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THE HONG KONG POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY
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Excelling in Professional Communication

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Language for Professional Communication:

Research, Practice & Training

Edited by
Vijay K Bhatia
Winnie Cheng
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Asia-Pacific LSP and Professional Communication Association

Language for Professional Communication: Research, Practice and Training

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Preface

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Department of Linguistics

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This is a remarkable book in many ways: not only does it present a widely diverse set of papers from an equally diverse geographically and institutionally-based authorship but it represents the first of what we hope will be many similar collections and publications that lie under the aegis of the newly-formed *Asia-Pacific LSP and Professional Communication Association*[1].

Some history might be useful here. In 2006, Vijay Bhatia and I conceived of the idea that it would be worth floating the concept of such an Association, reflecting both the extraordinary growth and present development of its themes in the Asia-Pacific, but also as a valuable partner with the much longer standing European Association for LSP. At the same time, we wanted to see if it might be possible to marry the long-standing interests in LSP with those of professional and organisational communication. Typically, the former has resided academically in the world of Applied Linguistics while the latter, much more diverse, has had its centre in a range of professional and organisationally specific arenas, together with some more general focus on communication as a central construct. In short, *Asia-Pacific LSP and Professional Communication* was to be not only new in its location, but also in its intellectual and practical domain. Following some enthusiastic responses from scholars in the region to the idea of a preliminary scouting meeting to be held at Macquarie University, Sydney, and already heartened by the strong support and interest of colleagues in Hong Kong, notably Winnie Cheng at the Hong Kong Polytechnic University, and others in the region, for example Azirah Hashim in Kuala Lumpur, the Macquarie meeting discussed and determined that an Association of the kind proposed would be both well received and valuable, with its three foci of Research, Practice and Training. In short, the way was open. Following that meeting, an interim committee was established with the aim of developing a constitution, and after intensive canvassing of opinion both in the region and in consort with the European Association, the draft constitution was to be presented at the initial conference of the Association, organised jointly by a team in Hong Kong from the City University of Hong Kong, the Hong Kong Polytechnic University and the Hong Kong Institute of Education. That conference, held in Hong Kong in December 2008, and supported by both the City University of Hong Kong and the Hong Kong Polytechnic University, was a very great success, with speakers coming from a wide range of Asia-Pacific centres but also from Europe, North America and Latin America. This edited collection of papers from that conference is one outcome. Most significantly, it

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[1] For information about the Association go to the website at http://www.english.cityu.edu.hk/aplspca

also represents the birth of the new Association and heralds what will become a force for exchange and innovation in all three aspects I refer to above: Research, Practice, and Training.

So much for history. What about ideas and practice?

The study of language in the context of professional communication, for example in the domains and fields of law, education, business, healthcare, social welfare, bureaucratic processes, media – from the perspective of language and communication (in the broad sense of discourse) has a long-standing history, beginning with the mid nineteen seventies and early nineteen eighties. We can group this body of literature generally under three categories[2]:

(i)   descriptive, genre and text-based studies focusing on specialised registers, mainly involving written texts, but extending increasingly to multimodal and semiotically varied realisations, originally, but not exclusively, from the context of education, especially the academy, but now extending across a wide range of domains;

(ii)   interpretive studies of talk and interaction in professional and organisational sites and settings, sometimes involving critical moments in crucial sites such as those that occur in team meetings, cross-examination of witnesses in courtrooms, contexts of risk in social care, the delivery of bad news in healthcare contexts, business negotiations, job interviews and performance appraisals etc, and especially in intercultural contexts;

(iii)   problem-centred, interventionist studies in the spirit of pursuing relevant applied linguistics and communication research, often involving close collaboration between discourse analysts/applied linguists/communication specialists and members of various professions and organisations, where research is focused, in part at least, on exploring the potential for systemic change in structures or in delivery, through interactional studies of focal themes.

It is clear that such categories, while emphasising the importance of *domain* or field of study, extend beyond this to a consideration of the particular conditions of *site*. It is also clear that such conditions cannot only be studied *descriptively* in terms of their objects – their texts, their interactions – but require *interpretive* engagement with the meanings made in such sites and through such texts, involving all participants. At the same time, such descriptions and interpretations, focused as they are on the micro of the interaction order, need connecting with the macro conditions of the institutional order, seen both historically and social structurally. Nor should one be so focused on the

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[2] The argument and exemplification here owes a good deal to discussions and formulations with Professor Srikant Sarangi of the Health Communication Research Centre at Cardiff University UK in the context of our joint research and publishing work in professional communication research; with colleagues and research students at Macquarie University in the Program in Communication in Professions and Organisations, notably Dr Alan Jones and Dr Sally Candlin; in the context of developing a multiperspectived research methodology with Dr Jonathan Crichton at the University of South Australia; with colleagues who are members of the European LSP Association, notably Professor Maurizio Gotti of Bergamo, Italy; and with the editors of this book over a long period of time in relation to a range of research projects and initiatives.

particularities of the given domain and site that one ignores the considerable potential for cross-domain and cross-site parallels and influences, both in terms of cross-cutting themes and of relevant methodologies. Indeed, it may be said that one of the notable new orientations of professional communication research and practice is precisely to engage with such inter-domain and inter-site constructs, such as *Trust*, *Risk* and *Quality* which are salient in many, if not all, professional domains and sites, which are characteristically discoursed, and which offer the occasion to refocus our research and practice on underlying theoretical issues as diverse as:

- Agency: (in the micro and/or the macro context)

- Identity: (involving gender, class, age, ethnicity, culture)

- Role: (role shifts, participation management, negotiation, (dis)enfranchisement

- Knowledge management: (control, data sourcing, differential expertise, risk and outcome assessment)

- Interpretive repertoires/perspectives: ((mis)framings, lay versus expert stances, researcher and participant perspectives)

- Reasoning: (lay and professional explanations and conceptualisation)

- Ethics: (moral behaviours, constraints and expectations)

Research in professional communication can thus make a significant contribution to our understanding of communication processes, participants and their roles, their objectives and goals, and the communication contexts within which knowledge-based professional practice takes place. This research will inherently become (and has indeed already become) an interdisciplinary undertaking, privileging a broad view of language and communication to include in its linked, and in some cases integrated methodologies formal studies of texts, genres and discourses in a range of semiotic modes, grounded ethnographic studies of contexts of use, more social psychological studies of participants' attitudes, identities and interpretive processes, all linkable to organizational studies of institutional and professional structures.

Such a professional communication-oriented perspective can not only build on the cumulative insights gained from discourse based studies and the body of literature in the sociology of professions and the sociology of work, it can also foreground a problem-orientation, deeply embedded in methodological and analytical challenges, so that research outcomes are made *practically relevant.* This, what has been called the "*'So what*?*'* factor", is central to our field and to our study. A particular challenge for researchers and practitioners in professional communication is how best to explore ways of accessing the tacit knowledge base that underlies professional practice in our chosen sites of engagement, and how to make a reflexive approach both for ourselves and for members of our target groups an indispensable part of our practice and our training endeavours.

So much for what drives our activity and our work. Where does this book make its contribution?

Taking a position on how these papers might be ordered is always a fraught endeavour for any editors (and of course these like any other groupings are in the last analysis arbitrary, and readers will reconstitute the contents according to their own preferred interests and motives) we can perhaps suggest some connections and linkages among them. For example, we can note how the paper from Li Lan and Lucy MacGregor with its focus on metaphor links with that of Giannoni, although of course in different cultural settings and sites, and again, with that of Janet Ho, thus identifying metaphor as an increasingly powerful construct in professional communication research. Leung Chi Kong's paper on hedging highlights the importance of the interpersonal focus on tenor, as does Nagiko Iwata Lee's cross-culturally focused paper on stance and engagement in writing, and Paulina Gocheco's work on politeness in television-mediated political campaigns in the Philippines. The need for careful linguistic description of lexico-grammatical change is evidenced by Răzvan Săftoiu, Mihaela Gheorghe and Stanca Măda's paper on Romanian workplace communication, and how semantic networks in a SFG tradition can suggest ways in which the broader institutional context can be linked via the construct of networks to the textualisation in the lexico-grammar is the focus on Ayako Ochi's paper on news broadcasts in English. That such constructs as personality and identity can be the property of institutions and not just persons is a way in which we can place Amy Suen's paper on the self-representation of hotel homepages. Often less appreciated than it should be is the focus in Stephanie Schnurr's and Bernie Mak's paper on humour in the workplace, mediating if you like, metaphor, pragmatics and workplace culture. Exploring how culture now seen more ethnolinguistically impacts on media choice and media content is the focus of Marinel Gerritsen's paper, serving to make the connection between genre, textualisation and context in an intercultural frame. Papers which privilege and focus our attention of particular domains, especially highlighting the pathway from research idea to research project and the stance of the researcher, include Janet Brady's account of her study of accessing the corporate world, and Annikki Koskenssalo's focus on what she terms the transdisciplinary and transcultural research alliance, the latter opening a means whereby, despite its wide geographical and cultural distance, we can explore Xu Xiaofei's paper on the adjustment of Chinese expatriates to the English-mediated world of international business. Getting down to the interactional ground in such a world, Anita Wolfartsberger's paper on meeting management suggests a way to cross the bridge from research to practice allowing us to appreciate the field research underpinning Janet Holmes' and Nicky Riddiford's paper, drawing on their extensive Workplace Language project, on the interactional challenges facing migrants to New Zealand. Inherent in many of the papers is the commitment to training and professional development that we highlighted earlier as one of the poles on which the Asia-Pacific LSP and Professional Communication Association was founded. Some papers, however, have that focus as a central theme: Kevin Knight's account of the professional communication underpinning of a business internship program is one such, as is that of Okamoto, Yasumuro, Yamamoto and Fuyuki (both papers incidentally from Japan), Trinidad Fernández and Pam Peters' study on providing ESP courses for

architecture students drawing on what they refer to as transdisciplinary research, and David Qian's account of a program targeting the needs of novice professionals to develop specific English language competences. Finally, the overriding focus on diversity within the LSP and professional communication paradigm is perhaps best exemplified by the paper from Marie Josée Berger, Georges Sefa Dei & Renée Forgette-Giroux, which, although sited in a school-based context and not in the workplace, shows how themes such a multi-literacy and the construction of knowledge are central to providing opportunity and access, both concepts which transcend country, institution and professional site.

The four editors of this remarkable volume are to be congratulated for the way in which they have not only provided a remarkable re-collection of an inaugural conference but also for enabling such a clear focus on its agenda and that of the Association which was its host.

Colour Metaphors in Business Discourse

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Abstract

Colour terms are widely used both literally and metaphorically in different language genres, and they may also reflect cultural identities of the language user. This paper takes a corpus-driven approach to compare colour terms in business English between Hong Kong and the United Kingdom. Two specialised corpora were chosen for analysis: a Hong Kong finance corpus (HK-F) and the financial texts from the British National Corpus (BNC-F), each comprising approximately seven million words. The discussion focuses on eight basic colour words: *black*, *white*, *green*, *red, yellow*, *blue*, *brown* and *grey*. All eight colours were used literally and metaphorically in both corpora but quantitative and qualitative differences were apparent. Colour words appeared more frequently overall in the BNC-F than in the HK-F with the exception of *yellow* but more often as metaphors in the HK-F with the exception of *red*. The ratios of literal to metaphoric use of colour terms showed large variation between colours and corpora. We discuss a number of the colour metaphors in business discourse and suggest cultural reasons for differences in usage between the corpora.

Key words: *metaphor*, *colour*, *business discourse*, *corpus*

1.   Introduction

'Metaphor is pervasive in everyday life, not just in language but in thought and action' (Lakeoff & Johnson, 1980, p. 3). Writers and speakers use metaphor to express abstract, difficult-to-talk-about concepts in terms of concrete entities which are easier to understand (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Lakoff, 1993). This can be further depicted by one of the twelve metaphor functions proposed by Goatly (1997), a function termed 'explanation', which includes 'filling lexical gaps', 'reconceptualisation', and 'expressing an emotional attitude'.

Cognitive linguistics provides a framework within which metaphors can be described and understood. Cognitive linguistics is underpinned by the assumption that language reflects thought; a specific aim is the analysis of linguistic metaphors to make inferences about underlying conceptual metaphors which are then used to make inferences about thought (Cameron & Low, 1999, p. 18). Analysis of linguistic metaphors requires identification of the underlying source domain whose (tangible) properties have been transferred to a target domain. Cognitive linguistics has had a significant influence on metaphor theories (e.g., Gibbs, 1994; 1992; Kittay, 1987; Lakoff & Johnson, 1980), but is not without its critics who argue that it relies heavily on researcher intuition and that metaphor must be considered in its context (e.g., Cameron, 1999; Deignan, 2008). Such criticisms can be addressed by the use of corpus approach. Corpus linguistics is the study of authentic language in context. It enables claims about language use to be made from real-life data rather than relying on intuitions which are unreliable (Sinclair, 1991; Teubert, 2005, p. 1) or on data that is experimentally elicited in psycholinguistic studies and which may be atypical (Deignan, 2008).

Corpus linguistics is the study of language in context. Nowadays, the corpus is considered the default resource for almost anyone working in linguistics. 'No introspection can claim credence without verification through real language data' (Teubert, 2005, p. 1). Authentic data analyses enables the description of words in terms of collocation, colligation, semantic prosody and semantic preference (Sinclair, 1991) in an attempt to uncover the patterns of word co-occurrence and reveal meaning in context. Critical Metaphor Analysis (Charteris-Black, 2004) is an approach to metaphor analysis that aims to reveal intentions of the language users. It integrates corpus linguistics with cognitive linguistics and Critical Discourse Analysis, and has three stages: identification of candidate metaphors, interpretation of the conceptualization underlying the linguistic metaphoric forms, and explanation of the metaphoric uses in terms of their discourse function or rhetorical motivation (Charteris-Black, 2004). Many researchers claim to have used corpora in metaphor analysis, but they mainly used quotations from the corpora, or only worked on a list of potential figurative items. There seems to have been little attempt to draw a fuller picture of metaphor use in a corpus.

The present study uses a corpus-driven approach to investigate metaphorical language in business discourse. Specifically, the aim is to compare the way in which colour terms are used metaphorically or as part of metaphorical expressions in Hong Kong and British English business discourse. A number of studies have investigated the metaphors in business discourse (Smith, 1995; Eubanks, 1999; Boers, 2000; Black, 2000; Charteris-Black, 2000; Henderson, 2000; Li & Bilbow, 2002; Koller, 2004; White, 2003) and identified a wide range of metaphors.

In business discourse metaphorical language can be particularly useful in making concepts more imaginable and ultimately more accessible, interesting and persuasive to readers (Black, 2000; Smith, 1995). Black (2000) identifies several conceptual metaphors frequently found in economics discourse. For example, the target domain 'economy' is conceptualised as an organism (e.g., economic growth, infant); and as a patient (e.g., healthy economy and economic depression); economic organization are people (e.g., giant, holding company, infant company, and sister company); the market is animate (e.g., the market is falling, and the marketing is bouncing); types of traders are types of animals (e.g., bear run, bearish, bull run, bullish, and bear trap). Overall, he uses the metaphors to argue that economists consider capitalism to be conceptually similar to natural selection in terms of the notion of the struggle to survive and survival of the fittest.

Some previous research has considered cross-linguistic and cross-cultural differences. Black and Ennis (2001) compared the metaphorical language between English and Spanish financial news reports during the 1997 stock market crash. Broadly speaking, their findings emphasised similarities between the two languages. For example, the economy is conceptualised as an organism, market movements as physical movements and sharp downward market movements as natural disasters (Black & Ennis, 2001, p. 249). Li and Bilbow (2002) compared Chinese and English business discourse in an attempt to discover whether the greater differences between the linguistics of English and Chinese and cultures of East and West would be reflected in the metaphorical language. It was

found that the two corpora utilised broadly similar metaphorical source domains for business, conceptualising them as war, as a plant, as a person, as a building and as a machine. However, differences did exist in the linguistic realisations of these underlying conceptual metaphors. For example, both English and Chinese conceptualised BUSINESS IS A PERSON but one linguistic realisation of this personification, *shrug off*, exists only in English, and not in Chinese.

Despite the interest in the metaphorical language of business discourse and the identification of a number of well-illustrated source domains, little consideration has been given to the use of colour as a metaphor (Smith, 1995; Allan, 2008). Colour terms, when used literally, describe perceptual experiences. However, they also have connotative meanings which can be specific to particular areas of life and can differ across cultures. The majority of connotative meanings of colour relate to emotions (Berlin & Kay, 1969; Phillip, 2006). For example, *red* is the colour of passion and the life force of our blood, but it can also be angry, aggressive and harsh. *Yellow* is fresh, alert, and optimistic. It can also be superficial, hasty and critical. The spirit of *green* is tolerant and compassionate. It can also be greedy, envious and bitter. The spirit of *Blue* is reflective, faithful and peaceful. It can also be egotistical and argumentative (Phillip, 2006).

A number of other studies have focused on cultural differences between the symbolic values and meanings of colour terms (Gage, 1993, 1999; Davis, 1998; Trim, 2007). Figure 1 shows Trim's (2007) portrayal of the cross-cultural differences between the symbolic meanings of five colours.

Figure   The cultural colour web   (Trim 2007:61)
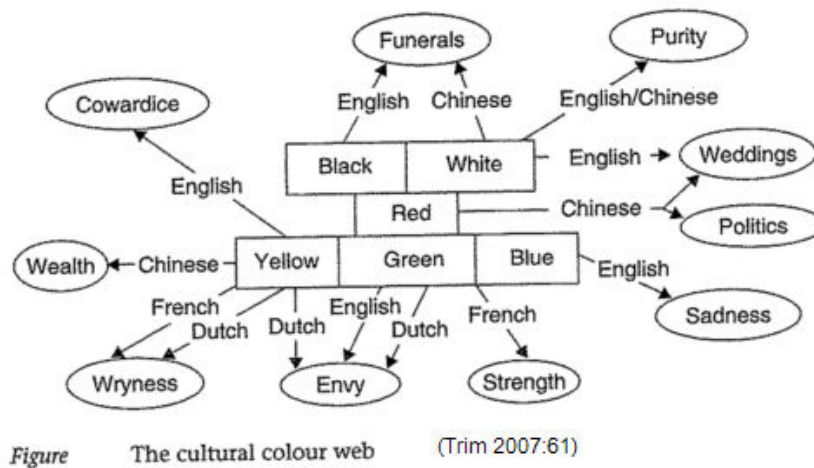
Figure 1. **The cultural colour web (from Trim, 2007, p. 61).**

Given that colour terms are known to portray symbolic meanings which may differ across languages and cultures, the present study considered whether such differences would be apparent in a comparison of English business discourses from Britain and from Hong Kong. The aim was to investigate how colour terms are used metaphorically or as part of metaphorical expressions in

business discourse. What meanings do colours convey? Are there any 'colourful expressions' which seem specific to business discourse? What similarities and differences exist between British and Hong Kong English business discourse and how can these be related to cultural differences?

2.   Research Methods

2.1   The Data

The British finance corpus (BNC-F) comprises of 284 files of commerce and finance domain in the British National Corpus. The BNC-F has a total of 7,462,591 tokens, with 48.4% taken from published books, others from regional and national newspapers, specialist periodicals and journals, published and unpublished letters and memoranda and other business related texts (Noor, 1998).

The eight-million word Hong Kong Financial English corpus (HK-F) was a compilation of three corpora: PolyU Business Corpus (PUBC), the Hong Kong Financial Services Corpus (HKFSC) and business reports of South China Morning Post. The PolyU Business Corpus comprises texts from various categories of writing encountered in a business environment, for example corporate annual reports, newsletters, and minutes. Texts were taken from the World Wide Web, printed company materials, government institutions, and library online databases (Li & Bilbow, 2002). The Hong Kong Financial Services Corpus comprises written and spoken language from professional associations and private organizations across the financial services sector in Hong Kong between 1997 and 2006 (http://languagebank.engl.polyu.hk/hkfsc). The business reports of South China Morning Post are financial news stories on Hong Kong and world economy.

2.2   Choice of Colour Terms

Based on Berlin and Kay's (1969) cognitive analysis of colour[1], we chose eight colours, *white, black, red, yellow, green, blue, brown, and grey*, for analysis. In their seminal paper, Berlin and Kay (1969) proposed eleven basic categories of colour in English, which are depicted in Figure 2. It has been argued that there is a highly consistent order with which cultures identify and name basic colours (Berlin & Kay, 1969; Phillip, 2006; Allan, 2008). *Black* and *white* are universal colour terms, and the most common in world languages. If there is a third colour in the language, then it will be *red*. A fourth colour in the language will be *yellow* or *green*, and fifth the other of the two. Sixth is *blue* and seventh *brown* followed by *pink, purple, orange* and *grey*.

Figure 2. **Basic colours in English (Berlin & Kay, 1969).**

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[1] There is some debate surrounding the theory of Berlin and Kay (1969) but the arguments are not relevant here.

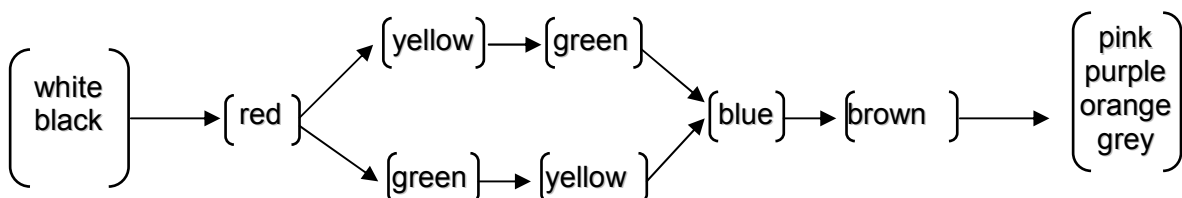Colour terms including inflections and derivations were identified using WordSmith Tools 5.0 (Scott, 2008). Concordance lines were generated and examined to determine, for each item, whether it was used literally or metaphorically. Compound words including colour terms were excluded (e.g., blacksmith) as were proper names (e.g., Mr White, White Horse Pub, and The White House) and literal non-colour meanings (e.g., cricket green, golfing green fees, and greens). All other expressions that contained colour terms were analysed, including some which were arguably idioms or could be considered metonyms rather than metaphors.

