as expressiveness and emotionality. Many PUs are expressive, which helps to emphasize the colouring of concepts. However, attribution of expressiveness to the main features of a PU (Mokienko, 1980: 4) is not substantiated. 'Expressiveness is a characteristic categorical feature of a phraseologism' (Vakurov, 1981: 58) seems erroneous to us because, despite the fact that expressiveness, emotionality, and evaluation of a PU are generated by the metaphorical (figurative) nature of a PU, not all PUs have preserved these features, and some PUs are emotional. Prolonged use of a PU, although it does not remove its metaphorical nature, can frequently erase its expressiveness (as evidenced by many clichés).

This brings us to the issue of a PU versus terminological unit. Linguistic and professional terminology studies often clearly separate these notions, as terms allegedly should be transparent, unambiguous, precise, and monosemantic (ISO, 1999), which as it were rules out the possibility of terms also being PUs. Yet in reality we see a different picture: many complex terms are closely related to PUs, carrying all the traits of the latter, e.g. *blind gut* (in medicine), *saltomortale* (in aviation), *false friends* or *faux ami* (in linguistics) have originated through metaphorisation of free word combinations. One of the methods of term creation is the use of figurative meaning (a metaphor, metonymy); therefore, they become idiomatic, e.g. *clover leaf*. If terminological units and complex terms (Cabre, 1998: 91) correspond to the definition of a PU, then the terminological character should not artificially exclude an expression from the category of phraseology (Veisbergs, 1989a). Terms are close to PUs in their semantic autonomy, collocational restriction (Ikere, 2011: 52) and independence from context. A compound term does not differ from a PU fundamentally when used figuratively. It should also be noted that some PUs of terminological character have no precise lexical counterpart in the language – they are the sole units that can denote phenomena and notions of reality. For example: *still life*, *lame duck*, *seed money*. This means that these PUs fill the gaps in nomination – a 'nominative vacuum' (Gering, 1983: 13) or lacuna (Schroeder, 1995: 10). Phraseology is rife in specialized texts (Glaeser, 2007).

Another group of terminological phrases consists of phrases that are not PUs when used in a 'native' terminological sphere because they lack figurativeness there, but which nevertheless develop a lasting tendency towards metaphoric use as a result of frequent use and popularity. This creates a stylistic effect: a compound term thus 'lights up' in a new context. In this way numerous idioms

have originated from professional terminology domains, e.g. *road map*, *trump card*. Whole layers of non-figurative cricket and baseball terms are frequently used in idiomatic sense today, e.g. *to play softball*, *to play hardball*. When used frequently, terminological phrases tend to migrate to a different language domain (journalese, colloquial, standard language). They may undergo a semantic change in the different domain, or function in both domains. Generally, the transition of terminological phrases into a PU undergoes the following stages:

- 1) 'transfer' of a terminological phrase in non-terminological context;
- 2) use of the terminological phrase in a figurative meaning;
- 3) adoption of the figurative meaning by regular use in standard language.

As a rule, when the functional range of a PU increases, the figurative meaning intensifies its abstract character. The above processes mainly refer to the source language. When borrowed, PUs of a terminological character are usually transferred both in their terminological and figurative meaning, sometimes in the figurative sense alone. Thus, for example, the English PU *dark horse* which meant *a horse with unknown racing abilities in equestrian sport*, undergoing the second metaphorisation, gained political semantics (an unknown candidate for the presidential election), and it is used to characterise an unknown candidate in any sphere. This is attested by the path within a century from specialised jargon through colloquial speech to standard language.

Finally, some remarks on the usefulness of classifications of the PUs. The phraseological stock of a language comprises many PUs of various types: this has prompted researchers to create numerous and different classifications trying to introduce some order in the seemingly chaotic collection of heterogeneous units. This was started by Vinogradov's concept based on grading the motivation of the components of PUs. Yet motivation, in our opinion, is an extremely ambiguous issue and category. Firstly, diachronically: many units that were motivated have now become unmotivated (archaization of lexical components, etc.). Secondly, it depends on the knowledge of the individual, e.g. many antique idioms are relatively transparent for a person with a classical education, but may seem unmotivated to someone lacking it. Later attempts were made to improve this classification, but in our opinion these were unsuccessful as they usually involved adding other criteria, but retaining motivation. The abundance of classifications, in our opinion, is caused by the wide range of studies, approaches, goals and definitions, etc. since, in all probability, no classification can meet all objectives, and there is always room for some subjectivity (Laua, 1992: 6).