3.   Results and Discussion

Although colour terms are strongly literal, many of their uses in business texts are often metaphorical as shown in the following concordance lines:

```
1       valid client.        Auditors deal with the black and white of reconciling company books and  are il
2     n dollar bombardment of the public with evocative black- and-white  s of the city, a lilting ballad and a
3     dge funds were not transparent, and came  from a "black box", based offshore in the Cayman Islands or the
4     can be substantially reduced through the  use of "black boxes" and the removal of the intermediary, has al
5      quite sufficient to restore our  finances to the black. For that year I am forecasting a modest deficit o
6     $396.9 million, which helped keep the bank in the black.  ``If we see no big changes in the operating envi
7      T Ford: you can have any colour as long as it is black.   In short, the local industry is at last catchin
8     ded and, in the case of 68 agents, the HKFI put a black mark on their  records, indicating their performan
9     ion is usually 1 per cent to 5 per cent above the black market  exchange rate for the yuan and Hong Kong d
10    g fake customs  documents and has clamped down on black market activities.  Despite strong imports, the ma
11     by then.  (SCMP190300) (1249)  Black marks for black market CLARA LI    Hundreds of millions of dollars
12    ential between the official exchange rate and the black market is also a factor.   With margins between th
13    ith margins between the official exchange and the black market rate at 7 to 8 per cent, savings can be  si
14    anshark had left by then.  (SCMP190300) (1249)  Black marks for black market CLARA LI    Hundreds of mil
15    S you may find some people being  referred to as "black people". Well, I do not personally like such refer
16    ith."   However, he added that China still raised black questions marks in the  minds of foreign investors
17    sult of a Number 8 Typhoon Signal or higher or a  black rain storm.  warning or other similar event, the p
18     Calculator is based on both the Binomial and the Black-Scholes option pricing models.  While these models
19     77 per cent in the past  year, but stayed in the black thanks to one-off gains from selling some of its v
20    IONS  1.  What happened on 23 October 1997 -- The Black Thursday?   The financial turmoil in Asia, which
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Generally colour terms are adjectives qualifying the appearance of something concrete, and they can be judged by our chromatic experience. To separate literal and metaphorical use of *black*, the notion of semantic preference (Sinclair, 2003), i.e., the relation between an individual word and semantically-related words, can be used as a parameter. When *black* co-exists with *people*, *weather* or other concrete items, it is used literally, as in Line 15 and 17. Although *black mark* and *black box* can also be concrete, the extended context (L14) and quotation marks (L3 and 4) show they are used figuratively, therefore they are counted as metaphors.

Following this metaphor identification procedure, the frequencies of the colour terms and the frequencies with which they were used metaphorically were normalised per million words for the two corpora. Results are shown in Table 1.

Table 1

Comparison of the Frequency of Colour Terms per Million Words

Colour Term	BNC-F			HK-F		
	Total	Metaphoric use		Total	Metaphoric use	
	#	#	%	#	#	%
BLACK	124	27	22	6	4	63
WHITE	106	26	25	39	2	4
RED	58	16	28	29	20	68
GREEN	52	29	56	23	10	42
YELLOW	12	<1	<1	38	<1	0
BLUE	36	17	48	14	4	26
BROWN	14	<1	<1	1	<1	20
GREY	26	11	45	2.1	1.9	88

Of the eight colours discussed, the BNC-F has 428 colour terms per million words, while the HK-F has only 166, less than 40% of colours in BNC-F. In the BNC-F, *black* and *white* are clearly the most frequent colour terms. Along with *green*, they occur the most frequently of all the colour metaphors. With the exception of *brown* and *yellow*, colour terms appeared metaphorically a high proportion of the time with *green, blue*, and *grey* appearing metaphorically approximately 50% of the time.

In the HK-F, with the exception of *yellow,* all colour terms were less frequent than in the BNC-F. White was again the most frequent but this time along with *yellow*, not *black*. *Black* appeared quite infrequently, although when it did it was most often metaphoric. *Red* was the colour term used metaphorically most often, compared to green in the British corpus. And in fact a large proportion of the time (88%), *red* was a metaphor. Along with *red* and *black*, *grey* and *green* were used metaphorically a large proportion of their time.

Colour metaphors are conceptual metaphors which can reflect the understanding of one conceptual domain in terms of another, for example, understanding *black market* as illegality and *green light* as permission. Operated at the level of thinking, metaphors link two conceptual domains, the 'source' domain and the 'target' domain. The source domain consists of a set of literal entities, attributes, processes and relationships, linked semantically and apparently stored together in the mind. The 'target' domain tends to be abstract, and takes its structure from the source domain, through the metaphorical link, or 'conceptual metaphor'. Target domains are therefore believed to have relationships between entities, attributes and processes which mirror those found in the source domain. In the following discussion, individual colours are set as 'source domain', and the concepts they represent are grouped into 'target domain'.

3.1   Black

Black is the most frequently used colour term in the British corpus. Characterized by the absence of light, *black* is often associated with darkness, decay, and evil deeds. Table 2 shows the

metaphorical expressions containing *black* which appeared in the BNC-F and the HK-F and the underlying conceptualisations.

Table 2

Comparison of *Black* as SOURCE DOMAIN in BNC-F and HK-F

Metaphorical expressions		TARGET DOMAIN
British Corpus	Hong Kong Corpus	
To be black		BAD
Black mark	*Black mark*	BAD (figurative mark)
Black list	*Black list*	BAD (figurative list)
Black cloud		BAD (ambience)
Black Wednesday/Monday	*Black Tuesday*	BAD
Black Friday		CREDIT
Black sheep		BAD + ODD ONE OUT
Black magic		EVIL
Black mail		THREATENING
*Black knight**		HOSTILE (takeover co.)
Black humour		MORBID/ MACABRE
Black future		BLEAK
*Black market**	*Black market**	ILLEGAL
*Black economy**		ILLEGAL
Black hole	*Black hole*	UNEXPLAINED (event)
Black box	*Black box*	UNCLEAR (operation)
	Black cat in a dark room	
Black spot	*Black spot*	DANGER/TROUBLE (area)
	Black question marks	(potential) TROUBLE
*In the black**	*In the black*	CREDIT
Black and white	*Black and white*	CLEAR

In business discourse, *black markets* refer to illegal or irregular dealings in trade. *Black money* in Chinese is ill-gotten gains and can be bleached. In contrast, in English there is the collocation *money laundering*, but not *black money*. *Black hole* and *black box* refer to a lack of transparency. *Black mark, black list* and *black spot* imply trouble and danger. A *Black knight* describes a hostile takeover company and is quite specific to business discourse.

Despite of the fact that *black* has mostly negative connotations, there is one notable exception which is specific to a business context and applies to both British and Hong Kong English: *in the black* which means 'solvent, in profit'.

Notably, *black* is considerably less frequent in the Hong Kong corpus (6 per million words) than in the British corpus (124 per million words). This may reflect the significance placed on the negative connotations of death, bad omen, crime and disease in the Asian culture (Allan, 2008: 628).

3.2   White

In contrast to *black*, *white* is associated with light and purity and has mostly has positive connotations as shown in Table 3.

Table 3

Comparison of White as SOURCE DOMAIN in BNC-F and HK-F

Metaphorical expressions British Corpus	Hong Kong Corpus	TARGET DOMAIN
To be white		PURE
		CLEAN
		BRIGHT
White lie		GOOD
White knight *	*White knight* *	FRIENDLY (takeover co.)
White squire *		FRIENDLY (minority takeover)
White space		BLANK
White wash		COVERUP
To bleed white		EMPTY
White heat		INTENSE
White collar work(er)	*White collar worker*	OFFICE LABOUR
Men in white coats		DOCTOR
White elephant		USELESS COSTLY OBJECT
Knight on a white charger		CHARITY
White paper		OFFICIAL REPORT/ POLICY
Black and white	*Black and white*	CLEAR

Business-specific 'white' metaphorical expressions include the use of *white squire* and *white knight* to refer to a friendly takeover company; for example, 'China looks like a potential *white knight* for Wall Street's distress' (*USA TODAY*, 2 Oct 2008).

White can also portray negative meanings. For example, a *white-knuckle* day in stock market is a sliding day full of tension, a *white elephant* is costly and useless entity, to *white wash* is to gloss over or cover-up events or activities often through a perfunctory investigation or through biased presentation of data. Notably, although *white* occurs more often in the British (106 per million words) than in the Hong Kong corpus (39 per million words), the difference in much smaller than for *black*.

3.3   Red

Red is the colour term used metaphorically most often in the Hong Kong corpus, compared to *green* in the British corpus. In business discourse, *red* has a variety of meanings. For example, to be *in*

the red is to show a deficit. *Red ink* may have been used as an instance of red for danger (Allen, 2008, p. 6), *red tape* hampers efficient action and has the extended meaning of overly constrictive bureaucracy, and the verbs collocate with it in the two corpora are *cut down, trim down, eliminate* and *remove. A red herring* is a misleading distraction (Philip, 2006; Allen, 2008), and a *red flag* is an indicator of potential problems.

Table 4

Comparison of Red as SOURCE DOMAIN in BNC-F and HK-F

Metaphorical expressions		
British Corpus	**Hong Kong Corpus**	**TARGET DOMAIN**
To see red		ANGER
Red faced		EMBARASSED
Red flag		WARNING
Red hot	*Red hot*	EXTREME
To be red		SOCIALIST
		REPUBLICAN
Red baiter		(accuse of being) SOCIALIST
*In the red**	*In the red**	DEBIT
*Red ink**		DEBIT
Red tape	*Red tape*	UNECESSARILY PROHIBITIVE
	Red line	RESTRICTIVE
Red carpet		SPECIAL TREATMENT
Red letter days	*Red letter day*	MEMORABLE
To be caught red handed		BLOOD
	*Red chip company**	CHINESE LISTING ON HK STOCK MARKET
	*Red chip investment**	CHINESE LISTING ON HK STOCK MARKET
To be red eyed		CRYING
Red brick university		INDUSTRIAL TOWN UNI
Red herring		DELIBERATE DECOY

Although *red* is associated with danger and warning in western culture, it is regarded as a lucky colour for Chinese. In China, *red* is not only the symbol of revolution, communism and socialism (Berlin & Kay, 1969, p. 59) but also refers to profits in a company. For example, *red* is used to indicate UP, and *green* DOWN in the stock market, which is opposite to the majority of market indicators in the world. However, no indication of this was apparent in the Hong Kong corpus.

Red chips in Hong Kong are companies based in Mainland China that are incorporated internationally and listed on the Hong Kong Stock Exchange. They are a main outlet for foreign

investors who wish to participate in the rapid growth of the Chinese economy. The frequent reference to *red chip* companies can explain the high proportion of metaphoric *red* in the Hong Kong corpus.

3.4   Green

Metaphorical use of *green* mostly derives from the green colour of plants and nature and is thus associated with life. *To be green* and *green chip* mean eco-friendly and many big companies portray themselves as *green*. In both corpora, to *get/give a green light*, meaning to proceed, is used frequently. There are a number of business specific expressions which incorporate *green*: *green fund, green pound, green chip*. There were a significantly greater number of different green metaphorical expressions in the British corpus (15) than in the Hong Kong corpus (3).

Table 5

Comparison of Green as SOURCE DOMAIN in BNC-F and HK-F

Metaphorical expressions		
British Corpus	**Hong Kong Corpus**	**TARGET DOMAIN**
To be green		ENVIOUS
To be green	*To be green*	ECO-FRIENDLY
*Green chip**		ECO-FRIENDLY (company)
To be green		NEW
Green shoots		THE BEGINNING
Green light	*Green light*	GO AHEAD
*Green pound**		AGRICULTURAL (market)
*Green rate**		AGRICULTURAL (market)
Green paper	*Green paper*	OFFICIAL PROPOSAL
Green fingered		(good with) PLANTS
Green welly brigade		UPPER MIDDLE CLASS
Little green man		ALIEN
Grass is greener		The alternative is BETTER
Green field		UNDEVELOPED land
Green belt		COUNTRYSIDE surrounding urban area

3.5   Yellow

Yellow is the only colour term that has higher frequency in the Hong Kong corpus (38 per million words), than in the British corpus (38), although both have a low ratio of metaphoric use (less than 1%). In English, *yellow* is often used to mean 'cowardly' and thus has negative connotations (Berlin & Kay, 1969). By contrast, in Chinese, *yellow* is associated with nobility, the emporia and wealth and thus has positive connotations.

3.6   Blue

Blue is used frequently to refer to entities of value, worth or status. In business discourse, *blue chip* stocks are shares of a well-established company with stable earnings and without extensive

liabilities, *blue ribbon* means something excellent, *blue riband event* means the most highly valued (Allan, 2008). *Blue chips* originally referred to the blue counters used in poker, which have the highest value (Smith 1995, p. 51).

Many metaphorical expressions incorporating blue derive from the metonymic link between blue and the sky or heaven. For example, *bolt from the blue* or *out of the blue*, meaning something that happened unexpectedly. The proximity of the colour *blue* to *black* on the colour scale may explain the use of *blue* to mean depression, as reflected by the phrases *to have the blues*, *to feel blue* or *to be blue*. These expressions occur in the British corpus but not in the Hong Kong one.

3.7   Grey

Like *green* and *blue*, *grey* has a low metaphoric use in the Hong Kong corpus. *Grey* can both temper the negative connotation of *black* and detract from the positive values associated with *white* (Philip, 2006). In this way, a *grey market* is legally unclear and anything ambiguous can be termed *grey area*. The phrases are used in both corpora, but the British one has more metaphorical uses of *grey,* referring to boredom or age.

Table 6

Comparison of Grey in BNC-F and HK-F

Metaphorical expressions		
British Corpus	**Hong Kong Corpus**	**TARGET DOMAIN**
To be grey		BORING
Greyness		BORING
To be grey		DEPRESSING
To be grey		OLD
Grey haired		OLD
Grey area	*Grey area*	UNCLEAR
Grey market	*Grey market*	LEGALITY UNCLEAR
Grey face		TIRED
Grey matter		BRAIN

3.8   Brown

Brown has no trace in Trim's cultural colour web (Figure 1), indicating it bears limited connotational meaning. In the Hong Kong business corpus, of the 26 instances, 25 *Brown*s are family names and only one in literal use. In the BNC-F, about 80% *Brown*s are proper nouns, and the literal use of *brown* is to modify colours of different commodities such as bags, shows, bread. Only two expressions can be regarded as metaphoric: *brown goods* and *brown majority*. The former refers to home electronic appliance for entertainment, and the latter is a euphemism for black people.

4.   Conclusions

Colour terms are used metaphorically to enhance the imaginability and clarity of language. In business discourse, many linguistic metaphors that incorporate colour terms refer to meanings that have been used so much that they have become part of the standard lexicon of the language, although it is possible to identify the roots of these metaphoric meanings. We found no evidence of the creative use of colour metaphors.

Colour terms appeared more frequently overall and as metaphors in the British than in the Hong Kong corpus; and a larger variety of conceptual metaphors was identified for each colour term in the British corpus. However, the proportion of colour terms used metaphorically was higher overall in the Hong Kong corpus than in the British corpus. Across both corpora, metaphorical expressions incorporating *black* generally had negative connotations, *white* metaphors had generally positive connotations, whilst other colours displayed a more equal mix of positive and negative connotations. Results necessarily reflect the corpus composition. Future work should investigate whether the present findings regarding colour terms extend to other discourse genres, and whether other categories of source domains show similar differences between Hong Kong and British business English.

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Acknowledgement

In My Own Words: Metaphoric Identity Across Academic Domains

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Abstract

Academic discourse serves a constellation of disciplinary cultures, which in turn are embedded in specific epistemologies and textual practices. Active community membership is gained through a multidimensional discourse capable of expressing the professional, institutional, social and individual facets of a researcher's identity. Among the linguistic cues that encode such facets, metaphoric expressions deserve special attention not only because of the positive/negative connotations evoked by their source domains but also because they often occur "at the scientific verge, [when] words routinely fail to refer" (Gross, 1996, p. 84). This study investigates how leading scholars in four academic domains – applied linguistics, economics, law and medicine – portray themselves and their journals through metaphor. The analysis focuses on journal editorials, a genre whose intensely assertive, evaluative orientation tends to generate interpersonal conflicts linked to the validation of new knowledge claims.

1.   Introduction

A high proportion of academic journals contain a variously-titled textual slot where editors address issues of special relevance to the serial and its readership. This unique rhetorical space provides interesting cues as to the editor's role and identity, especially when the text unfolds as a self-reflexive narrative (cf. Dyer & Keller-Cohen, 2000; D'Cruz et al., 2007) marking significant events in the journal's conduction. Thus a key aspect of the editorial is self-mention, which in Hyland's words "constitutes a central pragmatic feature of academic discourse since it contributes not only to the writer's construction of a text, but also of a rhetorical self" (2002, p.1110). The genre's reflexivity, however, means that self-mention extends well beyond the use of first-person pronouns: when editors take centre stage, they encode also aspects of their identity and subjectivity, through a "personal working up and collision of communal methods of self accounting, vocabularies of motive, culturally recognisable emotional performances and personal histories of sense-making" (Wetherell 2007, p. 676).

The expert scholars who write editorials communicate identity traits that define the gatekeeping function of academic journals but also the editor's personal values and beliefs. In this sense, editorials reveal an 'autobiographical self' (Ivanič, 1998) embedded in the journal's policies. Identity is thus constructed through self-reflexive practices whose textualisation encodes specific aspects of the editor and the journal. Among the various linguistic devices employed for this purpose, metaphoric expressions are particularly pervasive and worth investigating because of the functions evoked by their source domains. Far from being a peripheral aspect of discourse, metaphors are central to our perception of reality, they "organize their users' perceptions and, when acted upon, can

create the realities experienced" (Krippendorff, 1993, p. 3). The introspective cycle that underpins this process is illustrated below.
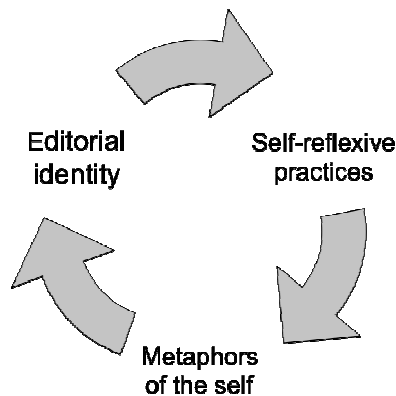
Figure 1. **The Introspective Process Embedded in Journal Editorials.**

When dealing with journal editorials, it is important to consider the genre in all its complexity. Despite the relative dearth of research on the subject, the results of an earlier study (Giannoni, forthcoming a) point to the presence of different subgenres subsumed by the 'Editorial' label; more specifically, journals employ this rhetorical space for three distinct – albeit at times converging – communicative purposes:

- *Message editorials* focus on the journal's relationship with its readers, stressing respective roles and obligations (phatic orientation). They are heir to the earliest form of scientific editorial, conceived simply as a 'Message from the editor' (cf. Vázquez y del Árbol, 2005).

- *Comment editorials* provide critical evaluations of relevant developments both within and outside the discipline (axiological orientation). In this respect they resemble the comment features in magazines and the general press.

- *Advice editorials*, which are particularly frequent in medical journals, promote best practices within the community (teleological orientation). Their role is to "interpret the studies they comment on and to contextualize them within the framework of previous findings, approaches, and practices" (Gross & Stärke-Meyerring, 1999, p. 185).

For the scope of this investigation, *message editorials* are the most relevant subgenre because of their prevalently self-reflexive content. This is where editors bare their soul, figuratively speaking, and share experiences with readers or solicit their collaboration. At the same time, they promote the journal's academic standing by drawing attention to its commitment and achievements in a way similar to that performed by introductory genres in academic monographs (cf. Bhatia, 1997; Giannoni, 2006). A representative sample of such texts will therefore be selected and analysed in order to

determine how academic editors portray themselves and their journal by means of metaphorisation and how such items vary across disciplines.

2.   Material and Methods

The domains considered for analysis (applied linguistics, economics, law, medicine) cover very different areas of scholarship, albeit with a common concern for problem-solving and empirical research; research articles in these disciplines are known to employ metaphoric lexis for value-marking purposes (cf. Giannoni, 2009, forthcoming b). In order to identify a sample of suitable texts, the online archives of two prominent international publishers (Elsevier and Oxford University Press) were searched for a list of journals in each domain; the relevant titles were then scanned to verify whether they included editorials, and if they did, whether any of these where prevalently of the 'message editorial' type. Eventually one suitable source journal was identified for each domain and the ten latest texts downloaded for analysis.

For applied linguistics (hence AL) the source is *English for Specific Purposes* (estd. 1980), for economics (ECO) the *Journal of Product Innovation Management* (estd. 1984), for LAW the *Journal of International Criminal Justice* (estd. 2005) and for medicine (MED) the *Journal of Chemical Health and Safety* (estd. 1994). The dearth of message editorials in mainstream medical journals explains why the last title comes from an area of inquiry that incorporates insights from other disciplines. Since external contributions would be irrelevant to this study, texts written by guest editors were omitted. Accordingly, all of the 40 message editorials assembled here – titled simply 'Editorial' or 'From the Editor' – are contributions by the editor(s) of the serial concerned. After removing such ancillary elements as footnotes, references, name lists, titles and contact details, the body of the texts was uploaded to WordSmith Tools (Scott, 2006) and the following data extracted:

Table 1

Quantitative Overview of Texts

Feature	AL	ECO	LAW	MED
Average length per text (tokens)	760	520	476	572
Average sentence length (tokens)	27	22	29	24
Standardised TTR	45.1	42.4	44.0	46.0

Each text was then manually scanned to identify lexis evoking a metaphor, broadly defined as "particular words and phrases [used] to refer to important topics when these words or phrases usually refer to other topics" (Charteris-Black & Musolff, 2003, p. 158). Among these, I singled out for analysis any realisation that qualified the identity (in terms of function, activity and status) of the

editor(s) or the journal itself. The total count of such items, normalised by 10,000 words, highlights the variation observed across the four domains considered:

Table 2

Distribution of Relevant Metaphors Across Domains

Referent	AL	ECO	LAW	MED	Average
The editor(s)	(66%) 73.7	(69%) 105.8	(67%) 168.2	(92%) 57.6	(70%) 101.3
The journal	(34%) 38.2	(31%) 48.1	(33%) 84.1	(8%) 5.2	(30%) 43.9
Total	111.9	153.9	252.3	62.8	145.2

The normalised occurrences in Table 2 reveal several interesting aspects. First of all, there is a marked difference between domains in the frequency of metaphors qualifying the activity of the editor and/or journal. Overall, these are four times more common in LAW compared to MED, which indicates a higher propensity of legal scholars to foreground such activities, albeit by means of figurative realisations, whereas medical researchers seldom do so. Secondly, the balance between referents is similar across domains, with 70% of items identifying the editor(s) and 30% the journal, except for MED, where the journal is qualified by a mere 8% of occurrences. Compared to their peers in other disciplines, medical editors are thus far less likely to metaphorise their activity and are generally unwilling to define their journal by means of such items.

3.   Metaphors Identifying the Editor(s)

Turning from the quantitative plane to that of individual realisations, the type of identity suggested by metaphoric lexis becomes more evident. If all relevant occurrences involving the editor are classified according to the role assigned to their referent, the results highlight seven different functional categories, summarised in the table below.

Table 3

Metaphors Qualifying the Editor

Category	Occurrences	Proportion
Socialiser	60	28%
Worker	59	27%
Enquirer	42	19%
Family	24	11%
Entertainer	14	6%
Object	12	6%
Conflict manager	6	3%

These expressions generally identify the editor as an individual interacting with the community (as a socialiser, family member, entertainer or conflict manager) or the discipline (as a worker or enquirer). The only exception is the penultimate category, which involves a shift from animate to inanimate (i.e. objectivation). A description of each group of metaphors is given below, with relevant examples drawn from the texts in hand.

3.1.   Socialiser

The most frequent category, accounting for 28% of all items, involves metaphors that foreground the editor's emotional and social experience. In fact half of these are classifiable as 'emoting' (1-2) since they make explicit the human feelings associated with editing an academic journal. Otherwise editors feature as conversants (3) interacting with their peers, or as facilitators (4) soliciting response from the readership (my emphasis here and below).

(1)   *I am very excited* about sharing the contents of this "regular" issue with you. (ECO)

(2)   *They were both as supportive and encouraging* then as I have since learnt them to be. (AL)

(3)   *We've said it* time and again here in this journal. (MED)

(4)   *I would love to hear from readers.* (MED)

3.2.   Worker

Almost equally common (27%) were metaphors that represent the editor as a worker engaged in variably strenuous undertakings (5-6) or in the provision of some kind of service to the journal and its readers (7-8). Accordingly, the focus is respectively on effort and on the act of giving.

(5)   I am so very thankful for my family who has continually supported *my efforts as this journal's editor* since 1999. (MED)

(6)   We gratefully acknowledge Dwight's contributions to the journal and wish him well *in his future endeavours*. (AL)

(7)   We hope our readers feel *we have delivered on many of these promises*. (ECO)

(8)   We thought it would be interesting *to offer to our readers a broader perspective*. (LAW)

3.3.   Enquirer

In 19% of cases the underlying metaphor portrays the editor as an enquirer. This involves the suggestion that editors are either travellers (9) on a journey of discovery (an image recalled also by the journal metaphors described later in 4.4), seekers (10), or believers (11) acting for the advancement of the journal.

(9)   Gradually, the pieces fit together and I get a pretty good picture of *where the research has led us, and what the next steps are.* (ECO)

(10)   *We're always looking for* new manuscripts to consider for publication. (ECO)

(11)   This journal could not be published without *the devoted group of professionals* who serve on its Editorial Board. (MED)

3.4.   Family

The fourth group of metaphors evoke family life and the home. Editors appear here mainly in the role of hosts (12) welcoming authors as guests to the journal's pages, but may also be shown as parents (13) or servants (14) – incidentally, the last of these roles features also in the title of a study of self-mention in research articles (Hyland, 2001).

(12)   There continues to be *a standing invitation to the readership* to share in JCHAS case studies. (MED)

(13)   This *nurturing of scholarly activity* that goes on through the review process is, in my view, one of the most valuable contributions of the journal. (AL)

(14)   Professor Mireille Delmas Marty ... *has served on the Board of Editors* from the inception of the Journal. (ECO)

3.5.   Entertainer

Metaphoric realisations occasionally (6% of items) point to the world of entertainment, with editors appearing on stage as actors (15-16) or, implicitly, as conductors of a show (17). The language employed is very similar to that of induction speeches in public award ceremonies.

(15)   It is a great honour for me to *take on this role* for the journal. (AL)

(16)   In addition, Salvatore Zappalà has agreed *to act as Managing Editor.* (LAW)

(17)   *I am delighted to introduce this special issue,* which contains the best articles from this conference. (ECO)

3.6.   Conflict manager

This group of personal metaphors, albeit rare (3%), evokes confrontational situations in which the editor acts as a wrestler (18), military strategist (19) or police officer (20).

(18)   Thirdly, *we are still grappling with the problem* of reconciling two conflicting requirements. (LAW)

(19)   *It is up to us to expand the reach of the journal* even farther: to different academic communities ... and to different geographic locations. (ECO)

(20)   As mentioned in earlier editorials *we have been constantly trying to keep the number of pages under control* so as to remain within the limits set by the publisher. (LAW)

3.7.   Object

The remaining items identified in the texts (6%) involve metaphors equating editors with inanimate entities, through a process of objectivation. These suggest that editorship is a physical location (21-22) or, less frequently, a machine (23) or another object (24).

(21)   Our fears that we might not be able to sustain four issues a year proved unfounded ... despite the sometimes long turn-around time between us and *our far-flung Editorial Board*. (AL)

(22)   *My position as editor in chief* gives me a unique perspective, because I will see topics come up in manuscripts submitted for publication. (ECO)

(23)   I would also like to add a personal thanks to Tony and Peter ... for their great help in *making the transfer of editorial responsibilities so smooth* over the last few months. (AL)

(24)   Now, before you think that I have slipped into my dotage ... it's important to recognize that I'm pretty much a results-oriented, *"Type-A" individual* and have been so for most of my life. (MED)

4.   Metaphors Qualifying the Journal

Though relatively less frequent, items qualifying the journal are equally interesting because they shed light on how editors perceive and construct their journal's identity. After manually scanning all the relevant items, these were found to match four categories, according to the source domain recalled by the underlying metaphor:

Table 4

Metaphors Qualifying the Journal

Category	Occurrences	Proportion
Organic	39	36%
Functional	29	27%
Material	22	20%
Spatial	19	17%

4.1.   Organic

The most prominent category of metaphors (36% of occurrences) suggests that the journal and its content are a living entity, often endowed with a body and capable of independent action. Two thirds of such realisations are indeed classifiable as personification (25), while the others either equate the journal to an animal (26) or a plant (27):

(25)   As readers may have noticed, the *Journal is constantly endeavouring to keep pace* with the expanding role and importance of international criminal law and justice. (LAW)

(26)   In our discussions, there was the general feeling that *the journal is in a healthy state*, successfully maintaining four quality issues a year and with several issues ready to go to press. (AL)

(27)   The Articles and Notes and Comments in this issue *are to a large extent intertwined*. (LAW)

4.2.   Functional

Metaphors of this type (27%) mainly suggest that the journal is a vehicle (28) to be steered in the right direction by its editor(s). Alternatively, it may be represented as a source of entertainment (29) or of light (30):

(28)   The current Reviews Editor ... will be *handing the reins* to a new Reviews Editor in June, 2000. (AL)

(29)   The last *exciting change to the journal* is one I am just missing – a new cover design coming soon! (AL)

(30)   In addition, the editors will occasionally publish guest-edited volumes, dedicated to specialized topics, *to illuminate the interfaces* between other disciplines and international criminal law. (LAW)

4.3   Material

Accounting for 20% of occurrences, most of these items realise the standard container metaphor, whereby the journal is viewed as something to be opened and filled with contributions (31-32). Elsewhere they encode a building metaphor (33).

(31)   *The issue contains* a set of book reviews edited by Preston G. Smith. (ECO)

(32)   You are sure to *find something* you can directly use in your research *in these pages*. (ECO)

(33)   To obviate to some extent the *strictures deriving from space constraints*, our publishers have recently provided us with the opportunity to publish advance online editions. (LAW)

4.4.   Spatial

These metaphors (17%) represent the journal's life as a journey by road (34-35), thus recalling the travel metaphor used for editors (see example 9). Less often they represent the journal (deictically) as a physical location (36).

(34)   *Looking back at the first issue* ... I note very interesting similarities. (AL)

(35)   We are *reaching a stage* where we need to consider how effective the courses that are developed from this research are. (AL)

(36)   Given the very nature of *the field we occupy*, the hottest research topics five years from now might indeed be difficult to predict. (ECO)

5.   Variation across domains

The metaphors described here vary across domains in several ways. Apart from their overall distribution, reported in Table 2, the most noticeable features linked to each of the four disciplines considered may be summarised as follows:

- *Applied linguistics*. The editor is endowed with a multi-faceted identity but never appears as a conversant or host. The journal is qualified by organic, functional or spatial metaphors.

- *Economics*. The editor has a multi-faceted identity which hardly ever involves the family. The journal is identified by organic (human), functional (vehicle) or material (container) metaphors.
- *Law*. The editor is represented either as an enquirer or as part of a family. The journal is qualified by organic or functional (vehicle) metaphors.
- *Medicine*. The editor has a multi-faceted identity but without any instances of emoting. The journal is hardly ever metaphorised.

Though drawn from a largely common metaphoric repertoire, the language of message editorials reflects disciplinary proclivities in its self-reflexive portrayal of the editor and journal. Legal scholars and economists appear to exploit this resource more often than applied linguists; medical researchers, on the other hand, are relatively unwilling to do so (a tendency consistent with the dearth of message editorials in this discipline).

6.   Conclusions

The lexis of academic publishing is highly figurative, to the point that even such mundane terms as *paper*, *table of contents*, *board*, *comment* and *column* are rooted in metaphor or metonymy. For the message editorial subgenre, metaphoric realisations are particularly salient because they are often used self-reflexively by the editor(s). As hypothesised, message editorials convey information that indirectly (through metaphoric lexis) reveals the 'rhetorical self' projected by editors to define their identity or that of their journal. This confirms that Wallhead's claim that "people have always drawn on symbols and symbolic material to fashion a sense of self. They actively construct a narrative of self-identity" (2003, p. 306) also applies to academic discourse.

The items identified in our sample point to a polyphony of narratives mainly evoking the source domains of travel, employment, entertainment and family life. In so doing, editors portray their contribution and the journal's life as multi-faceted and inherently dynamic. Despite quantitative variation, the texts draw (in functional terms) on a similar range of metaphors across domains. Editors refer to themselves mainly as socialisers (by emoting or acting as facilitators), workers (eganged in some kind of effort or providing a service) and travellers on a journey of discovery. Journals are represented above all as living organisms – more often than not personified – or as vehicles and containers. The merging of these different narratives and source domains points to complex metaphoric identities that co-exist across texts and are generally more negotiable than those observed in other academic genres, such as research articles (Salager-Meyer, 1990; Richardt, 2005; Roldán-Riejos & Úbeda-Mansilla, 2006), book reviews (cf. Low, 2008) and university lectures (Crawford Camiciottoli, 2004; Low et al., 2008).

Message editorials therefore offer valuable insights into how scholarly journals interface with their readership. Awareness of the editor/journal/audience relationship encoded in these texts is especially important for junior members of a disciplinary community, who need to understand how the knowledge-production process operates and how scholars position themselves rhetorically when

interacting (privately or as contributors) with journals and editors. Such information is also relevant to users of English as an academic lingua franca, because the metaphors identified here may give rise to misunderstandings of the kind experienced in lectures (cf. Littlemore, 2001; but also Giannoni, 2008) if they are not available in the person's first language. At the same time, academic authors of all ages and backgrounds need to bear in mind that "one unfortunate implication of minimising the amount of figurative language [...] in a text is that it can become extremely boring to read" (Low, 1997, p. 15), for metaphoric expressions contribute not only to the cognitive mapping of meanings but, indirectly, also to their saliency.

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Fear in Stock Market Crash: A Corpus-based Metaphoric Study

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Abstract

Emotion is considered one of the most central and pervasive human experiences. Despite its intangible nature and variety in people's emotional responses, emotion can be expressed from a linguistic approach, such as metaphor. This paper investigates the use of metaphorical expressions relating to the emotion of fear in financial news discourses. In particular, it focuses on how different conceptualizations of metaphors associating with 'fear' and 'panic' provide supplementary meanings to their dictionary entries such as the reasons of emotion arousal. This paper also discusses how the disaster metaphors reinforce the expression of fear.

1.   Introduction

The year 2008 was a tumultuous year to the global financial market. Triggered by the gravest credit crisis in the United States, there was a dramatic shift in stock market, as well as massive staff cuts in the banking and investment sectors worldwide. In the news reports about the financial crisis, some journalists claimed that they tried to tone down the emotion in their news reports.

> This year, the media have been accused of contributing to the collapse of both Bear Stearns and IndyMac, a large California thrift, so journalists are more aware of the risk of stoking fear- and the risk of being blamed…In fact, 'panic' heads the list of words that major news organizations have avoided using because they are seen as potentially self-fulfilling. (The New York Times, September 22 2008).

In other words, the media have played an important role in the construction of emotion. One of the ways to express emotional attitudes is the use of metaphors (Kövecses, 1995). As stated by Conceptual Metaphor Theory (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980), metaphor is a ubiquitous phenomenon which is grounded in our thought, and allows us to understand various abstract concepts unconsciously in everyday life.

The aim of this paper is to investigate the use of metaphorical expressions associated with the emotion of fear in the financial news discourse. In particular, this paper focuses on how the metaphors relating to two lexical emotion words 'fear' and 'panic' show their different degrees of fear, and how the disaster metaphors reinforce the expression of fear. The term *panic* is 'a sudden overpowering fright' (Merriam-Webster's Dictionary and Thesaurus (2007, p. 584) whereas *fear* means 'to have a reverent awe of <~God>; to be afraid of; to be apprehensive' (p. 296). It is anticipated that the metaphorical analysis would provide more explanations for the two lexical words of emotion beyond their literal meanings, which reflects the ideological significance about the exploitation of emotion in newspaper discourse. The paper is organized as follows: first, the literature review of emotion studies and the theoretical framework of metaphors provide the basis for this study, followed by a descriptionf the data and research methodology. Then, the data collected in this study are presented along with the findings, followed by a discussion of the dominant emotion and disaster metaphors.

2.   Emotion and Metaphors

Emotion is one of the most central and pervasive human experiences (Ortony, Clore & Collins, 1988). As proposed by Darwin (1872, 1965), emotion serves identifiable biological functions because of the necessary survival needs of mammals. Among various emotion concepts, fear is generally known as a negative anticipatory emotion arising from human instinct. According to Preparedness Theory (Seligman, 1971, as cited in Hofmann, 2008), humans are biologically 'prepared' to acquire the fear of certain objects or situations that threaten the survival of our species (p.201). In other words, fear is aroused because humans realize that such threats may harm their survival. This evolutionary view is consistent with James's (1884) instantiation of fear: When a person meets a bear, he runs because he is frightened. Fear is also considered a future-oriented emotion because of the worries about the adverse future event (Ortony, Clore, & Collins, 1988; Lazarus, 1991). Such worries would motivate humans to escape from the unpleasant situation or to trigger avoidance behavior.

One of the major approaches to investigate emotional experience is the study of metaphors because a certain conceptualization in the cross-mapping helps explain or motivate the emotion language (Kövecses, 1995). In their seminal book titled *Metaphors We Live By*, Lakoff and Johnson (1980) emphasize that metaphor structures our thinking, and that metaphors are ubiquitous in everyday language. Most of the central metaphors are grounded in our bodily experience. As Lakoff and Johnson (1980) point out, '*in actuality we feel that no metaphor can ever be comprehended or even adequately represented independently of its experiential basis*' (p.19, italics in original). It is this claim of ubiquity that arouses a high degree of interest among scholars and researchers in the cognitive functions of metaphors. Later in his article *The Contemporary Theory of Metaphor*, Lakoff (1993) further points out that the same conceptual metaphors existing in different languages actually function in similar ways. For instance, the concepts about UP with MORE and DOWN with LESS are never the reverse across the languages. By virtue of his claim that conceptual metaphors are universal across the languages and cultures, emotion metaphors in different languages have been given growing attention in recent years (e.g., Lakoff & Kövecses, 1987; Yu, 1995). In the study of anger, for instance, Lakoff and Kövecses (1987) demonstrated that the 'heat' metaphor, especially the HOT FLUID IN A CONTAINER metaphor is an important theme in the metaphorical system of anger in English. Yu (1995) studied the counterpart in Chinese and found that Chinese tend to conceptualize anger in terms of gas rather than heat. By detecting the universality of emotions across different languages, these studies on emotion metaphors have made important contributions to the human understanding of cultural varieties. However this line of studies has placed a heavy focus on anger metaphors. Regarding the methodology, most of them have exploited self-elicited data through a top-down approach instead of naturally-occurring data. Therefore, there is clearly a need for more research studies in the use of metaphors in texts in order to reflect the real picture about these important language features, and to investigate other kinds of emotion concepts such as fear.

3.   Corpus Compilation and Research Methodology

The data on which this study is based consists of the news reports on global financial market crisis in three American broadsheet newspapers, spanning a period of two months from 15 Sep 2008 to 14 Nov 2008. The data set includes *USA Today*, *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post* which comprises 694,270 words. During corpus compilation, all the graphs and pictures were deleted and linguistic texts were converted to plain text format. With the use of WordSmith Tools Version 5.0 (Scott, 2008), a word list of 24053 unique words was created. The corpus was named as Corpus of Financial News Reports (CFNR).

The investigation of fear metaphors had two stages. In the first stage, lexical words of emotion were selected for the investigation of frequencies and semantic preferences. This emotion study is centred around two words: *fear* and *panic* because of their high frequencies of occurrence (please refer to next section). The next stage was to study the non-literal citations. In order to trace the various metaphorical patterns and the market activities associated with *fear* and *panic* in the CFNR, collocates of each lexeme were identified and semantic preferences were examined. As defined by Sinclair (2004), collocation is 'the co-occurrence of words with no more than four intervening words' (p. 141) and semantic preference is 'the restriction of regular co-occurrence to items which share a semantic feature (ibid., p. 141).

4.   Discussion of Findings

To identify metaphorical senses of *fear* and *panic*, the literal meanings of these two lexical items were first analyzed. Table 1 shows the semantic grid for the literal meaning of the words *fear* and *panic*. The componential analysis were conducted with literal senses, as described in dictionaries, including *Collins COBUILD English dictionary: Helping learners with real English* (1995), *Chambers 21st Century Dictionary* (1999), *The Oxford Dictionary for the Business World* (1993), *Merriam-Webster's Dictionary and Thesaurus* (2007), *The New Penguin English Dictionary* (2000), *Macmillan English-Chinese Dictionary* (2008), *Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary* (2008), *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English* (2003) and *BBC English Dictionary* (1992).

Table 1

Semantic Grid for Components of Words Meaning 'Feeling Feared'

	negative emotion	because something unpleasant might happen	because in danger	so as to cause action	unable to think reasonably
fear	+	+	+		
panic	+			+	+

The semantic grid shows that both *fear* and *panic* are negative human emotions. People fear because something unpleasant might happen or because they are in danger. However, the literal meanings of panic from the dictionaries consulted do not provide any reasons about the arousal of such human emotion. Rather, the literal meanings focus on the consequence of such human emotions, and hence people in panic may take action without much thinking.

The next step was to identify the metaphorical sense of fear and panic with reference to the literal meanings analyzed in the semantic grid. Charteris-Black and Musolff (2003) defined metaphor as follows:

> A metaphor involves *a meaning shift* in the use of a word or phrase. This shift occurs when a linguistic expression is *taken from* one context and *applied to* another. The shift is caused by (and may accelerate) a change in the *conceptual system*. (p.155)

In other words, there is a metaphorical sense when the knowledge in one conceptual domain is adopted to describe a word or phrase. As can be seen in Fig. 1, concordance lines such as 2 and 4 contain a literal use of *fear* because they focus on human emotion. However if a financial market is described as possessing fear, and the knowledge in other domains such as FIRE and QUANTITY (as shown in lines 6, 11 and 13) is used in describing *fear*, then the word would be regarded as in metaphorical use.

Figure 1. **Extract of the KWIC concordance for *fear*.**

```
1   le "detail."  Across the Country, Fear About Savings, the Job Market and
2   ts. "I have my own savings and no fear about them," Mrs. Merkel told
3   . But Applebaum is  "riddled with fear about this market." Dominick, a
4  contracts. We went from euphoria to fear." After a futile search for new
5  o address the heart of the crisis — fear among banks to lend. "This is not
6  an bankruptcy might set off so much fear among investors that the market
7  bout her investments symbolized the fear among many everyday Americans who
8  n is about tamping down Wall Street fear and bringing back Wall Street
9 mer Communist bloc to South America, fear and disbelief mingled with
10 ny Americans aren't buying it.  In Fear and Distrust Run High (Sept. 30),
11RSON Published: September 14, 2008  Fear and greed are the stuff that Wall
12now, fundamentals do not count, and fear and greed rules." Big Financiers
13   iot Act, this bill is fueled on fear and hinges on haste."  Many lawma
```

Table 2 below shows that the total numbers of citations related to these two lexical emotion terms (in noun forms only) are 350 and 162 respectively. Although the occurrence of *fear** is nearly twice as that of *panic**, its metaphorical use (33.71%) is similar to that of *panic** (32.10%). For instance, both lexical words are conceptualized by similar set of source domains such as FORCE, DISEASE, LIQUID, and ORGANISM. In DISEASE, the occurrence of *fear** (frequency=12) is slightly frequent than *panic** (frequency=10). But for FORCE and ORGANISM, the occurrence of *fear** (frequency=22; frequency=26) is much higher than that of *panic** (frequency=3; frequency=12).

Table 2

Frequencies of Occurrence of Fear and Panic

	Frequencies of occurrence	Total number of metaphorical lines	Frequency of metaphorical use (%)
Fear*	350	118	33.71
Panic*	162	52	32.10

With respect to emotion metaphors, the lexical words *fear* and *panic* in the CFNR were categorized into different source domains, namely ORGANISM, FORCE, HIGH/LOW INTENSITY, DISEASE, LIQUID, HEAT, LARGE/SMALL QUANTITY, MIXTURE, COLDNESS, SHARP OBJECT, SOUND, COMMODITY and LIGHT as shown in table 3. Table 3 summarizes some of the source domains associated with *fear** and *panic**.The frequencies of occurrence reveal that the most important metaphorical concept is FORCE, followed by ORGANISM and HIGH/LOW INTENSITY. The most predominant source domains of *fear** are ORGANISM (26), followed by HIGHT/LOW INTENSITY (25) and FORCE (22). In terms of *panic**, it is characterized by the same set of metaphors such as ORGANISM, FORCE, HEAT, COLDNESS and DISEASE. However the variety of metaphorical senses associated with *panic** are relatively lower than those of *fear**, in that no metaphorical expressions are found to belong to COMMODITY, LIGHT and SHARP OBJECT domains. What should also be worth noticing is that only the frequency of metaphorical senses that is correlated with *panic** (11) in the domain of LIQUID is higher than that of *fear** (6).

Table 3

Source Domains Associated with Fear* and Panic*

Source domain	Frequencies of occurrence (fear*)	Frequencies of occurrence (panic*)	Examples from Corpus
FORCE	22	3	*Fear gripped markets, Panic is gripping producers*
ORGANISM	26	12	*Fear fled the markets, full-fledged global panic*
HIGH/LOW INTENSITY	25	3	*Fear is at recorded levels, Escalating panic*
DISEASE	12	10	*Contagion of fear, easing the panic*
LIQUID	6	11	*Adrift in uncertainty and fear, stem the panic*
HEAT	8	5	*Set off so much fear, Spark a financial panic*
LARGE/SMALL QUANTIT	5	0	*Snowballing fears*
MIXTURE	3	1	*Fear and belief mingled with frustration, stirring wider panic*
COLDNESS	1	2	*Snowballing fear, froze in a panic*
SHARP OBJECT	3	0	*Caused fear to spike*
SOUND	1	2	*Trumped fear and panic*
COMMODITY	1	0	*Fear-mongering*
LIGHT	1	0	*Flashes of fear*

The domain with the greatest variety of lexemes, ORGANISM and LIQUID, will be discussed in detail in the following.

4.1   Conceptualizations in the Same Source Domain

There are both similarities and differences in the conceptualizations of *fear* and *panic* in the same source domains. In the ORGANISM domain, both *fear* and *panic* can be conceptualized as an animal or a plant. Consider the following examples:

As an animal: This is ***spawning fears*** that major producers like China and India which vastly expanded production capacity in recent years. (*The New York Times*, October 31 2008)

A significant financial crisis has been allowed to morph into a ***full-fledged global panic***. (*The New York Times*, October 31 2008)

As a plant: Stock markets around the world plunged Monday on ***growing fears*** of a global economy in trouble. (*USA Today*, October 7 2008)

>German officials said their decision to guarantee all deposits was made to avoid a ***full-blown***
>
>***financial panic*** and had nothing to do with Hypo. (*The Washington Post*, October 7 2008)

Interestingly, although both *fear* and *panic* are conceptualized as an organism, they are used to describe as in different stages of organism. As indicated in the above examples, while *fear* is associated with adjectives like *spawn* and *grow* which belong to the reproduction stage, *panic* tends to co-occur with the adjectives revealing the mature stage such as *full-fledged* and *full-blown*. This difference may suggest that the intensity of emotion related to panic is comparatively higher than that to fear.

Differences in conceptualizations are also found in the domain of LIQUID. In this domain, *panic* has a stronger collocational pattern associated with the verb *stem* (Fig. 2):

Figure 2. **Concordance lines for the pattern of 'stem + *panic*'.**

```
ancier was  able to stem a financial panic. In 1907, amid bank runs, sinking
pe that the AIG bailout would stem a panic  in the financial markets was
t it hasn't been enough to  stem the Panic of 2008. Thursday, in its seventh
ed government struggling to stem the panic. Sound familiar? It does to
d the salvage effort and stemmed the panic: "This is the  place to stop the
```

Panic is also found to be associated with verbs like *torrent*, *stanch*, *flood* and *subside*. In this regard, panic is conceptualized as a high energy level of water. Because the water is so uncontrollable, some actions have to be taken immediately to stop the situation (*stem* or *stanch*) from getting worse. This may indicate that investors have such emotion because they realize that the current financial situation is dangerous and urgent. Although *fear* has no strong collocational pattern when being conceptualized as a liquid, it is revealed that the verbs associated with it such as *float*, *rippling* and *stir* are more static. For instance,

>Lehman sent a n**ew** ***wave of fear rippling*** through market. (*The New York Times*, September 16 2008)
>
>***Floating*** around the market were the usual ***fears*** about recession and corporate earnings. (*The New York Times*, September 27 2008)

In this case, fear is conceptualized as a lower energy level of water. This kind of verb shows the spread of *fear*, in that the emotion of one investor exerts an influence on another person in the market.

The above examples show that the differences in the conceptualizations of liquid are in line with those of organism, suggesting that the intensity of fright related to panic is higher than that related to fear.

4.2   Semantic Preference

Figures 3 and 4 show the concordance lines for *fear* and *panic* respectively. As may be expected, both lexical emotion words are often associated with such lexical words as *financial*, *Wall Street*, *inflation* and *market*.

Figure 3. **Concordance lines for *fear*.**

```
n bankruptcy might set off so much fear among investors that the market "wou
 is about tamping down Wall Street fear and bringing back Wall Street greed
he midst of a market controlled by fear and rumors, and short sellers are
ts in Day of Wild Swings For once, fear fled the markets at 3 p.m An hour
 can spend on something else."  As Fear Gripped Markets, Even Reliable
nomists worry that a psychology of fear has gripped investors, not only in
ents unlike any they can remember. Fear of Deflation Lurks as Global Demand
of Euro Pacific  Capital, said the fear of inflation provoked by the $700
```

Figure 4. **Concordance lines for *panic*.**

```
ing some of  the financial pain and panic after a $700 billion bill designed
ttan mansion amid growing financial panic and declared, "This is where the
ogether to stop a growing financial panic, but they failed to offer a
ade to avoid a full-blown financial panic and had nothing to do with Hypo,
ises a decade apart: once creditors panic and begin to pull out their
t'll settle the markets, quell the  panic." If all doesn't go well? The
e that the AIG bailout would stem a panic  in the financial markets was
 he is capitalizing on the fear and panic that can grip the markets to exp
```

The words *fear* and *panic* in this Corpus have the semantic preference of 'financial sector' in 84.8% (73 out of 86) and 74% (37 out of 50) of the instances respectively. The semantic preference of *fear* is 'uncertain event' in 20.9% (18 out of 86) because the word tends to be associated with words like *riddle*, *uncertainty* and *what could happen*. This shows that investors fear as they are uncertain about the future. But for *panic*, the words associated with it indicates the urgency, such as *blood*, *quell* and *stem*, suggesting that investors panic because they realize the danger of the current financial situation, implying that some actions need to be taken in order to stop the financial situation from getting more disastrous.

Overall, the metaphor analysis conducted so far supports the dictionary entries that the intensity of fright related to panic is higher than that to fear. In addition, it shows the cause of fear and panic which is actually not found in their literal meanings.

5.   Disaster Metaphors

In the Corpus of Financial News Reports, the use of disaster metaphors serves as hyperbole to intensify the serious impact of financial situation. It is also used as a tactic to influence the emotion of investors. As indicated by Charteris-Black (2004), 'by using metaphors of natural catastrophe drawing on domains such as earthquakes, financial reporters are in fact playing upon the worst fears of investors and assisting their worst predictions to become reality' (p. 156). This contributes to the high occurrences of disaster metaphors in the CFNR, as shown in Table 4:

Table 4

Frequencies of Occurrence of Disaster Metaphors

Disaster-related metaphors	Frequency	Example
Turmoil	186	*financial turmoil, market turmoil*
Meltdown	102	*Wall street meltdown, credit market meltdown*
Crash	86	*stock market crash, housing crash*
Storm	51	*financial storm, weather the storm*
Disaster	48	*financial disaster, stave off the disaster*
Destruction	15	*mass destruction*
Debacle	15	*Mortgage debacle, home-loan debacle*
Catastrophe	12	*economic catastrophe, credit catastrophe*
Tsunami	7	*financial tsunami*
Whirlwind	7	*financial whirlwind, whirlwind merger talks*
Shakeout	6	*industry shakeout, unprecedented shakeout*
Aftershocks	5	*economic aftershocks*

Table 4 shows that the nature of some disasters is specified (e.g., natural disasters such as tsunami, whirlwind and shakeout) whereas that of some others is unspecified (e.g., crash, destruction and debacle). However, what is worth noticing is that in both cases, the outcome is more important than the cause. The use of disaster terms shows that in the coverage of financial market crisis, the journalists place heavier focus on the influence of this incident rather than its cause. This finding is consistent with Charteris-Black's (2004) view that disaster-based keywords 'exaggerate the severity of market trading conditions' and 'conceals the actions of those who have caused the disaster' (p.154). In the case of global financial crisis, the reasons why disaster metaphors are widely employed in news reports are properly that the incident is actually triggered by the largest housing market bubble in American history. This massive housing market bubble is believed to be caused by a great number of U.S. citizens who are unable to pay the debt. Another reason for exploiting a great deal of disaster metaphors in the news reports may possibly be related to political agenda:

> Bush, Treasury Secretary Henry M. Paulson Jr., Vice president Cheney and others relied too much on scare tactics in their attempts to win rapid congressional approval of a package that would allow Paulson to purchase bad assets backed by home mortgages in an attempt to shore up the credit markets…the only thing we have to fear is the fear-mongering. (The Washington Post, October 1 2008)

Given that the media play a crucial role in influencing the opinions, views, attitudes and opinions of the general public, the use of disaster metaphors in newspaper discourses could potentially exert a strong influence on the emotion of the readers.

5.1   Cause of Fear

Among the lexical terms in the domain of disaster, those with high frequencies are found to have great fixedness in the collocational pattern. For instance, *crash* tends to collocate with the noun *market* (19), as shown in Figure 5.

Figure 5. Sample concordance lines for *crash*.