Thus, though there are numerous possibilities of classifying PUs (e.g. thematic, by origin, stylistic register, functionality, frequency, etc.) these classifications are of limited use in the narrow spheres of study. Yet, it sometimes makes sense to refer to the units as verb collocations, noun collocations, adverb collocations and preposition collocation. This simple grammatical classification dates back to Palmer (1933: 18). Also Kunin's (1972) structural and semantic

classification can help make some generalizations about the prevalence of a particular type of a PU in phraseological stock. This classification gives four types of PUs:

- 1) nominative, i.e. identifying the objects, events, etc.: *love triangle*;
- 2) nominative-communicative: *to be in the same boat*;
- 3) exclamatory and modal, i.e. expressing emotions, intentions: *et tu Brute?, you too, Brutus?, fuck off!*;
- 4) communicative, i.e. a PU with a structure of simple and complex sentences; this class includes proverbs and sayings: *my home is my castle*.

However, a canonical classification based on the categorical features seems to be impossible as it is likely to be extremely subjective and not universal. The features of the PU are too flexible and even the categorical characteristics are sometimes relative diachronically and in speech use. This is another reason why it seems reasonable not to try to subdivide the extremely versatile phraseological stocks into controversial domains based on subjective objectives or targets. Phraseology constitutes a varied system of overlapping, flexible sets of units which are in a continuous flux diachronically and synchronically, reflecting the current needs of their users.

## REFERENCES

- [Amosova] Амосова, Н. Н. (1963) Основы английской фразеологии. Ленинград: Наука.
- Álvarez de la Granja, M. (ed.) (2008) *Fixed Expressions in Cross-Linguistic Perspective. A Multilingual and Multidisciplinary Approach*. Hamburg: Verlag Dr. Kovac.
- [Aristova] Аристова, В. М. (1979) Англо-русские языковые контакты и заимствования (XVI-XX вв.): Диссертация доктора филологических наук. Калининград.
- [Arnold] Арнольд, И. В. (1973) Стилистика современного английского языка. Ленинград: Просвещение.
- [Arhangelsky] Архангельский, Б. А. (1964) Устойчивые фразы в современном русском языке. Ростов, н/Д.
- [Babkin] Бабкин, А. М. (1970) *Русская фразеопогия ее развитие и источники*. Ленинград: Наука.
- Bally, C. (1950) *Linguistique générale et linguistique historique*. Berne.
- Benson, M. (1989) The structure of collocational dictionary. *International Journal of Lexicography*, 2(1): 1-14.
- Bergenholtz, H. (2008): Von Wortverbindungen, die sie Kollokationen nennen. *Lexicographica*, 24: 9-20.
- Burger, H. (1998a) *Phraseologie*. Berlin: Erich Schmidt Verlag.
- Burger, H. and Linke, A. (1998b) Historische Phraseologie. In *Sprachgeschichte. Ein Handbuch zur Geschichte der deutschen Sprache und ihrer Erforschung*. 2. Auflage. 1 (pp. 743-755). Teilband. Berlin/New York.
- Burger, H., Dobrovolskij, D., Kühn, P. and Norrick, N.-R. (2007). Phraseology: Subject area, terminology and research topics. In H. Burger, D. Dobrovolskij, P. Kühn and