```
t in the aftermath of the 1987 market crash. But first the Treasury departme
fore that after the 1987 stock market crash. But in both of those instances,
  years — since the 1987 stock market crash. But the final week was the best
or Europe. But since the stock market crash, he has  adopted a softer tone
Q: I'm worried about the stock market crash. Is it the beginning of a total
n as one reason that the stock market crash of 1929 became the Great
as the one following the stock market crash  of 1929. It lasted almost three
```

Conversely, the expressions of other disasters such as *storm*, *disaster* and *destruction* have lower fixedness, but the variety in collocation may implicate how the emotion of fear is reinforced differently. As illustrated in Figure 6, *storm* collocates with *weather* (13) and *ride out* (3), or is associated with some phrases like *might not survive the storm* (1). The lexical evidence indicates the inescapability of the current financial situation.

Figure 6. Sample concordance lines for *storm*.

```
company seems to be  weathering the storm better than most companies. Steven
 ample cash reserves to weather any storm. But as sorrow has succeeded sorro
s it was well placed to weather the storm.  But Australian Prime Minister
 inancial resources to weather that storm. But most money managers did not,
 capital and funding to weather the storm," says Phil Davidson, the manager
next quarter.  How to Ride Out This Storm  By Manuel Schiffres Kiplinger's
hat you think you can withstand the storm if the  government does nothing, estment
banks might not survive the storm. Putting a Price Tag on a
```

This may suggest that investors fear because they feel that it is difficult to escape from the current financial problem, so what they could only do is to endure it.

Figure 7 shows that *disaster* is usually associated with words such as *potential, create* and *looming* which indicate an unpredictable future situation.

Figure 7. Sample concordance lines for *disaster*.

```
nd hugging, but  people who feel a disaster is looming generally are resi
ts potential for creating economic disaster. It's just that the Fed did not
convinced that inaction could be a disaster," said Senator Robert Bennett,
ned  to avert a potential economic disaster. Tax breaks and an increase in
t is about preventing a  financial disaster. Hopefully some the ignorant
-backed securities, it was still a disaster in the making." Beyond the
 critical to averting  a financial disaster. Results from the one-third of
```

The concordance lines show that investors have the emotion of fear because the situation is so uncontrollable that they could not predict it. This is in line with the analysis of the semantic preferences associated with *fear* which also suggest uncertainty.

Figure 8 shows that *destruction* is usually associated with the lexical word *mass*, indicating the severity of the financial problem.

Figure 8. **Sample concordance lines for *destruction*.**