- N.-R. Norrick (eds.), *Phraseologie: Ein internationales Handbuch zeitgenössischer Forschung und Phraseologie. 1. Halbband* (pp. 10-19). Berlin, New York: Walter de Gruyter.
- Cabre, T. (1998) *Terminology. Theory, Methods and Applications*. Amsterdam, Philadelphia: John Benjamins.
- [Chernisheva] Чернышева, И. И. (1977) Актуальные проблемы фразеологии. Вопросы языкознания, 5: 34-42.
- Coffey, S. (2001) Disturbing the Form-Meaning Nucleus of Multiword Units: Data and Issues. In *Studi Italiani di Linguistica Teorica e Applicata*, 2, (pp. 215-228).
- Cowie, A. P. (1981) The Treatment of Collocations and Idioms in Learner's dictionaries *SMALL Applied Linguistics*. Vol 2: 223-235. Cowie, A. P. (1988) Stable and Creative Aspects of Vocabulary Use. In R. Carter and M. J. McCarthy (eds.) *Vocabulary and Language Teaching* (pp. 126-137). London: Longman.
- Cowie, A. P. (2001) Phraseological Dictionaries: Some East-West Comparisons. In A. P. Cowie (ed.) *Phraseology: Theory, Analysis and Applications* (pp. 209-228). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Čermak, F. (2001) Substance of Idioms: Perennial Problems. Lack of data or Theory. *International Journal of Lexicography*, 14 (1): 1-20.
- De Mauro, T. and Voghera, M. (1996) Scala mobile. Un punto di vista sui lessemi complessi. In P. Beninca, G. Cinque, T. De Mauro, N. Vincent (a cura di): *Italiano e dialettini nel tempo* (pp. 99-131). Roma: Bulzoni.
- Degut, M. B. (1973) Idioms. *Babel*, 19 (4): 168-169.
- Dobrovolskij, D. (1997) *Idiome im mentalen Lexicon: Ziele und Methoden der kognitiv basierten Phraseologieforschung*. Trier.
- Dobrovolskij, D. (2001) Zur Motivation in der Idiomatik. In A. Häcki Buhofer, H. Burger, L. Gautier (eds.) *Phraseologiae Amor* (pp. 89-98). Baltmannsweiler: Schneider Verlag Hohengehren.
- Dobrovolskij, D. (2004) Idiome aus kognitiver Sicht. In K. Steyer (ed.) *Wortverbindungen – mehr oder weniger fest (Jahrbücher des Instituts für deutsche Sprache 2003)* (pp. 117-144). Berlin/New York: de Gruyter.
- Dobrovolskij, D. and Piirainen, E. (2010) Idioms: Motivation and etymology. *Yearbook of Phraseology*. Berlin, New York: Walter de Gruyter Mouton.
- Fellbaum, C. (2004) Idiome in einem Digitalen Lexikalischen System. *Linguistik und Literatur*. 34: 56-71.
- Fellbaum, C. et al. (2006) Corpus-based Studies of German Idioms and Light Verbs. *International Journal of Lexicography*. Vol. 19.4: 249-360.
- Fellbaum, C. (2007) *Idioms and Collocations. Corpus-based Linguistic and Lexicographic Studies*. New York: Continuum.
- Fernando, C. and Flavell R. (1981) On Idiom: Critical Views and Perspectives. *Exeter Linguistic Studies* 5 (pp. 1-94). Exeter: University of Exeter.
- Fernando, C. (1996) *Idioms and Idiomaticity*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Finkbeiner, R. (2008) *Idiomatische Sätze im Deutschen: Syntaktische, semantische und pragmatische Studien und Untersuchung ihrer Produktivität*. Stockholm: Acta Universitatis Stockholmiensis.
- Fontanelle, T. (2001) Discovering Significant Lexical Functions in Dictionary Entries. In Cowie A. P. Ed. *Phraseology: Theory, Analysis and Applications* (pp. 189-208). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Fleischer, W. (1997) *Phraseologie der deutschen Gegenwartssprache*. Tübingen: Max Niemeyer.