```
terrorism involving weapons of mass destruction -- argued in a recent white
ives are "weapons of financial mass destruction," in the prophetic words of
s called "financial weapons of mass destruction," Mark Lane, analyst at
 are witnessing may be the greatest destruction of financial wealth that
ore questions about weapons of mass destruction six years ago before we
se things financial weapons of mass destruction.  "The last eight years have
c — were "financial weapons of mass destruction." These securities were
```

Therefore, it could be deduced that investors fear because they predict that the financial crisis will bring serious consequences to the society such as surge in jobless rate.

6.   Conclusion

The metaphorical analysis reported in the paper has provided explanations for the literal meanings of *fear* and *panic* reported in the dictionaries. In the Corpus of Financial News Reports, *fear* and *panic* are used in high frequencies. Both lexical emotion terms are understood in terms of similar concepts, including ORGANISM, LIQUID and DISASTER. They collocate strongly with words of market activities, but comparatively, fear is a more controlled concept and panic includes more intense reactions due to its lack of control. The analysis also reveals that investors are panic-stricken because they realize the current financial crisis is risky which will cause more serious harm to the society such as surging jobless rate. This suggests that in the dictionary entries relating to *panic*, there is a need for addition of its cause, i.e., the consciousness of dangerous situation.

Apart from the emotion words, the emotion of fear is reinforced through the collocation of disaster terms in the news discourse. In terms of ideology, the journalists focus on the severity of situation rather than agent of the cause in this global financial crisis. Concepts such as storm, disaster and destruction offer reasons of fear and panic that seem to be valid among investors. The negative emotions are aroused because the current financial problem is uncontrollable and hence may have harmful consequences to the society, such as fluctuating stock prices and serious job cuts. The problem is also so serious that the future situation is unpredictable.

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Hedging Expressions Used by the Former Financial Secretary in Hong Kong

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Abstract

Research on the use of hedging in research articles ("RAs") has received greater attention during the last twenty years, but few have compared the use of hedges in other disciplines. This paper explores the use of hedges in the speeches of a former Hong Kong Financial Secretary ("FS"). The analysis shows that the FS uses fewer hedges when compared with the writers of RAs. Among the surface hedges, modal auxiliaries are discussed to find out why fewer modal auxiliaries are used in the FS speeches.

1.   Introduction

Hedging can soften or weaken a speaker's standpoint in order to shield himself/herself from being challenged by the hearer. Hedging can also enable speakers/writers to express a perspective on their statements, to present unproven claims with caution, and to enter into a dialogue with their audiences (Hyland, 1996). It has been recognized that an appropriate use of hedges is essential in successful communication (Hyland, 1996). The use of hedges is a negative politeness strategy in interpersonal communication (Brown & Levinson, 1987). While the literature confirms the importance of hedges, we know little about how hedging is realized in different disciplines and genres, such as political speeches.

The communicative purposes of a politician's speech are to make known a policy, express specific ideas to hopefully influence the audience's belief, and to test the responses from the public to any ideas of the politician (Beard, 2000). The Financial Secretary is a politician because he is a senior government official and a public figure in Hong Kong. His speeches, particularly with regard to economic commentaries, may give indications of the future directions of the Hong Kong government's fiscal or monetary economic policies. So understanding the illocutionary force of these speeches is important to the hearers as it may directly or indirectly affect their investment and business decisions (Bloor & Bloor, 1993).

Mainly backed up by the theoretical frameworks derived from the studies of Crompton (1997), Fortanet et al. (1998), Hyland (1998), and Prince et al. (1982), this study attempts to find the frequencies of the surface hedges and to explore the modal auxiliaries in the prepared speeches of the FS.

2.   An Exploration on the Concept of Hedging

Collins Cobuild Dictionary (2006) defines a hedge as "if you hedge or hedge a problem or question, you avoid answering the question or committing yourself to a particular action or decision". One of the first explorations of the linguistic hedging phenomenon was carried out by Lakoff (1972) who defines hedges as "words or phrases whose job is to make things fuzzy or less fuzzy", implying that writers are less than fully committed to the certainty of the referential information they present in

their writing. A speaker can state a proposition as fact (e.g. *this medicine will help you recover quickly*), or he/she can use a hedge to distance himself/herself from a claim, (e.g. *I believe that this medicine could help you recover quickly*.) Hedging has received some attention in the literature as a feature of spoken discourse mostly in casual conversation (Hyland, 1998, p.255), and as a way of "qualifying categorical commitment and facilitating discussion" (Hyland, 1996b, p.433). Although the term "hedging" itself gives the impression that it is "pejorative connotations in ordinary language" (Skelton, 1988b, p.98), research on academic writing has repeatedly shown that the use of hedges is crucial because hedges are a rhetorical means of negotiating knowledge claims (Hyland, 1994, 1998; Myers, 1989, 1997; Salager-Meyer, 1994).

In sum, the functions of hedging make things fuzzy or reduce the writer's commitment to the claim. The motivation of using hedges has been attributed to a desire to dilute assertions, modify or even hide the attitude of the writer/speaker to the propositions, to protect the writer/speaker from the possible attacks, to hide who is responsible for the truth-value of what is being said and to appear modest and polite (Lewin, 1998). The differences between disciplines in using hedges have been dealt with differently by researchers. As hedging has become a focus for research, similar to many other studies, this study examines its forms and functions in the FS speeches.

3. Background of Study

Prepared speeches are planned texts written to be read aloud in front of the audience. Politicians often exploit rhetorical structures and linguistic features to get politically relevant messages across to the audience in order to fulfill specific communicative purposes. Speeches delivered by the FS are regarded as political speeches as he is a politician of the Hong Kong Government.

4. Objective of Study

Surface hedges are lexical words that realize epistemic modality in English, such as modal auxiliaries, lexical verbs, adjectives, adverbs, and nouns (Hyland, 1998, p.103) The objective of this study is to investigate the hedging devices used by the FS in different speeches including the budget speeches. All the speeches of the former FS, Henry Tang, for the period from year 2003 to 2007 are examined. Both his ordinary speeches ("COS") and his budget speeches ("CBS") are analyzed in terms of their frequencies and forms. The occurrences of the surface lexical hedges between the COS and the CBS were compared and finally, his uses of modal auxiliaries were studied in more detail.

5. Taxonomy of Hedges

This study of hedges is based on the taxonomies of Prince et al. (1982), Crompton (1997), and Hyland (1998). Typically, surface hedges are expressed through the use of the following:

1. Modal auxiliary verbs are the most straightforward and widely used means of expressing modality in English academic writing. The most common ones are *may, might, can, could, would,* and *should*.

2. Modal lexical verbs are the speech act verbs used to perform acts such as doubting

and evaluating rather than merely describing. The degree of illocutionary force of different modal lexical verbs varies, such as *to see, to appear, to believe, to assume, to suggest, to estimate, to tend, to think, to argue, to indicate, to propose,* and *to speculate.*

3.   Adjectives, nouns, and adverbs.

     a)   Probability adjectives such as *possible, probable,* and *un-likely.*

     b)   Nouns such as *assumption*, *claim, possibility, estimate,* and *suggestion.*

     c)   Adverbs, or to be non-verbal modals, such as *perhaps, possibly, probably, practically, presumably, virtually,* and *apparently*.

6.   The Data

A corpus-based descriptive linguistic approach is adopted in the study. Two corpora were examined separately. The COS, which is composed of 595,148 words, is made up of 84 speeches in all. The speeches were delivered at various events such as inaugural ceremonies, symposiums, business programmes, business luncheon meetings with different professional associations, etc. The presumed audiences were highly educated people because they were distinguished guests of the events. Apart from addressing the thematic purposes of the events, all the speeches pertained to the economic outlook or financial matters of Hong Kong from different angles.

The CBS consists of four speeches from 2004 to 2007, making a total of 282,490 words. They were presented at the Legislative Council, describing the economic performance of Hong Kong and the outlook of the financial situation and budget forecast. The speeches were mainly used to explain the budgets and to get the endorsement of the Legislative Council.

7.   Data Analysis

For the purpose of finding out the frequencies of the surface lexical hedges, speeches were downloaded from the Government website. Then a quantitative analysis of the hedges was conducted. The following steps were taken:-

1.   With reference to the analytical taxonomy, I compiled two lists of frequency items from the COS and CBS to compare the surface linguistic realizations. They were computer searched to produce frequency counts of the target items.

2.   The hedges found in the above step were carefully examined in their contexts of use. The judgments rested on close contextual scrutiny concerning whether the words perform hedging functions.

8.   Results

8.1   Surface Hedges in the COS and CBS

Table 1 below summarizes the types of surface hedges in the two corpora. It shows that the frequencies of use of hedging devices are different between the two corpora. The CBS has more frequent occurrence of hedges (56.50 per 10,000 words) than the COS (46.26 per 10,000 words).

However, some uniformity can be found when the categories of hedges are listed in descending order of frequency in each corpus.

Table 1
Classification of Hedges in Descending Order of Frequency (%) in the Corpora

FS's Corpus of Ordinary Speeches ("COS")	Relative frequencies	Percentage	FS's Corpus of Budget Speeches ("CBS")	Relative frequencies	Percentage	Hyland's RA Corpus	Relative frequencies	Percentage
1. Modal Auxiliaries	11.75	25.40	1. Modal Auxiliaries	21.03	37.22	1. Verbs	49	27.53
2. Adjectives	10.79	23.32	2. Full verbs	10.16	17.98	2. Adverbs	44	24.72
3. Adverbs	9.95	21.51	3. Adverbs	9.17	16.23	3. Adjectives	39	21.91
4. Full verbs	9.17	19.82	4. Nouns	8.92	15.79	4. Modal verbs	35	19.66
5. Nouns	4.6	9.94	5. Adjectives	7.22	12.78	5. Nouns	11	6.18
Total	**46.26**	**100**		**56.5**	**100**		**178**	**100**

In each of the two corpora, modal auxiliaries are the most frequent; they rank first in both corpora with 25.4% and 37.22% respectively. Adjectives are quite common in COS, ranking second (23.32 %), but it ranks the fifth in the CBS (12.78%). Adverbs rank third in both COS (21.51%) and CBS (16.23%). Full verbs are in the fourth place in the COS (19.82%), but in the second place in the CBS (17.98%). Nouns rank fifth in COS (9.94%), whereas they are in the fourth place in CBS (15.79%).

Table 1 also shows that overall frequencies of hedges found in the two corpora are substantially lower than Hyland's (1996, 1998) results when the relative frequencies are normalized to n/10,000 words in my two corpora.

The results are sufficient to illustrate that there are similarities and differences between the two corpora. As the results show, modal auxiliaries are noticeably more frequent in the two corpora. This result is different from the results of Hyland's (1998, p.104) analysis of biology research articles in which modal auxiliaries were found to be the second least frequent type of hedge. In the following sections, more detailed analysis of each modal auxiliary is given.

8.2   Modal Auxiliaries in COS and CBS

Hedging may be realized through epistemic modality expressions. Epistemic modality is used to convey the possibility or necessity of the truth of propositions and with the knowledge and belief (Perkins, 1983, p.9). Palmer (1986) defines modality as "the grammaticalization of speakers' attitudes and opinions". Perkins (1983) and Halliday et al. (1994) see modality as supplementing a spectrum of meanings to proposition. In the analysis of biology research articles, Hyland (1998) suggests that modal auxiliaries are the starting point in the studies of modality in English. From this perspective,

hedging may be realized by means of epistemic modality. The following sections will look into how each of the modal auxiliaries is used as hedges in the two corpora of COS and CBS. Table 2 below shows the relative distribution of different modal auxiliaries across the three corpora.

Table 2
Comparison of the Relative Distribution of the Modal Auxiliaries Between the Corpora and Hyland's Corpus

	FS's Corpus of Ordinary Speeches("COS")		FS's Corpus of Budget speeches("CBS")		Hyland's Corpus of Biology RA	
	n/10,000	Percentage	n/10,000	Percentage	n/10,000	Percentage
Would	3.49	29.73	1.06	5.04	10.4	30.23
may	0.4	3.41	0.42	2.00	12.8	37.20
Could	0.77	6.56	0.18	0.86	6.4	18.60
Should	1.08	9.20	1.27	6.04	2.4	6.98
Can	0.55	4.68	1.06	5.04	0.8	2.33
Will	4.4	37.48	15.79	75.12	0.8	2.33
Must	0.97	8.26	1.06	5.04	0.8	2.33
Shall	0.08	0.68	0.18	0.86	0	0
Subtotal	**11.74**	**100**	**21.02**	**100**	**34.4**	**100**

The data from the two corpora include eight modal auxiliaries that could be interpreted to express epistemic meaning and are used for hedging purposes – *would, may, could, should, can, will, must,* and *shall.* The instances of all items across the corpora differ to a certain degree. CBS is found to have a greater number of modal auxiliaries (21.02 per 10,000 words) whereas COS has fewer of this kind of hedge (11.74 per 10,000 words). Each modal auxiliary is discussed in the following:

8.2.1   Will

Will may be used to realize a range of non-epistemic meanings, such as willingness and intention (Coates, 1983, pp.171-172; Quirk, Greenbaum, Leech & Svartvik, 1985, pp.228-229), which bear no hedging meaning. But in some cases *will* has the epistemic meanings of "predictability" about the present ("I [confidently] predict that it is the case that p") or "prediction" about the future ("I predict that…"). The former meaning refers to the speaker's or writer's common sense or repeated experience, making claims about the present. It typically takes third person subject. Hyland (1998, p.116) points out that *will* is not only simply a marker of future tense but also bears an element of uncertainty or doubt. However, he also agrees that it is difficult to distinguish between an indication of futurity and an epistemic meaning (Hyland, 1998, p.116). An example of *will* bearing hedging meaning is shown below.

I am sure Hong Kong **will** grow even stronger and more prosperous in the years to come.

8.2.2   Would

Would is used in its unreal/tentative mode (Huddleston, 1971, p.307). *Would* is found to have an epistemic meaning of prediction about some actions or states in the past (Coates, 1983, pp.208-209). It also expresses the speaker's/writer's confidence in the truth of the proposition. Coates (1983, pp.216-218) also points out that *would* is pragmatically used to express politeness or tentativeness, making no negative implications: an unreal form used to avoid a naked assertion. In such cases, they are more relevant to hedging (Coates, 1983, p.216). Below is an example of *would* bearing epistemic prediction and tentativeness.

> The easy choice, of course, **would** be to cut major taxes like salaries and profits tax, jack up government.

8.2.3   Must

Huddleston (1971, pp.311-313) recognizes two uses of *must*: deontic (permission and obligation) and epistemic. The latter is described as "epistemic necessity" (Quirk et al., 1985, p.224) or confident inference (Coates, 1983, p.31). From the known facts and through the process of logical deduction, epistemic *must* expresses the speaker's confidence in the truth of what he or she is saying (Coates, 1983, p.41). In view of these characteristics, the epistemic use of *must* can be regarded as hedge in which the speaker or writer is providing information that is likely to be true through his or her logical deduction, but not definitely true.

There are instances where *must* cannot be determined as either having a deontic or an epistemic meaning. These kinds of indeterminacy are regarded to be ambiguous (Coates, 1983: 15-16). Hyland (1998) and Butler (1990: 163) point out in their data that ambiguous cases between the deontic and epistemic meaning of *must* exist. Below is an example of *must* showing the epistemic characteristics.

> While we look north for the growth, we **must** not neglect our long-haul markets.

8.2.4   May

There are six uses of *may* expressing: a) qualified generalization, b) exhaustive disjunction, c) uncertainty (possibility), d) concession, e) legitimacy, and f) ability (Huddleston, 1971, pp.297-302). Coates (1983, pp.131-136) considers *may* as the modal of expressing epistemic possibility, reflecting the speaker's lack of confidence in the proposition expressed. The epistemic use of *may* has the characteristics of subjectivity, flexibility of time reference and hedging (Fraser, 1975). In its pragmatic use, *may* is used by the speaker to soften categorical expressions. It can be paraphrased by "it is possible that…"/"perhaps". Root (or deontic) *may* is concerned with granting permission, or "enabling circumstances (Coates, 1983, p.141).

In my data, there are indeterminate examples where distinguishing them either to bear an epistemic or a root meaning is not altogether straightforward. In Coates' (1983, p.145) analysis, such indeterminate cases between epistemic and root modality are reported as "merger" cases. Given that the intended meaning of epistemic possibility does exist in the merger cases, all occurrences of the

merger cases are counted as hedges in this study. Below are examples of *may* in the data used as hedges. Each occurrence of *may* tones down the degree of confidence expressed by the FS, for example,

> For me, I'm very delighted to be able to address the CLSA investors' Forum in my new role as Financial Secretary: and to reassure you that while I **may** still be finding my "financial feet".

8.2.5   Can

Huddleston's (1971) findings in the uses of c*an* are similar to those of *may*. Butler (1990) also states that the two auxiliaries have the same core meaning except that *can* occurs with an epistemic meaning only in the form of interrogatives and negatives. While both *may* and *can* indicate possibility, *may* is often used to indicate factualness, i.e., epistemic possibility ("it is possible that"), and *can* is often used to indicate the theoretical (deontic/root) form ("it is possible for X").

However, certain recent research suggests that such a distinction may not be altogether correct. Declerck (1995, p.398) suggests that cases of "merger" exist where factual and theoretical possibility cannot to be distinguished. This indicates that some instances of *can* are perceived to bear an epistemic meaning. Coates (1995) also illustrates that *can* is used with an epistemic meaning in certain contexts in American English. Coates (1995, p.64) indicates that the epistemic use of *can* is occasionally used with some "syntactic features such as inanimate subject and stative verb, and in contexts where accompanying words support an epistemic meaning". The example below can be interpreted as "a sort of hedge" or making some information presented as less than absolute in a way similar to *may*.

> We very much hope, therefore, that the various sectors of the community **can** reach a consensus on these projects as soon as possible, so that an early start **can** be made on them.

8.2.6   Could

Compared to *can, could* attributes itself more to epistemic interpretations (Hoye, 1997, p.87). Coates (1983, p.107) states that *could* is employed to express a range of modal meanings, such as hypothetical forms, deontic possibility in unreal conditions, and past forms of *can.* In its expressions of deontic possibility, permission and ability, *could* can be paraphrased as "it was /would be possible for…", "it was/would be permissible for…" and "x was/would be able to…". Epistemic *could* expresses the speaker's lack of confidence in the stated proposition and can be paraphrased as "it is possible that…/perhaps". *Could* also expresses a certain degree of tentative possibility (Coates, 1983: 165). It is also true that when this modal auxiliary co-occurs with some adverbs such as *well,* it may reflect a higher modal value of possibility (Hoye, 1997: 87). Due to its multiple meanings, the merger of deontic possibility and epistemic possibility exists. All mergers of this type are regarded as having the hedging phenomena. An example of *could* reflecting epistemic possibility is shown below.

> In the context of these encouraging signs, there are those who feel we **could** be well on our way to an economic revival

8.2.7   Shall

In his corpus, Huddleston (1971, pp.309-311) discusses the two uses of *shall*: making a statement about one's future actions and occurrence in clause embedded as complement to noun probability. Coates (1983, p.192) states that *shall* has the prediction in meaning which is very similar to *will*, except that *shall* is restricted to first person subject. *Shall* can also be paraphrased by "I/we predict that …" or "it is predictable that…". Hoye (1997, p.120) argues that although *shall* is not usually considered as having epistemic meaning, in some cases the auxiliary indicates a relatively high degree of probability. The following is an example bearing the probability or prediction meaning.

> Since we **shall** have ample time to consider GST, there is no need for anyone to jump to a conclusion.

8.2.8   Should

In Huddleston's (1971, pp.309-311) study, *should* is found to have three uses: obligation, logical expectation and first-person equivalent of "tentative would". Alongside its commonest root meaning, Coates (1983, p.58) also states that it is sometimes used to express an epistemic meaning. This epistemic meaning indicates a "rather extreme likelihood, or a reasonable assumption or conclusion", which implicitly "allows for speaker to be mistaken" (Palmer, 1979, p.49). Coates(1983, p.64) also points out that the epistemic *should* expresses a tentative assumption, an assessment of probability, based on facts known to the speaker. There are cases that *should* is interpreted as "merger" in which indetermination between root and epistemic meaning (Coates, 1983, p.77) is found for example:

> These opportunities **should** be especially attractive for Japanese companies in the services sector,
> where Hong Kong is particularly strong.

In summary, I have compared the relevant frequencies of the modal auxiliaries in the two corpora. It shows that the FS employs more of the auxiliaries in CBS than COS. In connection with the individual auxiliary, some differences are found between the two corpora and Hyland's (1998) corpus. The most noticeable difference is obviously the use of *must*. In the spoken corpora, the relative frequencies are 0.97 (n=58) and 1.06 (n=30) per 10,000 words which are higher than Hyland's (1998) biology research articles (0.8 per 10,000 words).

9.   Discussion

In the preceding sections, a summary of the frequencies of the surface lexical hedges have been presented. It shows that the frequencies of lexical hedging forms are not similar across the COS and CBS (46.26 vs. 56.50 per 10,000 words). A possible explanation might be that the discussions in the CBS are internal political communication, with the politician ("FS") speaking to other politicians (Schaffner, 1998) and the immediate audience is the Legislative Councilors who have the voting rights to disapprove the budgets. In the CBS, the FS needs to outline or defend his own decisions in proposing the budget, directly or indirectly criticizing or commenting on ideas or actions of his political opponents against his budget. Therefore, the FS tends to use more hedging devices to modify his words or assertive statements so as to give the impression of not being dogmatic. In the COS, they

are external political communication, with the FS speaking to the public. The immediate audiences are members of the associations, political parties or groups, friends or foes alike, and the general public, in Hong Kong or abroad. The contents of the speeches may not be so sensitive, merely information sharing or conveying some new ideas or proposals of the government. Although hedging devices are also used to express his personal opinions, factual statements are frequently found, rendering him the impression of precision.

In this study, modal auxiliaries have been explored. The relative frequencies of modal auxiliaries in both of the FS's corpora are fewer than those of Hyland's (1998) findings on RAs. There may be some reasons why the FS uses fewer modal auxiliaries. Firstly, due to the wide range of meanings expressed by a modal, it may be sometimes difficult to distinguish between epistemic and non-epistemic (or root) modality. For example, one of the most important characteristics of epistemic *may* is its use as a hedge. However, this auxiliary may also be associated with root possibility which implies willingness or intention, (e.g., *I am afraid this is the bank's final word. I tell you this so that you may make arrangements elsewhere if you are able to*) (Coates, 1983, p.132). In view of the time pressure always faced by the FS in finishing the script of a speech, he might take an easy approach to skip the modal auxiliaries. Secondly, the FS, Hendy Tang, grew up in a traditional Chinese family. Although he spent a few years in the United States for university education in the late sixties, he spends most of his time in Hong Kong. He adopts a traditional Chinese living style because his family members are all Chinese and speak a Chinese dialect. He works with the Chinese in Hong Kong most of the time. Many studies show that an effective and comprehensive use of a modal auxiliary often depends on cultural subtleties that put non-native speaker of English ("NNSE") at a disadvantage (Milton, 2001). By using English modals to express an appropriate sense and force is a complex mix of linguistic and cultural contexts that are not easily acquired by a NNSE. The Chinese generally express far too much certainty in both English speech and writing (Milton, 2001, p.80). As such, the FS may use fewer hedges than a native English speaker in the speeches. Thirdly, hedges (along with hesitations) have been regarded as the writer's lack of "commitment to ideas of proposition expressed"(Ng & Bradac, 1993, p.36). Blankenship and Craig (2007) also state that if a politician uses hedges in a speech, it may reflect his or her lack of confidence. In view of the FS's authoritative position, he may need to display confidence in prediction and commitment to the audience in order to gain credibility. Perhaps one of the possible manifestations of such an authoritative identity is his use of powerful language in the speeches. As such a balance of using powerful language (e.g., *It is absolutely sure*) and hedged language such as modal auxiliaries (e.g., *It can be sure*) may be seen in his speeches.

In conclusion, the FS uses a variety of forms and varying amounts of surface hedges in both of his ordinary and budget speeches. However, he uses more modal auxiliaries in his budget speeches than the ordinary speeches.

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Stance and Engagement in Writing: Japanese and American Editorials

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Abstract

This paper examines how expressions of stance and engagement are used in Japanese and American newspaper editorials. Data have been collected from major newspapers in Japan and America, namely *Asahi Shimbun* and the New York Times. They are analyzed using a model of academic interaction presented in Hyland (2005), where stance is comprised of four main elements: 'hedges', 'boosters', 'attitude markers', and 'self-mention', whereas five key resources of engagement listed are 'reader pronouns', 'directives', 'questions', 'appeals to shared knowledge', and 'personal asides'. Some differences between Japanese and American editorials have been identified. For instance, American editorials employ more engagement expressions, especially 'reader pronouns'. They also use a wider variety of stance and engagement expressions. Japanese editorials, on the other hand, use more 'questions' than American editorials. They are also characterized by a paucity of 'boosters'. The differences thus identified are explained by the linguistic characteristics of Japanese and English discourses. Although Hyland's model of interaction is based on academic English and some of the elements presented in the model hardly appeared in editorials, the model has uncovered some contrastive natures of Japanese and American editorials.

1.   Introduction

Newspaper editorials present the face of a newspaper, where they state their voice and opinions on current issues. This paper examines how voice and opinions are presented in Japanese and American editorials. Contrastive rhetoric studies have been carried out in the past between English and Japanese languages and some differences between the two languages have been identified. One of the major differences which have been pointed out in a number of studies is the inductiveness of the Japanese rhetoric. Kobayashi (1984), Hinds (1990), and Kubota (1992) all have pointed out that Japanese writers tend to organize essays inductively in the order of specific to general, placing main ideas at the end. Maynard (1996) examined Japanese newspaper opinion columns and also found out that they tend to place opinions toward the end of a column. Focusing more on the linguistic realization of opinions rather than their locations in a text, Lee (2006) examined research articles published in Japan and America, and found out that very few boosters are used in Japanese articles.

Given the findings of previous studies, this paper examines how language is used to express voice and opinions of major newspapers in Japan and America. For this purpose, Hyland's model of stance and engagement (2005) is used. Hyland has been examining academic discourse written in English (1994, 1999, 2001, 2002) and his model to be used in this study is also based on academic English. Thus this paper aims not only to examine a contrast between American and Japanese editorial writings but also to see the extent of applicability of Hyland's model of academic writing in newspaper editorial writings.

2.   Stance and Engagement in Hyland's Model

Addressing the lack of overall typology of the resources that writers employ to express their positions and connect with readers, Hyland (2005) offers a framework for examining the linguistic means by which interaction is achieved in academic arguments. Hyland claims that such an interaction is managed by writers in two main ways; stance and engagement. Stance is defined in Hyland (2005) as the way writers present themselves and convey their judgments, opinions, and commitments. Engagement is defined as the way writers relate to their readers with respect to the positions advanced in the text. Based on an analysis of 240 published research articles from eight disciplines and insider informant interviews, Hyland presents key resources of academic interaction consisting of stance and engagement as shown in Figure 1 and Figure 2 respectively.
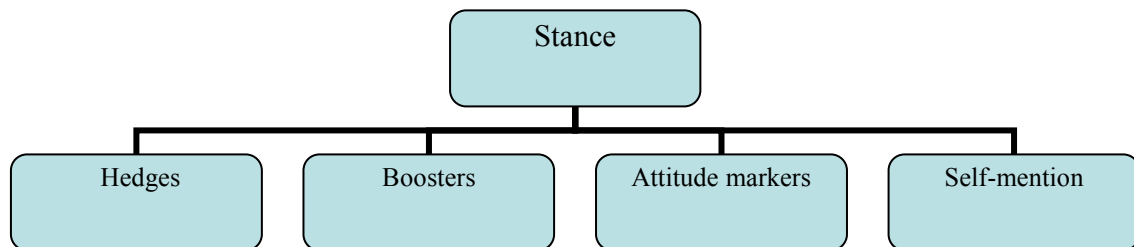
Figure 1. **Key resources of stance.**

Stance is comprised of four main elements: 'hedges', 'boosters', 'attitude markers', and 'self-mentions'. 'Hedges' are devices that indicate the writer's decision to withhold complete commitment to a proposition. Typical examples are expressions such as, "possible", "might", and "perhaps". 'Boosters', on the other hand, are words which allow writers to express their certainty, such as "clearly", "obviously", and "demonstrate". They function to stress shared information, group membership, and engagement with readers (Hyland, 1999). 'Attitude markers' indicate the writer's affective, rather than epistemic attitude to propositions, conveying surprise, agreement, importance, frustration, and so on, such as "important", "fascinating", and "quite extraordinary". 'Self-mention' refers to the use of the first person pronouns and possessive adjectives to present propositional, affective, and interpersonal information (Hyland, 2001). Examples of 'self-mention' are "I feel …", "I argue…", and "I bring to bear …".
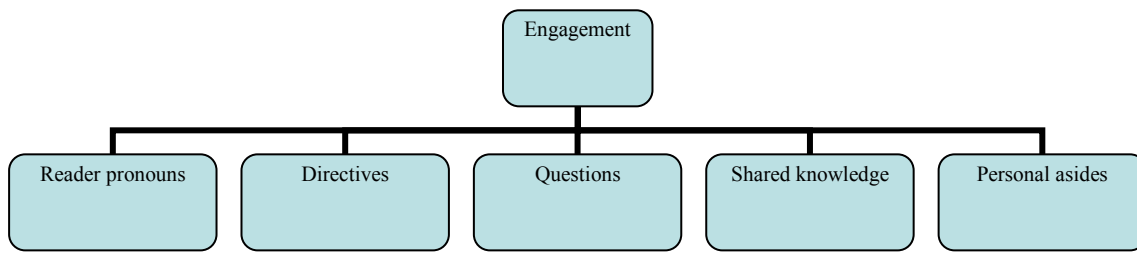
Figure 2. **Key resources of engagement.**

Engagement is classified into five elements: 'reader pronouns', 'directives', 'questions', '(appeals to) shared knowledge', and 'personal asides'. By using 'reader pronouns' such as "you" and "your", a writer can acknowledge the reader's presence, while by using inclusive "we", there is an enormous emphasis on binding writer and reader together (Hyland, 2005). 'Directives', on the other hand, instruct the reader to perform an action or to see things in a way determined by the reader, and 'questions' are the strategy of inviting engagement and bringing the interlocutor into an arena where they can be led to the writer's viewpoint. 'Shared knowledge', such as "of course" and "obviously", seek to position readers within apparently naturalized boundaries of disciplinary understandings, whereas 'personal asides' allow writers to address readers directly by briefly interrupting the argument to offer a comment of what has been said. An example of 'personal asides' is indicated by a dash in the following example: "And – as I believe many TESOL professionals will readily acknowledge – critical thinking has now begun to make its mark, particularly in the area of L2 composition." (Hyland, 2005)

Although Hyland's model is based on academic writing realized in English, newspaper editorials are also a means by which the writer attempts to present his or her stance and to relate to the readers with respect to the stance advanced in the editorials. Therefore, using Hyland's model is a viable option for analyzing newspaper editorials. Using the model, however, to analyze newspaper editorials written in a language other than English could be a challenge. With the lack of a comprehensive framework which can be used for contrastive rhetoric studies, however, Hyland's model based on English writing would offer an insight when at least one of the languages to be contrasted is English.

3.   **Research Questions, Data, and Method of Analysis**

In contrasting Japanese and American newspaper editorials, the following research questions have been set:

1.   Are there any differences between Japanese and American newspaper editorials in the way expressions of stance and engagement are used?

2.   Is Hyland's model of stance and engagement based on academic English useful in

analyzing newspaper editorials written in Japanese and English?

Data have been collected from editorials which appeared in major newspapers in Japan and America from the period of June to December, 2008 as follows:

30 editorials from *Asahi Shimbun*

30 editorials from The New York Times

The two newspapers have been selected for the comparability in terms of the length of an editorial. Average length of editorials selected from *Asahi Shimbun* is 31.1 T-units and that of the New York Times is 30.9 T-units. The language used in the selected newspaper editorials is then examined based on Hyland's model by identifying and counting expressions of stance and engagement found in them.

4.   Findings