- [Gering] Геринг, А. Г. (1983) Современное состояние англо-датских языковых контактов: Автореф. дис. канд. филол. наук. Москва.
- Gibbon, D. (1981) Idiomaticity and functional variation: A case study of international amateur radio talk. *Language in Society*, 10 (1): 21-42.
- Gill, P. (2011) *Colouring Meaning*. Amsterdam, Philadelphia: John Benjamins.
- Gläser, R. (1986) *Phraseologie der englischen Sprache*. Leipzig: Verlag Enzyklopadie.
- Grant, L. (2003) *A Corpus-based Investigation of Idiomatic Multiword units*. Victoria University of Wellington.
- Gries, S. (2008) Phraseology and linguistic theory: a brief survey. In S. Granger and F. Meunier (eds). *Phraseology. An interdisciplinary perspective* (pp. 3-25). Amsterdam, Philadelphia: John Benjamins.
- Hanks, P. et al. (2006) German Light Verb Constructions in Corpora and Dictionaries. *International Journal of Lexicography*. Vol. 19.4: 439-458.
- Häusermann, J. (1977) *Hauptprobleme der deutschen Phraseologie auf der Basis sowjetischer Forschungsergebnisse*. Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag.
- Hausmann, F. J. (2004) Was sind eigentlich Kollokationen? In K. Steyer (ed.) *Wortverbindungen – mehr oder wenig fest* (pp. 309-334). Berlin, New York: De Gruyter.
- Horn, G. M. (2003) Idioms, metaphors and syntactic mobility. *Journal of Linguistics*. 39: 245-273.
- Howarth, P. (1996) Phraseology in English Academic Writing: Some Implications for Language Learning and Dictionary Making. *Lexicographica*, Series maior 75. Tübingen: Max Niemeyer.
- Huemmer, C. (2006) Polysemy and Vagueness in Idioms: A Corpus-based Analysis of Meaning. *International Journal of Lexicography*. Vol. 19.4: 361-378.
- Huemmer, C. (2009) *Synonymie bei phraseologischen Einheiten. Eine korpusbasierte Untersuchung*. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang.
- Ikere, Z. (2011) *Translating English Philosophical Terminology into Latvian: A Semantic Approach*. Daugavpils: Saule.
- ISO / FDIS 704 (1999)
- Knappe, G. (2004). *Idioms and Fixed Expressions in English Language Study before 1800*. Frankfurt am Main, New York: Peter Lang.
- Konecny, C. (2010) *Kollokationen. Versuch einer semantisch-begrifflichen Annäherung und Klassifizierung anhand italienischer Beispiele*. München: Martin Meidenbauer.
- [Корыленко] Копыленко, М. М. (1973) Сочетаемость лексем в русском языке. Москва: Просвещение.
- [Kunin] Кунин, А. В. (1970) Английская фразеология (теоретический курс). Москва: Высшая школа.
- [Kunin] Кунин, А. В. (1972) О структурно-семантической классификации фразеологических значений. In Вопросы семантики фразеологических, германских и романских языков, ч. II (с. 72-77). Новгород.
- Lakoff, G. and Johnson, M. (1980) *Metaphors We Live By*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Lakoff, G. (1987) *Women, Fire and Dangerous Things*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- [Larin] Ларин, Б. А. (1977) История русского языка и общее языкознание. (Избр. работы). Москва: Просвещение.
- Laua, A. (1992) *Latviešu valodas frazeoloģija*. Rīga: Zvaigzne.
- Lueger, H. H. (1999) *Satzwertige Phraseologismen. Eine pragmalinguistische Untersuchung*. Wien: Edition Praesens.

- Makkai, A. (1978) Idiomaticity as a Language Universal. In *Universals of Human Language* (pp. 401-448). Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Meľchuk, I. (1988) Semantic Description of Lexical Units in an Explanatory Combinatorial Dictionary: Basic Principles and Heuristic Criteria. *International Journal of Lexicography*. 1/3, (pp. 165-188).
- Meľčuk, I. A. (1995) Phrasemes in language and phraseology in linguistics. In M. Everaert, E. van der Linden, A. Schenk & R. Schreuder (eds.) *Idioms: Structural and Psychological perspectives* (pp. 167-232). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- [Mokienko] Мокиенко, В. М. (1980) Славянская фразеология. Москва: Высшая школа.
- [Molotkov] Молотков, А. И. (1965) Понятие формы слова. In Проблемы фразеологии и задачи ее изучения в высшей и средней школе (сс. 78-79). Вологда.
- [Molotkov] Молотков, А. И. (1977) Основы фразеологии русского языка. Ленинград: Наука.
- Moon, R. (1998) *Fixed Expressions and Idioms in English*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Moon, R. (2001) Frequencies and forms of Phrasal Lexemes in English. In A. P. Cowie (ed). *Phraseology: Theory, Analysis and Application* (pp. 79-100). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Naciscione, A. (2001) *Phraseological Units in Discourse: Towards Applied Stylistics*. Riga: LAC.
- Naciscione, A. (2010) *Stylistic Use of Phraseological Units in Discourse*. Amsterdam, Philadelphia: John Benjamins.
- Omazić, M. (2008) Processing of idioms and idiom modifications: A view from cognitive linguistics. In S. Granger and F. Meunier (eds) *Phraseology. An interdisciplinary perspective* (pp. 67-79). Amsterdam, Philadelphia: John Benjamins.
- Orlovskaya, L. (1975) Dažas inovācijas angļu un latviešu frazeoloģijā. In *Inovācijas dažādos valodas līmeņos* (pp. 50-64). Rīga: LVU.
- [Orlovskaya] Орловская, Л. Я. (1968) Сопоставительный анализ фразеологических единиц латышского и английского языков и некоторые принципы составления латышско-английского фразеологического словаря: Автореф. дис. канд. фил. наук. Москва.
- The Oxford Companion to the English Language* (1992).
- Palmer, H. E. (1933) *Second Interim Report on English Collocations*. Tokyo: Kaitakusha.
- Palm, C. (1997) *Phraseologie: eine Einführung*. 2. Auflage. Tübingen: Gunter Narr Verlag.
- Philip, G. (2008) Reassessing the canon: 'Fixed' phrases in general reference corpora. In S. Granger and F. Meunier (eds). *Phraseology. An interdisciplinary perspective* (pp. 95-108). Amsterdam, Philadelphia: John Benjamins.
- [Raihstein] Райхштейн, А. Д. (1980) Сопоставительный анализ немецкой и русской фразеологии. М.: Высшая школа.
- Rey, A. (1973) La phraseologie et son image dans les dictionnaires de l'âge classique, in *Travaux de linguistique et de littérature* (pp. 97-107). Strasbourg, 2 (1).
- Saeed, J. (2003) *Semantics*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Schindler, W. (1993) Phraseologismen und Wortfeldtheorie. In P. R. Lutzeier (Hg.): *Studien zur Wortfeldtheorie./Studies in Lexical Field Theory* (pp. 87-106). Tübingen: Niemeyer.
- Schroeder, H. (1995) 'Lacunae' and the covert problems of understanding texts from foreign cultures. In H. Schroeder, B. Dellinger (eds) *Lacunaology. Studies in Intercultural Communication* (pp. 10-25). Vaasa.