4.1   Stance Expressions

Expressions of stance in American editorials have been found as indicated by the underlines in the following examples:

- Hedges

  … defendants <u>may</u> feel pressure to …

- Boosters

  There <u>surely</u> are more economic shocks in …

- Attitude markers

  The <u>most </u>important part of her answer was …

Examples of expressions of stance from Japanese editorials are as follows:

- Hedges

  … *soo kangaete-iru no <u>kamo shire-nai</u>*.

  '… <u>may</u> be thinking that way.'

- Boosters

  … *<u>amari ni mo</u> go-tsugoo-shugi ni sugi-nai k*a.

  'Isn't it <u>too much</u> of opportunism?'

- Attitude markers

  … *meikaku ni naru <u>hazu da</u>*.

  '... <u>should</u> become clear.'

The following table presents frequency of stance expressions which appeared in the American and Japanese newspaper editorials.

Table 1

Frequency of Stance Expressions

	American editorials	Japanese editorials
Hedges	32	43
Boosters	31	2
Attitude markers	207	158
Self-mention	0	0
Total	270	203

No expressions of 'self-mention' appeared in either American or Japanese editorials, suggesting that this might be a device found in research articles but not in newspaper editorials, at least in the editorials where no individual authorship is identified. A paucity of 'boosters' is observed in Japanese editorials, and the same phenomenon has been observed in academic discourse (Lee, 2006), suggesting that this might be a characteristic of Japanese writing, at least in academic and newspaper editorial writings.

4.2   Engagement expressions

Examples of expressions of engagement found in American editorials follow:

- Reader pronouns

  Now <u>we</u> learn that P Morgan Chase and …

- Directives

  <u>Find</u> it and <u>pitch in</u>.

- Questions

  So <u>why</u> wait until <u>January</u> to get started?

- Shared knowledge

  There is, <u>of course</u>, nothing new in …

- Personal asides

  … is more efficient and —<u>not incidentally</u>—more fair.

  Examples of expressions of engagement from Japanese editorials are as follows:

- Reader pronouns

  <u>Watashitachi</u> wa sore kurai no kakugo o …

  '<u>We</u> must be ready to …'

- Questions

  <u>Naze</u> kooka ga agara-nai no <u>ka</u>.

  '<u>Why</u> ... is not effective?'

- Shared knowledge

  … <u>kore hodo</u> kiki e no taiouryoku o ...

  '... the ability to cope with crisis <u>this much</u>'

The following table presents frequency of engagement expressions which appeared in American and Japanese newspaper editorials.

Table 2

Frequency of Engagement Expressions

	American editorials	Japanese editorials
Reader pronouns	30	1
Directives	7	0
Questions	14	27
Shared knowledge	1	1
Personal asides	20	0
Total	72	29

Unlike American editorials, an imperative form of 'directives' was not found at all in Japanese editorials. This would be explained by the fact that an imperative form of directives is considered rude when used with strangers (Dunkley, 1994). It would be thus natural to find no occurrence of directives in Japanese newspaper editorials where the reader and writer are anonymous and strangers to each other.

Another expression which has not been found in Japanese editorials is 'personal asides'. 'Personal asides' are typically indicated by a dash in English writing and its equivalent in Japanese writing is a bracket as follows:

… is more efficient and —not incidentally—more fair.

…*wa yori kooritsuteki de (toozen no koto nagara) yori koohei de aroo*.

It is not surprising to find lack of 'personal asides' in Japanese newspaper editorials as the use of brackets is considered to be a rather informal manner of expressions in Japanese, whereas a newspaper editorial is a formal channel of presenting opinions.

Another difference between American and Japanese editorials is found in 'reader pronouns'. 30 instances were found in American editorials while only one was found in Japanese editorials. The paucity of this engagement device in Japanese in contrast to English would be explained by the linguistic characteristics of the two languages. The existence of an overt pronoun is an unmarked linguistic feature of English, while a covert pronoun is a norm in Japanese (Lee, 1987; Kameyama, 1988).

The only element of engagement where Japanese exceeds American editorials in number is 'questions'. 27 questions have been found in Japanese editorials while only 14 questions appeared in American editorials. As Hyland (2002) pointed out, 'questions' are the strategy of dialogic involvement, inviting engagement and bringing the reader into an arena where they can be led to the writer's viewpoint. When used in newspaper editorials, it is considered as a strategy for the writer of editorials to lead the readers to his or her viewpoint. The tendency for Japanese editorial writers to use this strategy more often than American counterparts may be related to a characteristic of Japanese discourse where use of questions has been frequently observed. Beebe and Takahashi (1989) reported a case in which a Japanese speaker used a rhetorical question to correct an interlocutor's error. Hajikano, Kumatoridani, and Fujimori (1996) studied complaint strategies used by native and

nonnative speakers of Japanese. They reported a case in which questions, whether rhetorical or not, were used more frequently by native speakers of Japanese than nonnative speakers whose first languages were English, Chinese, Indonesian, and Thai, among others. Lee (2002) has also found that Japanese adult speakers tend to use questions when refusing a request from someone of equal or higher status. Although the type of questions differs according to relative social status between the one refusing and the one being refused, Japanese, overall, use a question strategy in refusal much more frequently than native speakers of English, who displayed no or little use of questions in the same situations.

Note that all the cases introduced above from previous studies are face-threatening situations. Thus, use of questions seems to be a strategy not only to mitigate potential loss of face (Brown & Levinson, 1978) but also to invite engagement (Hyland, 2002). Whether the Japanese editorial writers take the element of face into account remains debatable, but the fact that they use a question strategy more often than American counterparts confirms the characteristic of Japanese discourse.

5.   Conclusion

The following table presents the contrast of American and Japanese editorials in terms of the total numbers of stance and engagement expressions. Frequency ratio per T-units is indicated in a bracket. Statistical analysis was not conducted due to a small volume of data available, but the contrast between American and Japanese editorials can be observed.

Table 3

Stance and Engagement Expressions in American and Japanese Editorials

	American editorials (per 926 T-units)	Japanese editorials (per 933 T-units)
Stance expressions	270 (0.29)	203 (0.22)
Engagement expressions	72 (0.08)	29 (0.03)
Total	342 (0.37)	232 (0.25)

Major findings from the current study can be summarized as follows:

1)   American editorials use more engagement expressions than Japanese editorials, especially 'reader pronouns'.

2)   American editorials use a wider variety of stance and engagement expressions.

3)   Japanese editorials hardly use 'boosters'.

4)   Japanese editorials use more 'questions' than American editorials.

These findings answer the following research questions which have been set for the current study:

1.   Are there any differences between Japanese and American newspaper editorials in the way expressions of stance and engagement are used?

2.   Is Hyland's model of stance and engagement based on academic English useful in

analyzing newspaper editorials written in Japanese and English?

Differences between Japanese and American newspaper editorials have been identified especially in the frequency of engagement expressions. American editorials use more engagement expressions (72 instances) than Japanese editorials (29 instances), especially 'reader pronouns' (30 vs.1). This phenomenon has been discussed in 4.2 and explained by the fact that covert use of personal pronouns is a norm in the Japanese language (Lee, 1987; Kameyama, 1988).

American editorials use a wider variety of stance and engagement expressions than Japanese editorials. This is due to the fact that a number of devices presented in Hyland's model were hardly observed in Japanese editorials. For example, only two instances of 'boosters' were observed and most of the engagement expressions were hardly found; 'reader pronouns' (1 instance), 'directives' (0 instance), and 'personal asides' (0 instance).

A paucity of 'boosters' seems to be a characteristic of Japanese discourse. It has been found in this study and also in a previous study on research articles (Lee, 2006). Thus, Hyland's model not only identifies differences between American and Japanese editorials but also confirms the characteristic of Japanese discourse, both in academic and newspaper editorial writings.

Another characteristic of Japanese discourse confirmed by Hyland's model is frequent use of questions. 'Questions' has turned out to be the only category of engagement devices in which Japanese editorials exceeded American editorials. As mentioned in 4.2, a number of previous studies on Japanese discourse have pointed out the Japanese tendency to use questions (Beebe & Takahashi, 1989; Hajikano, Kumatoridani, & Fujimori, 1996; Lee, 2002). Thus, we may conclude that the question strategy is a characteristic of Japanese discourse. Newspaper editorials are meant to present the newspaper's view on current issues. They are meant to be engaging and persuasive. The means of engagement and persuasion, however, may be different according to the language used.

Although 'self-mention' and 'shared knowledge' were hardly found in both American and Japanese editorials and because of that, Hyland's model may not be considered suitable for analyzing newspaper editorials, it has uncovered contrastive natures of Japanese and American editorials and, at the same time, confirmed characteristics of Japanese discourse; a paucity of boosters and frequent use of questions.

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The Use of Politeness Marker *Po* in
Television-Mediated Political Campaign Advertisements in the Philippines

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Abstract

Politics has developed, as has advertising, a type of discourse in the form of a political campaign advertisement that is launched through the medium of television or what is referred to in the present study as a television-mediated political campaign advertisement (TPCA). The present study investigates how politeness is enacted in a TPCA, a transdisciplinary type of discourse that involves the media, advertising, and politics. A distinctive quality of a TPCA is the hybridity that is brought about by the fusion of several disciplines in the discourse.

In the Philippines, *po* is a deferential marker that is used to express respect for the person being addressed; this is similar to the function of the second person plural pronouns in Tagalog. The study aims to examine the functions, occurrences, and linguistic pattern of Tagalog politeness marker *po* in a TPCA.

The polite marker *po* is idiosyncratic of the Tagalog language and culture. It is one of the ways through which people show respect not just towards elders but also towards peers or even younger people. The substantial usage of this enclitic (at least one in 50% of total transcripts) illustrate the value of politeness among speakers in Philippine politics, specifically, in a TPCA.

1.   Introduction

The television-mediated political campaign advertisement (TPCA) is a universal type of discourse that is common in most societies. However, the use of certain linguistic features such as politeness markers *po* and *ho* may reveal idiosyncrasies that make each TPCA unique. In this paper, the deliberate use of politeness marker *po* is investigated in a scripted typed of discourse such as the TPCA in the Philippines.

Polite markers and address forms may vary according to the linguistic devices available in different cultures. Cross-cultural studies illustrate the significance of politeness and its social implications in communication. Politeness is demonstrated in most cultures through *honorification*, a term in sociolinguistics that refers to the use of respect markers to convey respect in addressing another person who is perceived as a social superior (Bonvillain, 2003). Through the employment of linguistic features, the attitude of politeness may be shown in different ways.

Bonvillain (2003) cites the Japanese language as a rich body of data that shows the value of politeness among the Japanese; further, Bonvillain notes that *honorification* is illustrated through the use of respect markers with nouns such as the word 'sensei', which means 'teacher', although the person may be a doctor, politician, or any other person in other professions (p. 134). Other terms such as 'father' or 'senior colleague' *(senpai)* may also be used to show respect to any addressee. Nouns

may also occur with polite prefixes *o* and *go,* as illustrated in the following example provided by Ide (as cited in Bonvillain, 2003, p. 134):

(1)   teacher's work (produced by teacher)

sensei   no   go-sakuhin

teacher   HON-work

The Japanese language has other politeness devices that may be more complex especially those that are used with verbs and modifiers. In addition to providing formality in addressing participants in a formal setting, Ide (as cited in Bonvillain, 2003) gives three other rules in Japanese social etiquette (p. 136):

(i)   Be polite to a person of higher social position.

(ii)   Be polite to a person with power.

(iii)   Be polite to an older person.

According to Ide (1982), Rule (ii) may take precedence over Rule (i); for example, doctors have power over their patients or teachers over their students. Ide's study gives another example of a situation where power and social position coincide: the case of a policeman issuing a ticket to a doctor. Although the police officer has lower social status, the police officer has power to impose a penalty on a traffic misdemeanor of the doctor. Further, Ide (as cited in Bonvillain, 2003) reports that some Japanese individuals of high social status and power may violate Rule (i) by using reciprocally polite speech to their subordinates. This is strongly observed in women who have higher positions in their professions, thus creating a "clash of the high position and the low status of women in general" (p. 137). Ide's study has found that women are generally more polite than men in the Japanese society.

In the Philippines, honorifics are reflected in the use of deferential pronouns, deference markers *po* and *ho,* and address forms (Bresnahan, 1991; Schachter & Otanes, 1972). *Po* and *ho* are peculiar politeness markers in Tagalog, one of the major Philippines languages. The function of these polite markers is similar to that of the second person plural pronouns in Tagalog. The politeness markers *po* and *ho* are used to express formality or distance in interactions. These enclitics may differ in certain aspects of usage, such as who often use them and in what circumstances. *Po* is more formal and respectful than *ho,* which is more commonly used especially among young speakers, except in social formulas, as exemplified in the following examples (Schachter & Otanes, 1972*,* p.423):

(1)   *Magandang umaga po,Ginoong Cruz.*

[Good morning, Mr Cruz.]

(2)   Alam (*ho* or *po*) ba ninyo kung anong oras ang alis ng bus?

[Do you know, (sir/madam), what time the bus leaves?]

In (1), a social formula in greeting is illustrated. In this case, *po* is more commonly used. The next utterance (2) is a more conversational construction that may entail the use of any of the two variants of the deferential marker.

Television-mediated political campaign advertisement (TPCA) is a scripted typed of discourse, and the choice of linguistic expressions in TPCA reflects the culture and expectations

among the participants that provide the likelihood of a positive outcome in a persuasive type of discourse. Examination of TPCAs in the Philippines reveals an interesting pattern of use of a deliberately chosen politeness marker *po*.

2.   Methodology

2.1   Corpus of the Study

The corpus consists of sixty TPCAs in the Philippine senatorial elections held on May 14, 2007. There were a total of 37 political candidates who ran for senator: 12 candidates from the government party, 11 candidates from the opposition, 1 independent candidate, and the rest of the candidates from less known political parties. The senatorial candidates competed for twelve senatorial slots for a six-year term that ends on June 30, 2013. Not all candidates presented their campaign ads on television, and thus the procurement of data was based on its availability in the internet archives. No particular mode of selection was needed because 60 was the maximum number of videos accessible through the internet archives.

Most TPCAs were recorded during primetime viewing, which started at 6 pm onwards. Initially, the ads were recorded as they were shown on television by the two leading networks, ABS-CBN and GMA 7. Both television stations fielded the same pre-recorded TPCAs for each candidate; thus, there was no attempt to identify the specific source for each TPCA. However, due to the difficulty of recording each and every TPCA on 'real time', which is during commercial breaks of television programs, the mode of data gathering was changed. It must be noted that the same TPCAs that were aired on television were also shown on the internet. Thus, to take advantage of the accessibility and convenience of recording the data from the stored archives of the latter, all of the 60 TPCAs that comprise the corpus of the study were consequently recorded from the internet, specifically, the YouTube. To ensure that the TPCAs were the exact TPCAs shown on television, these were validated through an actual viewing of the video clips in the office of a leading television network. The painstaking procedure entailed a notation of the exact dates when the TPCAs were aired. This procedure proved and validated that all of the 60 TPCAs gathered were aired on television during the campaign period.

2.2   Data Analysis

The frequency of occurrences of the linguistic features is used as an index to determine the predominance of the functions that *po* may serve in the corpus. Based on the frequency index, the most salient or predominant features were chosen as examples for the analysis. Two modes of analysis were used: First, the addressors and addressees of utterances with *po* were identified to establish any pattern that may be evident in the TPCAs; second, the functions of *po* were examined using the framework of the speech act theory of Austin (1962) and later refined by Searle (1979) to include the five general functions performed by speech acts, as follows:

Representatives (or assertive) are the speech acts that commit the speaker to the truth of the expressed proposition. An example is the utterance "Francis Crick and Jim Watson discovered the double helix structure of DNA" (Huang, 2007, p. 107).

Directives are those speech acts that express the speaker's desire for the hearer to do something. This speech act may be manifested in commands, suggestion, advice, question, and request. An example is the utterance, "Could you lend me a pen, please?" (Yule, 1996, p. 54).

Commissives are those speech acts that commit the speaker to a future action. These may be manifested in pledges, promises, offers, refusals, or threats. An example of this is the utterance, "We'll be launching a new policing unit to fight cyber crime on the internet soon" (Huang, 2007, p. 107).

Expressives are those speech acts that express a psychological state of the speaker such as joy, sorrow, fear, and excitement. These may be in the form of apologizing, praising congratulating, and thanking. An example of this speech act is *I am sorry* (Yule, 1996). Finally, *declarations,* the last category, are those speech acts that have the power to effect immediate changes in the present state of affairs. These acts are sanctioned by institutional laws such as in the example, "*I now pronounce you man and wife"* (Yule, 1996, p. 53)*,* generally uttered by a priest who is sanctioned by his church to make such a pronouncement; thus, effectuating marriage between the two parties.

3.   Results and Discussion

The deference marker *po* occurs in 50% of the transcripts in the corpus while *ho* has a null occurrence, as presented in Table 1.

Table 1

TPCA Transcripts (T) with 'po' and 'ho' Occurrences

T with *ho*	With *po*	Total T
0	30	60
0%	(50%)	(100%)

Following the qualification of *po* as the more formal deferential marker as compared to *ho*, the sole occurrence of *po* in the corpus may suggest that the TPCA consists of formal scenarios in the discourse. However, it must be noted that some frames in a TPCA involve young speakers and informal gatherings. It is difficult to say if the discourse is formal due to the complications brought about by interdiscursivity, a notion put forth by Biocca (1991), Scollon (1998), and Fairclough (1999, 2003). Scollon (1998) defines interdiscursivity as mediated action that may emanate from other genres, situations, registers, social practices or communities of practice. In a recent publication, Fairclough (2003) uses 'interdiscursivity' as a term that refers to genre mixing or hybridization of genres. The TPCA's interdiscursivity is manifested in the combined presence of forms and modes of

texts from different disciplines aside from politics, such as the cinema, advertising, and mass communication. For example, a TPCA may involve a comedy 'skit' in one frame or a formal political debate on the other; or it may involve children among the participants in a TPCA aside from adults and elderly people. The fusion of these discourses blurs any formality that may be attributed to the TPCA. Therefore, even though *po* is the only deferential marker found in the corpus, it may not be deduced that the TPCA texts are all formal. What is clear is that the TPCA has a function that is serious and of national concern based on its aim of persuading the electorate to vote for the campaigning candidates to occupy important roles in the government.

Since one function of the deferential marker *po* is to show politeness between participants (Schachter & Otanes, 1972), it is important to recall who the participants are in a TPCA. Foremost among the participants is the massive and culturally diverse target audience in the corpus, the electorate. The electorate is composed of Filipino citizens who are eligible to vote, that is, all Filipinos who are 18 years old and above. There may be a common 'national culture' but there may be other cultures in which the target audience may belong to the youth, women, religious, and other sectors of society.

Of the 30 occurrences of *po*, there are three instances of dual *po* occurrences in an utterance; an example is illustrated in the following extract.

(1)   Child: (addresses the audience)

         *Kaya pag nasa Senado **po** ang daddy ko, K na **po** tayo.*

         [So if my daddy is in the Senate, then we are K (okay)]

In (1), the Tagalog enclitic *po* occurs in both the conditional clause and the main clause. In the first clause '*kaya pag nasa Senado **po** ang dady ko*', S sets a condition in preparation for a positive situation to happen, as stated in the next clause. The two other dual occurrences of *po* contribute to a total of 33 occurrences of in the corpus.

The analysis proceeds by looking into the functions of *po* in the discourse and how it affects the interaction among the participants.

Deference markers are used for different purposes. One observable purpose is to give respect to elders. Excerpt (1) shows the customary way of showing politeness by a younger person towards an older person. The employment of *po* by the young child (S) is clearly a manifestation of respect in deference of age. There is an obvious disparity of age between S (child) and H (electorate).

A summary of the usage of *po* by the other TPCA participants in the corpus is summarized in Table 2 below.

Table 2

Participants in PO Occurences and Frequency Disctribution of Addressor and Addressee

Addressor (N=33)	Addressee (N=33)					
	E	Ad/LS	Fa	Mo	PC	Total
PC	17 (51.5%)	1 (3.0%)	1 (3.0%)			19 (57.6%)
Ch	7 (21.2%)					7 21.2%
YoA	2 (6.1%)				2 (6.1%)	12.1%
LS					2 (6.1%)	2 (6.1%)
Ad				1 (3.0%)		1 (3.0%)
Total	26	1	1	1	4	33
%	78.8%	3.0%	3.0%	3.0%	12.1%	(100%)

YoA – refers to young adults (or youth sector of the electorate) who are approximately
    from 18 to 25
Adult – refers to actors who are approximately 25 years old and above
Ch – child
PC – political candidate
LS – person who is perceived to be of lower status
Fa – father
Mo – mother
Electorate – target audience
Co – actors – refer to other social actors in a TPCA aside from PC

   Table 2 shows that the political candidates, as addressors, are the most frequent users of *po* in the corpus, which accounts for 57.6% frequency of occurrence as they address the electorate. It may be noted that, in terms of age, it may not be exactly determined if the addressor or addressee is more senior or junior, thus, the age is approximated as indicated in the legend given in Table 2. As an addressee, the mass of Philippine electorate belongs to different sectors, which can generally be categorized as the youth and the more adult citizens of the country. In this sense, the political candidate may be identified as being generally older than the youth sector while the candidate may be of the same age, if not, younger or older than the rest of the 'adult' sector of the electorate. The youth comprise a big percentage of the electorate; they account for 11 to 12 million voters out of the 45 million Filipino voters.

   Therefore, the usage of *po* by the political candidate is not merely because of age but to express deference to the general public, in particular, the electorate. This may suggest the power of the electorate in the campaign period. Compared to the buying power of the customer vis-a-vis the goal of the merchant to gain their patronage, the power of the electorate lies in the casting of votes for the preferred political candidate.

   Po may also have other interactional functions as illustrated in the following examples.

(2)   Political Candidate: (walks closer to the fish seller)

*Kumusta **po** kayo, 'nay?*

[How are you (*po*), mother?]

(3)   Market Fish Vendor: (Apologetically, holds out her hands)

*Ay naku, ma'am, madumi (1) malansa **po** ang mga kamay ko.*

[Oh ma'am, it's dirty. My hands (*po*) smell of fish.]

Excerpts (2) and (3) are two consecutive utterances in TPCA 8. Excerpt (2) is a social formulaic expression of greeting while utterance (3) is an equally respectful response by a fish market vendor, who appears to be older than the political candidate. In (2), a hint that the market vendor is older than the addressor is the Tagalog word 'nay' or 'mother' in English. Utterance (2) also reflects another value of the Filipino culture: respect for mothers in society. The elderly female market fish vendor presents a mother figure that the political candidate deems worthy of respect as reflected in the use of a linguistic marker *po.*

On the other hand, Excerpt (3) illustrates the use of the deferential marker in showing respect for a person of higher status in society, that is, a market vendor (lower status) showing respect for the political candidate (higher status), who has previously served as a senator. The lower status of the market fish vendor may be due to two reasons: the power of the customer in business since their patronage is solicited by the merchant; and the prestige and respect that are generally given to government officials or individuals that hold high positions in society whether in business or politics. The relationships described are linguistically reflected through the use of *po* and *ma'am*.

The employment of *po* by the addressors in a TPCA reflects the Filipino socio-cultural value of politeness that is attributed to age and professional status in society. A key factor is the relationship of the addressor and the addressee. As may be gleaned from the previous table (Table 2), the addressee with the highest occurrence of *po* is the electorate, which accounts for 78.8% frequency. It must be noted that the electorate's age ranges from 18 and above. From this, it may be deduced that age is not the only reason for the use of *po* in the corpus since a large number of students who belong to the youth sector comprise the electorate. To investigate further the usage of *po* in the corpus, the discussion proceeds to an examination of the specific functions it serves in performing the communicative acts in the corpus.

3.1   *Po* Occurrences in Speech Acts

The function of the Tagalog enclitic 'po' may further be examined as it occurs in statements that perform illocutionary acts in the corpus, as presented in Table 3 below.

Table 3

Occurrences of 'Po' in Expressions of Illocutionary Acts

Illocutionary Acts	Frequency	Total	%
A. Representative		18	54.5%
a. Making a general statement/ assertion	9		
b. Personal Achievement Statement	1		
c. Self Introduction	6		
d. Testimonial	2		
B. Expressive		7	21.2%
a. Thanking	1		
b. Agreeing	2		
c. Expressing desire	3		
d. Refusing	1		
e. Greeting	1		
C. Directive		5	15.2%
a. Requesting	1		
b. Pleading for votes	3		
c. Suggesting	1		
D. Commissive		2	9.1%
a. Promising	1		
b. Refusing	2		
TOTAL Transcripts		33	100%

The usage of *po* in general statements accounts for the highest frequency: 54.5% of total occurrences. This follows a frequency of 21.2% in expressive structures.

The deference marker *po* may be used in representative utterances such as general statements, testimonials, self-introductions, or boasts. The following examples show how strong claims by the candidate may be mitigated through the use of *po*. For instance, Excerpt (4) shows a dual occurrence of *po* in an utterance that consists of an embedded conditional clause with an underlying assertion made by the Speaker.

(4)   Political Candidate:

*Kapag nagamit **po** sa mabuti ang talentong yan,*

*mas may pag-asa **po** ang bayan natin.*

[If these talents are put to good use, our country will have more hope]

T 21, 114

This excerpt expresses a disclosure of the candidate's advocacy, through a claim that is mitigated in two ways: the use of a passive structure and the use of Tagalog adverbial enclitic *po.* The usage of *po* allows the candidate to show respect to the addressee (the electorate), whether young or old. Instead of putting forward a strong claim that could possibly offend the audience. In the next clause, '*mas may pag-asa **po** ang bayan natin',* the use of *po* reinforces the expression of respect by the addressor towards the addressee. In this clause, *po* is used as a mitigating device to put forward an assertion that

may otherwise be threatening to the hearer if the clause is otherwise perceived as an unsolicited advice.

Another example that shows mitigation through the use of *po* is shown below.

(5)   Political Candidate:

*Gumawa **po** tayo ng batas para mabilis magrehistro at makahiram ng murang puhunan.*

[We drafted a bill to facilitate registration and loans with low capital.]

T37, 212

Excerpt (5) may be categorized as a boast of a personal achievement uttered by a political candidate. Boasts are contrary to *hiya* or shame that is valued in the Filipino culture. As noted earlier, Brown and Levinson (1987) maintain that politeness mitigates the negative effects of boasts through politeness. To boast about a personal achievement may be an imposing act on the cultural values of the Filipino electorate, specifically the value of *hiya* [shame]. Relevant to this value is the virtue of modesty, which often results in indirectness in discourse. On the other hand, a boastful person may be referred to as *walanghiya* [shameless], a negative attribute. This may be regarded as a threat to the negative face or the "freedom from imposition" (Brown and Levinson, 1987, p. 61) of the electorate. Through the employment of *po* in (5), the negative stance created by boasting is softened. Thus, the deference expressed by *po* may also be used as a discourse strategy to maintain modesty in assertions or claims of achievements that may be construed as boastful, yet necessary in putting forward the qualifications of a political candidate.

Another type of speech acts is the expressive type. Expressives are those speech acts that express the psychological state of the speaker. An example is given in the following excerpt.

(6)   Political Candidate (Sonia Roco):

*Kung inyo **po**ng mamarapatin, nais ko **po**ng ituloy ang misyon*
ni Senador Raul Roco.

[If you will allow it, I would like to continue the mission of Sen Raul Roco.]

T 46, 280

Excerpt (6) expresses the desire of the political candidate to continue the mission of her deceased husband, which subtly connotes the desire of the candidate to be elected as a senator. The speaker is able to achieve this by using the politeness marker *po* and foregrounding a permission directive in her statement while the main clause that expresses the desire of the candidate to serve is embedded in the preceding clause. There may be other devices in the structure of Excerpt (6) that contribute to the expression of the psychological state of the speaker but the employment of *po* is marked because of its dual occurrence in the structure. In the first clause, *po* ascribes respectfulness to the act of asking for permission, while its employment in the next clause adds the sense of deference of the speaker towards the addressee. Taken as a whole, the utterance expresses the speaker's politeness and mitigates the speaker's desire to serve the people, which could otherwise be stated in a more direct form such as that of a promise (commissive) or a plea for vote (directive).

The use of *po* may also be observed in giving thanks to the addressee, which is another form of an expressive type of speech act. This is illustrated in the following excerpt.

(7)   *Salamat po, Tito Ed.*
        [Thank you, Tito Ed]
        T 1, 2

Excerpt (7) is an example of a formulaic expression of thanks in social functions that may be formal; if not, a social function wherein the addressee is an older person or one who has higher status in society. In this case, the addressee is both more advanced in age and higher in status since he is one of the senior incumbent senators in the Philippines, who are running for re-election.

The presence of *po* is also observed in another type of speech acts, the directives. The usage of *po* in directives may be in the form of pleas, requests, and suggestions. The forms of directives may vary in their degree or intensity. For example, a strong directive may be in the form of a command, while a weaker or softer form may be in the form of a request or a plea. The employment of *po* may be a device that affects the intensity of a directive, as illustrated in the following example.

(8)   Political Candidate:
        *Tayo **po** ay magkaisa, magtrabaho upang umunlad ang ating bayan.*
        [Let's unite (*po)*, work so that the country can progress]
        T 20, 112

Excerpt (8) is a directive in the form of a plea. The directive is softened by *po* and the inclusive pronoun *tayo*. Due to the mitigating effect of *po,* the directive is categorized as a plea, instead of a command, which may be considered as a directive that is higher in the continuum of intensity. Thus, if *po* is removed from (8), the expressive becomes a command, as shown in the following utterance.

(9)   *Tayo ay magkaisa*
        [Let us unite]

Utterance (9) qualifies as a command, a more forceful directive instead of the mitigated version of a plea in (8) that is brought about by *po.*

4.   Conclusion

In sum, the use of *po* may serve several functions in TPCAs: to show deference for elders in society, to show deference for other reasons such as status in society, and to add formality in formulaic social expressions like the Tagalog expression of thanks, '*Salamat po'* [Thank you, (Ma'am/Sir)] or self introductions. Most importantly, the use of the politeness marker *po* fulfills two significant functions in a persuasive type of discourse such as that of a TPCA: mitigation and deference for the electorate.

An important function of *po* in a persuasive discourse such as a TPCA is its use as a strategy of mitigation to soften acts that may be imposing on the electorate. Unlike other types of political discourse, the persuasive nature of the TPCA is undisguised in the form of 30 to 60-second television ads in an attempt to ensure victory for the political candidate. Thus, the electorate is openly persuaded