- [Shansky] Шанский, Н. М. (1969) Фразеология современного русского языка. Москва: Высшая школа.
- Sinclair, J. (1991) *Corpus, Concordance, Collocation*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- [Smirnitsky] Смирницкий, А. И. (1956) Лексикология английского языка. Москва: Издательство литературы на иностранных языках.
- Steyer, K. (2008) Kollokationen in deutschen Wörterbüchern und in der deutschen Wörterbuchforschung. *Lexicographica, Thementeil: Kollokationen in der europäischen Lexikographie und Wörterbuchforschung*, 24: 185-207.
- Stubbs, M. (2002) *Words and Phrases: Corpus Studies in Lexical Semantics*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Svensson, M. H. (2008) A very complex criterion of fixedness: Non-compositionality. In S. Granger and F. Meunier (eds) *Phraseology. An interdisciplinary perspective* (pp. 81-93). Amsterdam, Philadelphia: John Benjamins.
- [Teliya] Телия, В. Н. (1996) Русская фразеология: Семантический, прагматический и лингвокультурологический аспекты. Москва: Языки русской культуры.
- [Vakurov] Вакуров, В. Н. (1981) Метафорическая природа фразеологических единств русского языка. *Филол. науки*. №4. 48-55.
- [Veisbergs] Вейсбергс, А. (1986) Окказиональное использование фразеологических единиц как семантико-стилистическая универсалия индоевропейских языков. *Известия АН АССР*. 10: 121-128.
- Veisbergs, A. (1989a) Terminu un frazeoloģijas attiecības. *Latviešu valodas kultūras jautājumi*. 134-138.
- Veisbergs, A. (1989b) Latviešu frazeoloģijas cilmes problēmas // *LPSR ZA Vēstis*. No.9: 46-57.
- Veisbergs, A. (1996) Idiom Transformation, Idiom Translation and Idiom Dictionaries. In *Lexicographica*, Series Maior 76 (pp. 241-246). Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag.
- Veisbergs, A. (1999) *Idioms in Latvian*. Riga: University of Latvia.
- Veisbergs, A. (2012) *Phraseological Borrowing*. Berlin: Logos.
- Vietri, S. (1990) La sintassi delle frasi idiomatiche. *Studi italiani di linguistica teorica e applicata* 19: 133-146.
- [Vinogradov] Виноградов, В. В. (1947) Виноградов В. В. Основные типы фразеологических единиц в русском языке (pp. 21-28). Русский язык.
- [Zhukov] Жуков, В. П. (1986) Русская фразеология. Москва: Высшая школа.

**Andrejs Veisbergs** (Prof., Dr. Habil. Philol.) is working at the University of Latvia. He is a Consultant of Oxford English Dictionaries and European Union accredited interpreter. His research interests include lexicography, idioms, language contacts, translation and interpreting. Email: anveis@lanet.lv





**Baltic Journal of English Language, Literature and Culture**, Volume 3, 2013

---

LU Akadēmiskais apgāds  
Baznīcas iela 5, Rīga, LV-1010  
Tālrunis 67034535

Iespiests SIA «Latgales druka»