through the presentation of the candidate's achievements and qualities, which may appear boastful in a society that values modesty. As a remedy, the study has shown that *po* may be employed to show politeness and modesty amidst situations that may have otherwise put the political candidate in a bad light. In persuasion, *po* is a necessary linguistic marker that may be exploited to gain solidarity with the target audience, as its usage manifests the observance of socio-cultural values of politeness and modesty, especially in the culture of the Philippines where politeness is one of the honoured values.

Another function of *po* is the accordance of importance to the addressee (electorate). Respect is usually given to an elder or an individual who belongs to a higher social status in society. However, during the campaign period, the electorate, who may either be younger than the speaker or lower in status in society, is generally addressed with respect through the use of *po*. The employment of *po* in the TPCA illustrates the importance of the voting power of the electorate during the campaign period.

In summary, the politeness marker *po* is a unique linguistic expression in the Tagalog language that serves as a valuable tool in persuading the electorate, as it establishes solidarity through the cultural propriety of politeness and modesty.

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Recent Linguistic Changes in Romanian Workplace Communication

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Abstract

Romanian workplace communication has changed significantly in the past two decades. Multinational companies implemented western European and American communicative practices and patterns. Many linguistic innovations were adapted and adopted by Romanian language both at the structural and discourse level. Thus, new communicative patterns have emerged in professional Romanian. Within the frameworks of sociolinguistics and discourse analysis, we will focus on three aspects that cover various linguistic compartments: new textual patterns (farewell letter, welcome letter etc.), lexico-semantic innovations, especially borrowings and calques, as well as salutation formulas as they appear in workplace written texts.

In this paper, we argue and exemplify the way in which various discoursive structures have been adapted to the Romanian specificities of intra-organizational communication, and we lay special emphasis on the reorganization of the lexical level as a result of the English influence on Romanian as well as on the alterations brought about by the familiar "you" and first name address in salutation formulas.

1. Introduction

The changes in Romanian workplace communication were determined by the implementation and development of new means of communication (electronic mail) and by significant influences in the thought patterns of the people. Being no longer controlled by censorship and propaganda, workplace communication has developed independently, on already existing Romanian patterns, or based on recognized practices, implemented by the multinational organizations. Romanian workplace communication is now defined not only by an increased use of worldwide spoken languages in everyday speech or conversation, instead of plain Romanian, as it used to be, but also by the implementation of Western European and American communicative practices and patterns.

In this paper we present part of the results of a larger on-going research project, *Professional Language in Present-day Romanian. Linguistic Patterns and Discoursive Structures,* commenced in 2007 at Transylvania University of Braşov. This is the first Romanian research project supported by a governmental grant (CNCSIS, ID 142) which focuses on the linguistic aspects of workplace communication in Romanian[1].

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[1] Institutional talk in English and its intercultural aspects were addressed to in another research project based at Transylvania University of Braşov, entitled *Institutional Talk and Intercultural Communication in Multinational Companies (Case Study)* (CNCSIS, A1052), having Liliana Coposescu as coordinator.

2.   **Data and Methodology**

The data for this paper are selected from an original corpus that contains more than 100 professional written texts, which were chosen from various fields of activity (commercial, production, administrative, educational, military and medical), having different participatory frameworks, structure and topics. A distinctive feature of all the data is that they only render "internal" communication, between participants who belong to the same organization or to different branches of the organization.

The methodology used in collecting the data derives from the participatory methodology, used by the *Language in the Workplace Project*, based at Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand (Holmes & Stubbe, 2003, pp. 18-30). The same basic methodological principles are considered, namely giving the participants as much control as possible over the data collection process, reducing the researchers' involvement in the physical process of collecting data to a minimum, providing useful preparation in advance and relevant feedback in the end in order to increase reliability and trust between the organizations and the research team. We have then adjusted the participatory methodology to collecting written texts.

In this paper we will focus on some new textual patterns (farewell letter, welcome letter, etc.) and on the various influences brought about by English in multinational organizations.

3.   **New Discursive Patterns in Romanian Professional Written Texts**

In this part of the paper we will focus on some new textual patterns that appeared in Romanian professional context during the period 2000 - 2008. In our data we have identified patterns such as: welcome and farewell letters or messages, jokes and some formal and informal invitations to team-building events.

Institutional discourse is closely linked to the social relationships created in a specific workplace. As we will see in the final part of this paper, forms of address represent a means of creating social identities not only in interactions, but also in writing. Gender, ethnicity, status, occupational role, and power are significant features in building the written discourse.

Example 1

Context: E-mail message with an announcement towards organization regarding the appointment of an employee in a different position (in Romanian, in original, translated by the authors).

To the Organization

We are pleased to announce the appointment of Liana Coroian, presently **Manager Customer Service & Logistics, Romania** in the position of **Manager Customer Service & Logistics Development, CEEMA**, reporting to Herbert Kueng, Director Customer Service and Logistics, CEEMA, starting from 1st October 2004. Liana is Stuart Martin's successor, who left the company, choosing to continue his career outside [company]. Liana will be based in Vienna.

[…]

In her new role, Liana will be a close partner to the customer service & logistics managers in the country, in order to implement the alignment and development of functional programs and practices. Liana's experience in positions from customer service & logistics, combined with her leadership abilities, recommend her for this challenging and important mission.

Liana's successor in Romania will be announced at a later date.

Please join me in wishing Liana good luck in her new mission.

Herbert Kueng	Stephan Warley
Director Customer Service &	Managing Director, Romania
Logistics, CEEMA	

The welcome and farewell letters are good examples of formal venues in creating group solidarity. The power relationships and the hierarchy are obvious from the content of the above announcement. The tone, the succession of paragraphs, the salutation and closing formulas are means of enforcing power relationships within the organization. This type of text is new for Romanian institutional discourse which had no formal written means of announcing and welcoming new employees. The same function may be observed in a slightly less formal situation, an announcement at departmental level (see 5.1).

The discursive frame is closing with farewell letters, in which the formal tone is replaced by a semiformal one:

Example 2

Context: Farewell message to all colleagues (In Romanian and English in original. For conformity, we will provide the English version):

Dear all,

As some of you already find[2] (sic!) out, today is my last day in [company]. Since I've decided (sic!) that (sic!) is the right time for (sic!) change, I've choosed (sic!) another path for my career. Looking behind (sic!) to the last five years spent with [company], I want to thank you for everything: trust, support, cooperation and nice times (sic!). I'll take with me good memories and some good friends.

I wish all of you many successes (sic!) and achievements in both professional and personal life.

All the best,

Manuela

The use of a foreign language in professional communication, especially in writing, is relatively new in Romania. The multinational companies have imposed the use of the predominant language (in most of the cases, English) in almost all communication that went beyond departmental level. This

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[2] Grammar and lexical mistakes made by the author of this letter are marked with (sic!).

constraint had numerous influences upon the cultural, social and professional identity of Romanian labour force. For most of the employees it was a matter of either pick it up fast or leave the company.

Team-building as a concept has appeared recently in Romanian workplace culture. Events such as Christmas parties or going out on trips with one's workmates were highly improbable twenty years ago. Still both the concept and the events seem to have gained acceptance and prove worthwhile activities in any organization. A core of written texts emerged from the necessity of managing such activities: announcements, invitations, and programs.

Example 3

Context: Part of the program of a Christmas team-building event (in Romanian in original, translated by the authors).

> …We promise you, Kab Fresenian people, unique moments of happiness and warmth, as they appear only between old and dear friends, who are separated by seas and countries and cannot meet each other very often, but only now and then, and much too rarely do they have the chance to swap stories leisurely, by the fireside. Greater is our joy and double the pleasure of our meeting again!

4.   Professional Romanian – The New Language of Work

The changes that affected all strands of life in Romania and the increasing exposure of Romanian professionals to Western communicative patterns determined a linguistic dynamics which is visible both in workplace context and in the field of mass-media.

The re-shaping of a language register always has linguistic consequences, and this is also the case of Romanian language of work. Romanian workplace communication is now defined by an increased use of worldwide spoken languages (mostly English) in everyday talk. This is the main source for a great number of innovations both at the *lexical-semantic level* (loans, calque, internal word formation processes, and conversion of certain categories) and at the *morpho-syntactic level* (changes in subcategorization of verbs or changes in the valency grill of a category, adoption of clichés that affect, by analogy, the functioning of structures specific to other registers etc.).

In this section, we will provide several examples of innovations at the lexical-semantic level, which are based on English models. Apart from several words that are frequent in most registers, the examples are taken from the above mentioned corpus.

4.1   Borrowings

In the context of globalization and adoption of Western organizational patterns, Romanian borrowed a large number of words from English[3]. In our opinion, the productivity of this procedure depends on the predisposition of the target-language to accept and to process foreign lexical material. Romanian is a very "hospitable" language[4] that freely accepts loanwords, even from languages that

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[3] This is also the situation of other former communist countries, where liberalization of the economy determined linguistic changes (cf. Medgyes & Laszlo, 2001 for Hungarian, Gardt & Hüppauf, 2004 for German etc.). In each of them, English is the main source-language for innovations in professional vocabulary.
[4] Cf. Avram & Sala, 2000, who point out that Romanian displays a natural force of adopting foreign words, without endangering its identity.

are not genealogically related to it. The lexical system of Romanian has a great power of adaptation, so a new term may easily be adopted and its lexical root may even become productive by means of internal derivational and inflectional affixes.

Depending on the frequency of the word and also in relation to its graphic and phonemic aspect, the orthography and pronunciation of the new loan is adapted or is preserved as in the donor language. For instance, the process of adaptation was accelerated, for several terms, by the fact that nothing in their spelling seems peculiar to Romanian speakers, thus, words like *audit, barter, grant, holding, monitor, manager* (pronounced /ma-na-ğer/)*, management* (pronounced /ma-na-dje-ment/)*, marketing, multimedia, sponsor* etc. could easily be adopted even by people without any knowledge of English.

Recently borrowed English terms in the field of technology, economics and business are not yet orthographically adapted, their pronunciation is also similar to the one in the source language: *broker, cash-flow, CD* (pronounced /si: di/)*, PR* (pronounced */pi: ar/) clearing, deadline, dealer, design, display, feedback, folder, forecast, franchiser, hardware, know-how, laptop, leadership, leasing, player, printer, replay, scanner, server, shuttle, software, target, template, tuner, walkman* etc. Other reasons for the preservation of the original shape of a loanword may be "the anglophile linguistic trend" and "speakers' better command of English" (Stoichițoiu-Ichim, 2006).

For many young Romanians, the terminology of professions is more prestigious if English terms are used instead of their Romanian equivalents: *account manager, area sales manager, chief executive officer, HR Trainee, IT manager, marketing manager, program officer, regional representative.* The departments in both multinational and Romanian organizations have also English names: *Controlling Department, Corporate Affairs*, *HR Department, IT Department, PR manager* etc.

The morphological adaptation of foreign borrowings clearly shows that Romanian is a "highly tolerant" language. For example, verbs are often created from English verbs or nouns using Romanian verbal classifiers, like derivative suffixes: *–a: forcasta* (cf. *forecast*), *targheta*[5] (cf. *target*), *printa* (cf. *print*); *–iza: sponsoriza* (cf. *sponsor*), *computeriza* (cf. *computer / computerise*), *–ui*[6]*: a brandui* (cf. *brand*)*, a bipui* (cf. the interjection *beep*)*, a chatui* (cf. *chat*)*, a şerui* (cf. *share*)*, a zipui* (cf. *zip*) or inflectional suffixes: *downloadaţi fişierul* [download the file]: *femeia care îl body-guard-ează pe N.* [the woman that *body-guards* N.] (*apud* G. Dindelegan, in GALR, 2005). The affix*–(a)re* is specialized for abstract nouns*,* and is used as a means of completing the lexical family of the loanword: *auditare, forcastare, printare, targhetare* etc.

In professional environment, the main motivation for foreign borrowings is the need to denote concepts and activities. Thus, nouns and verbs are more frequent than other parts of speech.

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[5] When the new creation goes too far away from the original loanword, it may be orthographically adapted, in order to indicate the correct pronunciation. For instance, *targetare* is spelled *targhetare,* because in Romanian the group of letters *ghe* is pronounced /ğ/, while *ge* is pronounced /ğ/.
[6] The suffix *–ui* is used in informal, colloquial language.

4.2   False Friends and Calques

In order to enrich their vocabulary, more conservative languages resort to calque rather than borrowings. Though not a conservative language, Romanian frequently adopts the procedure of calque in professional register. Workplace language is the source of numerous calques (mostly semantic) that are now spread in everyday communication.

4.2.1

A *semantic calque* is a semantic loan, a procedure that involves the use of an already existing word in the replica language, but with an extended sense, which is modelled after its use in another language. In order to transfer the new sense from a foreign term, the word in the replica language should be at least bi-semantic and at least one of its meanings should correspond to the meaning of the loanword.

Examples of semantic calques in professional lexis may be found in the terminology of informatics (and some in business terminology), but it is important to point out that they are not very specialized terms and some of them are used in parallel to their foreign counterpart: *a aplica* (Engl. *to apply*), *a descărca un fişier* (Engl. *to download a file*), *a licenţia*[7] (Engl. *to licence*), *a naviga* (Engl. *to surf*), *a opera* (Engl. *to operate*), *provocare* (Engl. *challenge*), *portofoliu de produse* (Engl. *product portfolio*), *promoţie* (Engl. *promotion*), *virus* (Engl. *virus*), *vierme*, (Engl. *worm*)[8], etc.

Professional linguistic context is probably the most important source for such semantic deviations in present-day Romanian. The abusive use of calques is originated in the professional environment and then, through mass-media, it spreads into other registers. The examples below are extracted from our corpus of written texts.

Example 4

a agrea₁ (transitive verb, with the meaning of "to like somebody, to be fond of", DEX, 1996)

a agrea₂ (transitive verb, cf. Engl. *to agree*, "to decide together", LDOCE, 2003)

să agreăm strategia [in order to agree on the strategy]

a agrea₃ (cf. Engl. *to agree on/ that* "to have the same opinion", LDOCE, 2003) – as an intransitive verb, used in Romanian only with subordinate clause (never with prepositional phrase)

sperăm să agreaţi că.... [we hope that you will agree that…]

Example 5

ataşament₁ ("attachment to / for somebody or something", DEX, 1996);

ataşament₂ (cf. Engl. *attachment* "a document or file that is sent with an email message", LDOCE, 2003)

*vă rog să trimiteţi chestionarul **din ataşament** completat până cel târziu 28 ianuarie 2008* [please send the questionnaire enclosed in the attachment file by 28th of January 2008 the latest]

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[7] The participle of this verb: *licenţiat*, ex. in *software licenţiat* (licenced software) comes in semantic "collision" to the homonym "graduate".

[8] For an extensive list of semantic calques from English, in various registers of Romanian, see Stoichiţoiu-Ichim, 2006, p. 78-79.

Example 6

> **competiție₁** ("race")
>
> **competiție₂** ("people or groups that are competing against you", LDOCE, 2003)
>
> *îmbunătățirea [...] imaginii mărcii față de* **competiție** [improvement of the image of our brand against competition] – the innovation may have both an internal and an external explanation.

Example 7

> **dedicație₁** ("a text written at the beginning of a book, album etc. as means of expressing appreciation or affection for somebody")
>
> **dedicație₂** ("hard work or effort that someone puts in a particular activity because they care about it a lot", LDOCE, 2003)
>
> *succesul mărcilor dvs. demonstrează* **dedicația** *pe care ați avut-o* [the success of your brands proves your dedication]

4.2.2

A *phraseological calque* consists in a literal translation of an entire expression, with less adaptation to the syntactic patterns of the replica language. Stoichițoiu-Ichim, (2006, 86) shows that expressions like *târg de joburi* (Engl. *jobshop*) or *lider de piață* (Engl. *market leader*) are not calques, because the structure of the model is altered in translation, it is adapted to the structure of Romanian noun phrases.

In professional context, phraseological calques are not very frequent. In our corpus, we found only the original expressions: *e-mail, e-commerce,* which seemed to be preferred to the Romanian calques (*poștă electronică* and *comerț electronic*). We noticed, instead, the use of certain translations of English expressions which are not well-formed in Romanian. The resulting phrases are syntactic calques that affect the subcategorization pattern of the verb: *a face diferența* (cf. Engl. *to make the difference*), or determines changes in the valency grill of the verb: *a suna înapoi* (cf. Engl. *to call back*).

5.   Salutation Formulas in Workplace Written Texts

In this section, we will address the realization of salutation formulas in Romanian workplace written texts. In our analytical framework, we start from the assumption that instances of language should be analyzed both in the context of language itself and in the larger context of social behaviour (Blom & Gumperz, 1972).

By means of salutation formulas, actual information is not conveyed; they are mainly used to construct and maintain personal relationships. In the context of written workplace communication, we are mainly interested in identifying the main salutation formulas and in commenting on their uses.

We will further focus on the main salutation formulas as they could be identified in our corpus. We will take into account the beginning formulas of written texts such as announcements, welcome and farewell messages, invitations, and calls for meetings.

Forms of address are specific ways of building a relationship between sender and receiver. We start from the assumption that forms of address as a means of constructing relationships with the

interlocutor are *message exchange triggers* which allow the sender (source) to establish a certain social relationship.

In institutional settings, message exchanges by means of written texts are definite, i.e. they can no longer be modified. In interaction, messages and forms of address may be negotiated on the spot, while in written messages they may be indirectly negotiated either in the body or in the end of the message. In the following extract, taken from an announcement of a food and beverage company, the Human Resources manager introduces a new trainee to the rest of the employees:

Example 8

> I am pleased to announce that ***Silviu Georgescu*** was named HR Trainee starting August 18, 2003. ***Silviu*** has 5 years experience with AIESEC student organization […] Please join me in welcoming ***Silviu*** to our organization and in wishing him success in his career.

One can easily notice that in the beginning of his message, the manager uses the new employee's full name (first name and surname), but when describing the activities and past results he uses only the first name, i.e. Silviu. In the ending paragraph, the manager sets a trend by using again the first name, suggesting that in the respective company employees should use an informal form of address. The message is followed by some replies from employees showing that they rapidly took the covert piece of advice from the manager and addressed the new employee by his first name:

Example 9

> What faculty, where and when did ***Silviu*** graduate?

Once the form of address is set, the relationship – at least at the level of the written texts – will emerge accordingly: in the previous example, the manager used an informal form of address (first name) and one of the employees acted in accordance with it. In the following extract, a recruitment specialist from the same food and beverage company sent a message to several employees, addressing them differently. What is more, she even used different languages – English and Romanian – when giving the employees their tasks.

Example 10

> [message 1, in English]
>
> ***Dear all***,
>
> > Cristian Niculae, the preferred candidate for Sales Controlling Specialist, accepted our offer and will start on December 2. Cristian will attend the Orientation Program on December 2 (Bucuresti) and December 3 (Brasov).
>
> [message 2, in Romanian]
>
> ***Mrs. Popescu***,
>
> > I am sending you Cristian's resume in order for you to contact him about the necessary documents for his employment.

[message 3, in English]

Cristina,

      Please prepare a cash advance for Cristian's trip to Brasov for the Orientation Program and also the accommodation in Brasov for the night of December 2.

      Thanks for your support and have a good weekend!

Sending messages with multiple addressees seems to be a corporate common practice. This may be done so that everybody knows what their specific tasks are together with letting everybody find out general information. In this example, the sender firstly uses a group form of address (*dear all*) and informs them about a new colleague who joined the company. Secondly, she specifically addresses a specialist giving her a specific task and thirdly, she addresses a person from the financial department.

Choosing a particular form of address is not accidental, but it is a choice based on the communicative competence of the speakers. In the messages presented above, our attention was drawn by the forms of address: if in message 1, the sender used a group form of address and in message 3, she used the first name – both of them informal forms of address, in message 2, the sender used a formal form of address. This may show that the respective addressee was an older person. Showing respect and deference to older persons when addressing them is still common practice today in Romania. With respect to this example, it means that the sender has selected from a variety of forms of address only those that will present her as a respectful person, yet having authority.

Although these are individual messages, one may notice that they are linked, all of them addressing the same issue: preparing the arrival of a new employee. In the end of the message, the sender no longer uses both English and Romanian for the ending formula, but only English.

The comments we made bring to front another issue that is interesting for written professional communication: *institutional forms of address*. In many written messages, we could observe there was a shift from individual first name address to a category-based form of address.

Example 11

      Dear employee of CEEMA region…

      Esteemed employee of KFI…

      Dear associate KFI…

The explicit use of a membership category (Pomerantz & Mandelbaum, 2005) such as "employee", "associate" is relevant to understanding the way in which the sender will build his message. People do not very often use categories as forms of address, but when they do so this may show there is something underlying their use.

The sender – usually the President or the Vice President of the company – uses a specific category taking into consideration the fact that there are "activities, motives, rights, responsibilities, and competencies that they regard as appropriate for incumbents of a relationship category" (Pomerantz & Mandelbaum, 2005, p. 149). By invoking the category of "employees" in the beginning

of the written message, its sender states that he specifically addresses the people who perform a certain activity "in return for financial or other compensation" (AHDEL).

By beginning his discourse as such, he acts as the type of person who has the power to formulate requests on the basis of a difference of social status. It is only the adjective (either *dear* or *esteemed*) that mitigates the form of address.

Apart from these categories, we also encountered another one, which was used on a larger scale than the previous categories: *colleague* (fellow workers in a profession).

Example 12

> ***Dear colleagues***,
>
> Starting [DATE], we will have a new colleague in HR, Bucharest office.
>
> ***Dear colleagues***,
>
> At 15.30 we will have a short meeting about the closing term.
>
> Please be prepared with concrete information about what we need to record and the stage of each remaining task as well as an estimate time of closing.
>
> ***Dear colleagues***,
>
> For six months I have been part of the wonderful family of KFI. Today is the last day of the shortest six months in my life. Thank you everyone for every moment that we spent in the company and I wish you reach your goals and fulfill your dreams. It is the only way you will feel fulfilled and happy and will take the company to the highest peaks of success.

In these examples, the noun was used in the plural (*colleagues*) and it was always accompanied by the adjective *dear* when addressing peers. This shows that individuals use such "classifications or social types to describe persons" (Psathas, 1999, p. 144). Moreover, by means of membership categories individuals can efficiently organize the information they have about certain persons. In other words, it is easier to remember a category, a pattern that one can use every time he recognizes part of its characteristics, than to use individual descriptions.

Unlike the category used in the messages from the management (*employee*), the category *colleague* is more intimate; it is closer to the people involved in the message. Besides, the category *employee* is connected to a profession, foregrounding a certain activity, while the category *colleague* brings along other characteristics: close relationship, unitary group, understanding, common values, sharing common interests etc.

Among people who know each other very well and who have interactional history, in a written text, one of the senders may even use a "signature salutation form" (Schegloff, 1979), his/ her own way of addressing in the beginning of the message. Unlike the serious tone imposed by *esteemed colleague*, a signature salutation form may bring along familiarity, openness, intimacy.

Example 13

> ***Greetings to you, KabFresenian people!*** Here is the moment of the Great Reunion… We hope that, just like us, you are waiting for it with the same anxiety and ardour as if centuries had separated us from it!

Apart from being a signature hello, the salutation formula is made of a humorous pun that comes from the name of the company (Fresenius Kabi) which is deconstructed and reorganized into KabFresenian. By means of a unique form of address, which is in fact a play upon words, the sender of the message succeeds in catching the characteristics of a group. It is no longer a generic noun like *colleague*, but it is a member of a particular community, it is no longer an adjective (like *dear*) that precedes the noun, but it is a colloquial formula that melts the barriers.

There are situations when the sender does not want to take responsibility for the message because (s)he is not its source. This is obvious in the salutation formula that is reduced to "indicators" (either *to* or *to the attention of*) as in the following examples taken from educational institutions as well as from companies:

Example 14

To all the teaching staff of the Department

To the attention of all the teaching staff

To the attention of master's programmes coordinators

To the attention of Mrs. Manager Prof. eng. Cristina Popescu, PhD

To: Organization

To all the employees of KFI

To the employees in the production unit of KFI

Such instances are depersonalized and they cannot transmit anything to the recipient, but mere facts and information to be taken into account or tasks to be fulfilled. If we take into consideration that a company's main concern is with productivity, then such salutation indicators have the role of making things more efficient.

6.   Conclusions

Whether discoursive, lexical or pragmatic, the changes of Romanian professional written communication in the past two decades are significant. Under the influence of American and Western European organizational culture, new discourse patterns have occurred especially in communicating via electronic mail. Among these, we have identified the use of humour in the writing discourse and the appearance of context-related texts such as: welcome and farewell letters or invitations to team-building events.

The changes of the professional environment also brought about a re-organization of the linguistic level. The native vocabulary has been strongly influenced by English, leading to hybrid forms made of native and foreign elements. Borrowings, false friends and calques are just a few examples that prove the idea of setting up a new linguistic code rather than a specialized vocabulary, with its own linguistic and pragmatic features.

Significant changes may be observed when analysing the microstructures that we have already mentioned. By far, the most significant change brought about by an increasing use of English

is first name address, which is more colloquial and melts the barriers among communicators. This is not the case of state-owned institutions, where the shift to colloquial forms of address is slightly coming into shape: among peers, first name address is age-dependent, and "indicators" are more often used and they depersonalize the message.

It is interesting to note that speakers are aware of the fact that not all their workmates have the same level of English (lingua franca in such organizations) and switch between two linguistic codes. It is also worth mentioning that sometimes there is a shift from the individual first name address to a category-based form of address (*employee, associate*). Unlike such forms of address, signature forms of address are used so that the social distance is reduced and the focus is on maintaining good work relationships.

Not only mimetically reproducing foreign models, but also developing traditional values, the Romanian organizational culture and discourse seek their own identity.

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Semantic Network: Strategies for Assessment in News in English

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Abstract

The present paper concerns semantic strategies for assessing the information that are manifested in the institution of news media. Drawing on Systemic Functional Linguistics (e.g. Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004), it provides a register-specific semantic network (Halliday, 1973; Hasan, 1987) that represents the reporter's assessment strategies as "a hypothesis about patterns of meaning" (Halliday, 1973, p.76), by analysing eight English newspaper articles which share the same experiential domain (or "subject matter"). In this paper, the semantic network is validated "trinocularly" (e.g. Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004) "from above" (from the level of context), "from around" (from the level of the semantic system itself), and "from below" (from the level of lexicogrammar). The text-based analysis shows that (i) semantically the assessments are manifested either reporter-oriented or news-oriented, (ii) lexicogrammatically they are realized objectively rather than subjectively, and (iii) the preferred orientation agrees with the analysis of the context, which suggests the constraint in the ways for enacting valuation to the experiential domain of language. This paper is a part of my ongoing research on reporter "voice" in English and Japanese, and it will contribute to research on interpersonal semantics and multistratal analysis of language. Based on the qualitative research, future studies will quantitatively profile the assessment strategies in the register of news reporting.

1.   Introduction

The present paper explores discourse in a particular institutional context – the institution of news media. Drawing on Systemic Functional Linguistics (e.g. Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004), I will describe the reporter's semantic strategies for assessing the information presented as news in English. This will show how institutional roles and relations determine the ways in which valuation is enacted towards the experiential domain of language. I will show this by providing a semantic network (Halliday, 1973; Hasan, 1987) that represents the register-specific assessment strategies. Halliday (1973, p.76) suggests that a semantic network is "a hypothesis about patterns of meaning" and that it has to be validated trinocularly "from above" (from the level of context), "from around" (from the level of semantics itself), and "from below" (from the level of lexicogrammar) based on the stratificational model of language (e.g. Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004, p.24). When the semantic network is seen "from above", the network is the realization of the reporter's behaviour pattern characterized by the context. Similarly, when it is seen "from around", the network is a set of interrelated choices that embodies the reporter's assessment strategies; and seen "from below", it shows the ways the choices are realized by lexicogrammar.

The research consists of three stages. I will first view the semantic network "from above" and describe the context of the register where the texts for the analysis belong (see Matthiessen, 1993 for the notion of register). This will show how the context of the texts circumscribes the semantic options

that are available to the reporter for assessing the news explicitly or implicitly. Secondly, viewing the semantic network "from around", I will show how these alternative options are related to each other. Thirdly, based on Matthiessen's (2006b) description of emotion and attitude in English, I will view the semantic network "from below" to explicate how the options are realized lexicogrammartically in two metafunctional modes of meaning – interpersonally or ideationally. The present paper employs Halliday & Matthiessen (2004) as the key resource for the systemic functional description of the grammar of English.

2.   The Semantic Network Seen "from above"

The texts for the analysis consist of eight news reports drawn from the online news websites. They include two texts from the U.S., two from Australia, three from the UK, and one from the international press network. All the texts are the initial reports on North Korea's pronouncement of nuclear arms and their withdrawal from the six nations talks that are designed for denuclearizing North Korea. The details of the texts including the headlines, the sources, and the published dates are shown below.

"North Korea Says It Has Nuclear Weapons and Rejects Talks"
The New York Times   [NYT] http://www.nytimes.com/
Published on February 10, 2005

"N. Korea Declares Itself a Nuclear Power"
The Washington Post   [WP] http://www.washingtonpost.com/
Published on February 10, 2005

"North Korea admits it has nuclear weapons"
Sydney Morning Herald (source AFP) [SMH] http://www.smh.com.au/
Published on February 10, 2005

"N Korea: we have made nukes"
The Australian [AUS] http://www.theaustralian.news.com.au/
Published on February 11, 2005

"North Korea 'has nuclear arms'"
The Times online [Times] http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/
Published on February 11, 2005

"N Korea suspends nuclear talks"
BBC NEWS [BBC] http://news.bbc.co.uk/
Published on February 10, 2005

"North Korea: We have nuclear weapons to defend from US"

Guardian Unlimited [Guardian] http://www.guardian.co.uk/

Published on February 10, 2005

"North Korea Says It Has Nuclear Weapons, Won't Return to Nuclear Disarmament Talks"

The Associated Press [AP] http://www.ap.org/

Published on February 10, 2005

The texts for the analysis belong to the register (or "text type") of news reporting, which is a 'reporting' type of register in terms of a context-based typology of registers (Matthiessen, 2006a, pp.44-47). The following is the description of the context of the register investigated in this study. Context is metafunctionally diversified into the field of discourse, the tenor of the relationship between the speaker and the listener, and the mode of the discourse (see Halliday, 1978, pp.142-143; Matthiessen, 1995, pp.33-34).

Field: "what is going on?"

The socio-semiotic process of the register of news reporting is "reporting on the flow of particular (actual) events" (Matthiessen, 2006b, p.3). The experiential domain (or "subject matter") of the register is North Korea's pronouncement of nuclear arms and their withdrawal from the six nations talks.

Tenor: "who is taking part?"

The interactants are the reporter of the news and the reader of the news report. 'Reporter' is the collective term that denotes the person who takes up the social role of writing news reports in the institution of news media. The social relationship between the reporter and the reader is equal, and there is no contact between the two. The reporter enacts a negative valuation towards the experiential domain within the field.

Mode: "what role is language playing?"

The text is written. The role of language is constitutive. In other words, the texts that instantiate this register have the generic structure, whereby a text is contextually staged as Headline ^ Lead ^ Lead Development (^ Wrap-up) (Iedema, 1997; Iedema, Feez, & White, 1994; van Leeuwen, 1987). This enables the readers to anticipate how the text unfolds when they read a news report.

The manifestation of the reporter's act of assessment, which is a part of her/his behaviour pattern, is determined by the nature of the context variables – more specifically by the nature of the socio-semiotic process (Matthiessen, 2006b, p.3). Since the socio-semiotic process of this register is primarily concerned with field (what is happening) rather than tenor (the relationship between the interactants), the way that the reporter can exhibit their valuations in language is highly restricted by the context. As a result, it is necessary for the reporter to express their assessments objectively in order to maintain the media's credibility. We can see this constraint in Schiller's (1981, p.2) description of the social purpose of the news reporting: "neutral or 'unbiased' reporting of what often seem to be naturally occurring events".

3.   The Semantic Network Seen "from around"

In order to describe the reporter's act of assessment, we need to first understand the notion of assessment. In his account of emotion and attitude in English, Matthiessen (2006b, p.2) explains assessments as below:

> Emotion and attitude are constructed semiotically in language in two metafunctional mode of meaning – they are enacted interpersonally as assessments in the course of interpersonal exchanges in dialogue, and they are construed ideationally as a domain of our experience of the world inside us – the world of our own consciousness, in the first instance as emotive mental processes.
> (Matthiessen, 2006b, p.2)

According to the description above, assessments are the manifestations of emotion and attitude within the semiotic system in terms of different orders of systems. More precisely, they are interpersonal enactment of emotion and attitude within the semiotic system. Matthiessen (2006b, p.54) further suggests that the semantics of assessment extends broader domain beyond "appraisal" resources described by Martin and his group (e.g. Martin, 2000; Martin & Rose, 2003; Martin & White, 2005) (See also Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004, pp.608-612).

By analysing the texts, I have described the reporter's register-specific semantic strategies for assessing the information. The description is represented in the form of the system network in Figure 1. The system network shows that the information can be assessed either by reference to the reporter (the assessor) or by reference to some aspects of the news event (the product). The choice between 'assessor-orientated' and 'product-oriented' can be found not only in the register of news reporting but also in Halliday's (1973) description of regulatory semantics, Slade's (1996) description of pejorative evaluation in the register of gossip, and Matthiessen's (p.c.) description of ARC assessor reports.
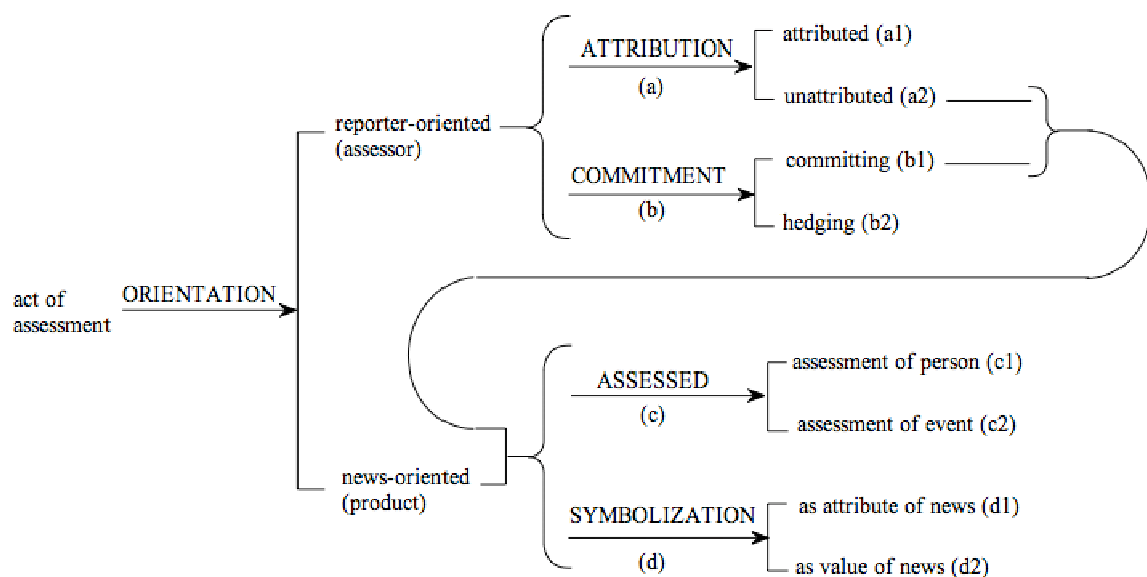

Figure 1. **Strategies used in assessing the information in news reporting in English.**

If the assessment is reporter-oriented, there are two simultaneous systems for the reporter to make a selection. They are (a) ATTRIBUTION and (b) COMMITMENT. On the one hand, the system of ATTRIBUTION involves a paradigmatic choice between (a1) attributed and (a2) unattributed. The notion of 'attributed' is defined based on Hunston's (1995, pp.133-134) study on verbs of attribution in academic writing. 'Attributed' means that the reporter transfers the responsibility for the validity of the proposition to other sources. Attribution can be typically realized by projection such as *someone said*, *they say*, *I head*. On the other hand, the system of COMMITMENT involves a systemic choice between (b1) committing and (b2) hedging. It is concerned with whether the reporter presents himself/herself as believing the validity of the proposition or not. The notion of 'hedging' has been first introduced by Lakoff (1972, p.195), and its manifestations in academic writing were investigated for example by Hyland (1994) and Crompton (1997) in relation to epistemic modality such as *probably*, *apparently*, *suggest*, *believe*. Overall, the reporter-oriented assessments have four potential choices: (a1 b1), (a1 b2), (a2 b1), and (a2 b2). However, when both (a2) 'unattributed' and (b1) 'committing' are selected simultaneously, the assessment is not reporter-oriented but news-oriented. For example, *The statement is a deliberate slap at the second-term Bush administration, which had moderated its approach to try to coax North Korea back to the six-party talks it has boycotted since September* is 'unattributed' and 'committing'; therefore, it is not assessed by reference to the reporter but by reference to an aspect of the news event. As a result, the choice (a2, b1) becomes recursive to news-oriented assessment. The recursion is indicated with the curved line in Figure 1. In total, when the assessment is reporter-oriented, there are thus three choices available: (a1 b1), (a1 b2), and (a2 b2).

If the assessment is news-oriented, it is focused either on (c1) the person manifested in the news event or on (c2) the news event itself. They are assessed symbolically either as (d1) 'attribute of the news' or (d2) 'value of the news'. This means that the reporter assesses the information either by assigning an evaluative attribute to it or by identifying it with some value. The differences between attribute and value are explained in Halliday & Matthiessen (2004, pp.215-239) as the differences between 'relational' clauses of attributive type and identifying type in lexicogrammar. For example, in *Tom is tall, tall* is an Attribute for *Tom*, whereas *Tom* is Value for *the tall one* in *Tom is the tall one*. The system also appears both in Slade (1996) and in Matthiessen (p.c.). I shall call the semantic system SYMBOLIZATION. When news-oriented is selected, there are four choices available: (c1 d1), (c1 d2), (c2 d1), and (c2 d2). Accordingly, there are overall seven possible choices in the system of the reporter's assessment: (a1 b1), (a1 b2), (a2 b2), (c1 d1), (c1 d2), (c2 d1), and (c2 d2). This is the most general system, and it can be described into further delicacy.

4.   The semantic network seen "from below"

I will now look at the semantic network "from below", and examine whether all the choices are realized at the level of lexicogrammar and how they are realized lexicogrammatically. The realizations of the different types of assessment are exemplified below. The domain of assessment is

indicated by underlines. It is the semantic equivalent of a clause: it is a 'move' when it is enacted interpersonally, and it is a 'figure' when it is construed ideationally; and it is either an act of giving/demanding or the proposition/proposal (Matthiessen, 2006b, pp.25-26). In what follows, I will first investigate 'reporter-oriented' assessment strategies, and then move on to 'news-oriented' assessment strategies.

4.1   Reporter-oriented Assessment

4.1.1   Attributed

(a1 b1) 'attributed; committing'

Attribution is often realized by verbal projection nexuses. When both 'attributed' and 'committing' are selected, the projected proposition has the newsworthiness, and the validity of the information in the proposition is supported by the Sayer of the verbal projecting clause, which is typically a reliable information source such as government officials. In the examples below, the verbal projections are experientially realized by a Circumstance of Angle 'source' *according to*.

> North Korea will stay away from talks on its nuclear programme for an "indefinite period," **according to the nation's foreign ministry**. [BBC]

> It also said that it will boycott United States-sponsored regional talks designed to end its nuclear program, **according to a North Korean Foreign Ministry statement transmitted today by the nation's wire service**. [NYT]

Alternatively, 'attributed; committing' may be realized by a 'relational' intensive & identifying clause with a Process *show*. Here, the proposition is projected not as a wording (locution) but as a meaning (idea). The relational Process *show* indicates the reporter's commitment to the proposition *the remains were not of the missing Japanese woman, but of two unidentified people*, which construes the value identified by the token *DNA analysis*.

> **DNA analysis *showed*** that the remains were not of the missing Japanese woman, but of two unidentified people. [NYT]

(a1 b2) 'attributed; hedging'

The combination of 'attributed' and 'hedging' is the assessment strategy that is most frequently observed in the register. Through this strategy, the reporter can exhibit a variety of attitudes towards the proposition such as shifting responsibility, scare quote, doubt, disbelief.

(i)   Shifting Responsibility

In the following example, the projected proposition is presented with the newsworthiness, and the validity of the information in the proposition is supported by the Sayer of the verbal projecting clause *analysts*, which is considered a reliable information source. However, the verbal projecting Process *suggest* indicates that the reporter is not committed to the information in the proposition but hedging to it (e.g. Hunston, 1995, p.135). This is a strategy for the reporter to present the proposition

as factual without being responsible for the validity of the information in the proposition. In this option, the Sayer (i.e. the information source) is typically unspecific.

> **Analysts *suggested*** <u>the move by North Korea may be a negotiating tactic aimed at getting more compensation in exchange for giving up its nuclear weapons program</u>. [AP]

This type of assessment can be enacted also by MODAL ASSESSMENT (e.g. Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004, pp.607-612) 'presumption' type, which realizes the comment Adjunct *reportedly* in the following example. The orientation of assessment is implicitly objective, and the attributed source is left implicit because the assessment does not realize the Projector for the proposition.

> <u>North Korea had</u> **reportedly** <u>already told the US in private that it had nuclear weapons and that it might test one of them.</u> [Guardian]

The reporter's hedging to the attributed proposition can be enacted not only by verbal projections but also by mental projections which construe 'ideas' such as belief, conclusion, thought. When hedging is enacted by mental projection nexuses, the ways the information in the projected proposition was retrieved remain unspecific because of the unspecific Senser e.g. *US and other intelligence agencies*, *many*, *analysts*, *it is thought*. That is, it is not clear how the reporter came to know the information in the projected proposition – whether he/she heard it or saw it.

> **US and other intelligence agencies *believe*** <u>the North could already have built a small number of weapons, variously estimated at between two and ten</u>. [BBC]

> **Many *believe*** <u>it had delayed a return to the table to see if Bush was reelected, and then, what the new administration's policy might be</u>. [WP]

> **Analysts *concluded*** <u>that North Korea's statement Thursday meant it no longer saw anything to lose</u>, given that the Bush administration, with a largely similar cast, is now entrenched for four more years. [WP]

> ***It is thought*** <u>North Korea may have one or two nuclear weapons but is building its capacity to make more</u>. [Guardian]

(ii)   *Scare Quote*

By shifting the responsibility for the assessed proposition to other sources completely, the reporter can employ even strong or disputable expressions. This strategy is sometimes called 'scare quote'. In the following examples, the assessment is realized either lexicogrammatically by an inserted projecting clause *what they say is* or graphologically by double brackets. In this option, the Sayer is typically absent or left unspecific.

> Conservative Japanese increasingly say Mr. Koizumi should call the bluff of **what they say is** <u>a bankrupt state that routinely hides behind scary bluster.</u> [NYT]

The statement expressed North Korea's anger at being branded an "outpost of tyranny" by US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, which was proof of <u>Washington's **"hostile policy"** towards Pyongyang</u>. [SMH]

(iii)   Doubt

Verbal projecting Processes such as *claim*, *argue*, and *assert* can exhibit the reporter's doubt about the validity of the information in the proposition. Hunston (1995, p.135) points out that the verbal Process *claim* indicates commitment on the part of the writer and lack of commitment on the part of the attributer in the register of academic writing. Hunston's discussion seems also applicable to the register of news reporting when we replace the 'writer' to the information source and the 'attributer' to the reporter, since verbal Processes such as *claim*, *argue*, and *assert* enact the type of assessment that indicates commitment on the part of the information source and lack of commitment on the part of the reporter.

NORTH KOREA yesterday *claimed* what foreign governments have feared for at least two years — <u>that the world's most unpredictable regime has built its own nuclear weapons for use against the United States</u>. [Times]

But it will also strengthen the hand of **those who *argue*** <u>that the Bush Administration's hardline policy has needlessly created a crisis and that engagement is the only way to bring Pyongyang into the fold</u>. [Times]

These verbal projecting Processes that are realized congruently by projection nexuses can also be realized metaphorically by a nominal group 'Thing' such as *claim*, *assertion*. Through the ideational grammatical metaphor, the reporter can label the discourse as dubious.

The North also repeated a ***claim*** <u>to have built nuclear weapons for self-defence</u>. [BBC]

Without evidence of a nuclear test, considered difficult given North Korea's small size and broad border with its chief benefactor, China, **North Korea's *assertion*** remains just that -- an ***assertion***. [WP]

(iv)   Disbelief

Furthermore, 'attributed; hedging' can exhibit not only the reporter's doubt but also his/her disbelief or greater distance to the proposition. Like other assessments discussed above, this is also realized by projection. In the following examples, projections are realized either interpersonally by a post-determiner *alleged* in a nominal group or ideationally by the inserted projecting clauses such as *what it has dubbed*, *what is ambiguously called*.

The statement said <u>Washington's **alleged** attempt to topple the North's regime</u> "compels us to take a measure to bolster its nuclear weapons arsenal in order to protect the ideology, system, freedom and democracy chosen by its people." [Guardian]

Since withdrawing from the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and ejecting weapons inspectors in a dispute with the Bush administration in late 2002, North Korea has used less specific language, both publicly and privately, to describe the development of **what it has dubbed** <u>a "nuclear deterrent."</u> [WP]

In response, North Korea expelled international inspectors from Yongbyon, announced that it was quitting the Non-Proliferation Treaty, and said it was building up **what it ambiguously called** its **"**nuclear deterrent.**"** [NYT]

4.1.2   Unattributed

(a2 b2) 'unattributed; hedging'

When both 'unattributed' and 'hedging' are simultaneously selected, the assessment strategy is what White (2003) calls 'engagement: dialogic expansion: entertain' in his discussion of "appraisal" resources. Whereas the attributed assessments are generally construed ideationally, unattributed assessments are either enacted by MODAL ASSESSMENT interpersonally or construed by the experiential agnates of MODAL ASSESSMENT ideationally. Therefore, when the strategy of 'unattributed; hedging' is selected, choices within ORIENTATION – subjective vs. objective and implicit vs. explicit (e.g. Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004, pp.619-626) – are available for the reporter. For example, when 'unattributed; hedging' is realized by a modal auxiliary as Finite (e.g. *would*), the assessment is implicitly subjective. When it is realized by an adverbial group as modal Adjunct (e.g. *probably*, *apparently*), the assessment is implicitly objective. When it is realized by a relational clause (e.g. seemed to, appears to), it is explicitly objective.

A motion of censure in the UN Security Council **would probably** be vetoed by Russia and China **would** oppose substantial economic sanctions. [Times]

Although North Korea **apparently** organized the visit to persuade Americans of their nuclear weapons prowess, Dr. Hecker returned home saying that he was not convinced North Korea could build a working nuclear bomb and mount it on a missile. [NYT]

The statement, however, **seemed to** comport with estimates by U.S. intelligence officials, who believe that North Korea has developed at least a couple of nuclear devices and has reprocessed 8,000 spent fuel rods into plutonium -- potentially enough to make as many as six more. [WP]

North Korea's anger **appears to** be directed at several keynote speeches made by US President George Bush and other senior members of his administration as they started their new terms in office. [BBC]

The assessment may be enacted not only at clause rank but also at group rank. In the example below, 'attributed; hedging' is enacted by an inserted clause that realizes a post-determiner *what now appear to be*.

Over the next decade, South Korea conducted **what now appear to be** several minor, disconnected experiments in technology related to nuclear weapons. [NYT]

4.2   News-oriented Assessment

When an assessment is news-oriented, either a person or a news event is assessed symbolically either by an evaluative attribute assigned to it or by being identified with some value.

4.2.1   Person Focused

If a 'person' is the focus of assessment, what is assessed is the Sayer of the pronouncement in this context. The person can be either (i) an institution such as *government, nation, state, neighbour, regime,* and *North Korea* or (ii) a representative of the institution such as *Kim Jong Il, Kim family,* and a spokesperson from the institution.

(c1 d1) 'person; attribute'

(i)   Institution

When a person is assessed by being some evaluative attribute assigned to it, the assessments are often realized by an Epithet in a nominal group.

> In a surprising admission, <u>North Korea's</u> **hard-line Communist** <u>government</u> declared publicly today for the first time that it has nuclear weapons. [NYT]

> Washington and its allies cut off free fuel oil shipments for **the impoverished** <u>country</u> under a 1994 deal with the United States made under the condition that North Korea halt nuclear weapons development. [AP]

> Condoleezza Rice's description of **the isolated** <u>nation</u> as an "outpost of tyranny" was also singled out for criticism. [BBC]

Alternatively, the assessed word itself may denote negative connotation such as *regime*.

> Condoleezza Rice, the US Secretary of State, who had referred to North Korea as an "outpost of tyranny" during her confirmation hearings last month, called on the Pyongyang **<u>regime</u>** to return to the talks. [Times]

(ii)   Representative

> The statement, considered a definitive policy pronouncement, said that North Korea, led by **the reclusive dictator** <u>Kim Jong Il</u>, is pulling out of the talks after concluding that the second Bush administration would pursue the "brazen-faced, double-dealing tactics" of dialogue and "regime change." [NYT]

> Outside critics and defectors say that North Korea is neither democratic nor popular, since it has been ruled for the last 60 years by the <u>Kim family</u>, **an avaricious clan that does not permit multiparty elections or the slightest whisper of dissent**. [NYT]

In the following example *a regime mouthpiece, the Korean central News Agency*, the assessments are manifested in multiple layers. First, *regime* and *mouthpiece* are negative connotations for *government* and *spokesperson* respectively; secondly, *a regime mouthpiece* is an Attribute for *the Korean Central News Agency*.

> A North Korean Foreign Ministry official said in a statement carried by **a regime <u>mouthpiece</u>**, <u>the Korean Central News Agency</u>: "We have manufactured nukes for self-defence to cope with the Bush

administration's evermore undisguised policy to isolate and stifle the Democratic People's Republic of Korea." [SMH]

(c1 d2) 'person; value'

The following example also has a double-layered assessment. The country is assessed with a negative connotation *regime*, and it is further modified by an evaluative Epithet *one of the world's most isolated and unpredictable*.

The announcement late yesterday sent shockwaves through neighbouring capitals, where governments have been trying to coax **one of the world's most isolated and unpredictable <u>regimes</u>** back to the negotiating table. [AUS]

4.2.2   Event focused

If an 'event' is the focus of assessment, the assessed event is the statement by North Korea, which is the experiential domain ("subject matter") in this register. In other words, it is the central concern in the news reports analysed in this study.

(c2 d1) 'event; attribute'

In the following example, assessments are enacted through 'relational' clause of intensive & attributive type.

<u>The statement</u> is **a deliberate slap at the second-term Bush administration**, which had moderated its approach to try to coax North Korea back to the six-party talks it has boycotted since September. <u>It</u> is also **a direct challenge to Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice**, who during her Senate confirmation hearings broke step with the administration's new softly-softly approach and grouped North Korea with five other rogue states as "outposts of tyranny". [AUS]

The assessment of the event may also be realized by an Epithet in a nominal group. In the first example below, the Epithet *harshly worded* is an attribute for *North Korea's pronouncement*. Therefore, the nominal group *North Korea's harshly worded pronouncement* is agnate to a 'relational' clause of intensive & attributive type *North Korea's pronouncement is harshly worded*. The difference between the assessment in a nominal group and the clausal assessment is that the former is not arguable whereas the latter is arguable e.g. *No, it's not harshly worded* because the ideational grammatical metaphor makes the proposition unarguable (cf. Halliday, 1998). Consequently, the assessment of the event is often realized metaphorically by a nominal group rather than congruently by a relational clause. Likewise, in *In a surprising admission*, the Epithet *surprising* is an attribute for *admission*; therefore, the nominal group *a surprising admission* is agnate to a relational clause *the admission is surprising*. The nominal Head *admission* can be lexicalized as a verbal Process *say* plus a Circumstance of Manner 'quality' *reluctantly*; and it is thus not enacting the reporter's assessment but construing the speaker's (i.e. North Korea) attitude towards the content of their locution circumstantially. In other words, the reporter is construing North Korea's attitudinal status as unwilling to say the information in the proposition is the case.

North Korea's **harshly worded** <u>pronouncement</u> posed a grave challenge to President Bush, who started his second term with a vow to end North Korea's nuclear program through six-nation disarmament talks. [AP]

In <u>a</u> **surprising** <u>admission</u>, North Korea's hard-line Communist government declared publicly today for the first time that it has nuclear weapons. [NYT]

(c2 d2) 'event; value'

In the first example below, the assessment is realized by a 'relational' intensive & identifying clause with *the statement* realizing value and *more of the North's typical brinksmanship designed to win the upper hand in negotiations* realizing token. In the second example, the assessment is also realized by a 'relational' identifying clause with *the move by North Korea* realizing value and *a negotiating tactic aimed at getting more compensation in exchange for giving up its nuclear weapons program* realizing token. When an event is assessed as value, the assessment is typically attributed to other unspecific but reliable sources (e.g. *Some officials*, *Analysts*) through projection so that the reporter's direct assessment is deliberately avoided. For example, the assessment is attributed to the Assigner *Some officials* in the first example; and the assessment is attributed to the Sayer *Analysts* in the second example. This means that they are also enacting speaker-oriented assessments 'attributed; hedging' while enacting news-oriented assessments.

Some officials on Thursday called <u>the statement</u> **more of the North's typical brinksmanship designed to win the upper hand in negotiations**. [WP]

Analysts suggested <u>the move by North Korea</u> may be **a negotiating tactic aimed at getting more compensation in exchange for giving up its nuclear weapons program**. [AP]

5.   Conclusion

The present paper has shown a semantic network that describes the reporter's assessment strategies manifested in the register of news reporting in English, and validated the network through a "trinocular perspective" multistratally. It has shown that semantically assessments are manifested either speaker-oriented or news-oriented, and that they are in fact manifested in layers. For instance, in the following example, the word *regime* has a negative connotation, and it is identified by a value that is realized by an evaluative Epithet *the world's most unpredictable*. These assessments are news-oriented. Besides, the projecting clause with a verbal Process *claimed* enacts the reporter-oriented assessment 'attributed; hedging' to the projected proposition.

NORTH KOREA yesterday **claimed** what foreign governments have feared for at least two years — that **the world's most unpredictable regime** <u>has built its own nuclear weapons for use against the United States</u>. [Times]

Interestingly, the example above suggests that the reporter-oriented assessment *claim* is ***not*** assessing the interpersonal meaning of the projected proposition. We can see this when we compare the reported proposition above with the original proposition in the North Korea's statement:

> [We…] have manufactured nukes for self-defense to cope with the Bush administration's evermore undisguised policy to isolate and stifle the DPRK. [North Korea's original statement]

In the original statement, the Actor denoting North Korea is realized by the pronoun *We*; whereas, as explained above, the negative assessment *the world's most unpredictable regime* is loaded on the Actor in the reported proposition by Times. Besides, the negative assessment in *the Bush administration's evermore undisguised policy to isolate and stifle the DPRK* in the original statement is removed to become *the United States* in the reported proposition; and the justification for North Korea to possess nuclear weapons realized in the prepositional phrase *for self-defense to cope with…* becomes neutralized to the non-finite dependent clause *for use against…* This means that the reporter is hedging from the ideational meaning in the proposition, which is the fact that North Korea has built its own nuclear weapons, but not from the interpersonal meaning.

The paper has also supports Matthiessen (2006b, p.2) suggesting that lexicogrammatically assessments are realized either interpersonally or ideationally. In the focused register, the ideational construction of assessment is preferred; and when the assessments are enacted interpersonally, they are more likely to be oriented objectively. It is shown that the analysis of lexicogrammar is consistent with the analysis of the context, which suggests the presence of the constraint in the ways the reporter enacts his/her valuation towards the experiential domain.

There are some questions arisen from this research. The semantic network shown above is register-specific. It is specific to the register of news reporting; and more specifically, it is specific to the register where the experiential domain is concerned with a discourse (e.g. a governmental pronouncement). If we draw a semantic network for the register of news reporting with another experiential domain – for example, disasters or some financial crisis, would the semantic network appear differently from the one we have illustrated here? Would it be different if we describe a semantic network for the same register but in other languages? If so, how would they be different? Slade (1996) has identified a semantic network specific to each stage of the generic structure for the register of casual conversation (i.e. Third Person Focus ^ Substantiating Behaviour ^ Pejorative Evaluation). As noted above, the register of news reporting is organized into the generic structure, Headline ^ Lead ^ Lead Development (^ Wrap-up). Does the register of news reporting also identify a semantic network specific to each stage of the generic structure? In order to find out the answers for these questions, we need to analyse larger amount of data quantitatively and describe the network into further delicacy. This will also show how each semantic strategy is distributed in the text and which types of assessment are favored in the register.

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Self-Representation of Five Star Hotels: A Digital Genre Analysis of Hotel Homepages

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Abstract

The Internet offers the hotel and tourism industry new opportunities to communicate with global visitors. To enhance competitiveness in the industry, hotels have been promoting themselves and handling transactions through websites since the 1980s, (Law & Yeung, 2007). Despite the importance of websites in facilitating business, very few research studies have analyzed hotel website discourse and the hotel website as a genre. A few studies have given a general overview of website content but none have presented detailed analysis of the language and images used, for example, the usability of hotel websites in Hong Kong (Law & Yeung, 2007), the development of the Automatic Website Evaluation System and applying it to 61 Hong Kong hotel websites (Chan & Law, 2006), and comparison of website usability between chain and independent Hong Kong hotels (Yeung & Law, 2004).

The purpose of this paper is to examine the generic characteristics and visual images of five-star hotel homepages in Hong Kong. Bhatia's (2004) multidimensional and multiperspective approach to genre analysis and Kress and van Leeuwen's (1996) framework for analysing visual images are adopted to explore these hotels' self-presentation on their websites. The findings of the study will have useful implications for research in digital genre and English for Specific Purposes.

1.   Introduction

Research studies have been conducted on the genre analysis of websites. Dillon and Gushrowski (2000), for instance, attempt to identify the existence and form of a truly digital genre by examining over 100 personal homepages. Askehave and Nielsen (2005) explore the possibility of extending Swalesian genre analysis model to account for the genre characteristics of non-linear, multi-modal and web documents by adding Finnemann's (1999) hypertextual navigating mode to the analysis of a casino homepage. Herring, Scheidt, Bonus and Wright (2004) conduct a content analysis of 203 randomly selected US weblogs to identify structural and functional properties of the blogs. The findings show that the communicative purpose of digital texts is realised by hyperlinks instead of moves and there are some common structural elements of webpages. However, none of these studies have investigated hotel homepages as a genre.

The major areas of research in the hotel and tourism industry in the past ten years have been in management, service, food, marketing, job satisfaction and customer satisfaction (see, Mongiello & Harris, 2006; Eusebio, Andreu and Belbeze 2006; Akbaba, 2006; Geddie and DeFranco 2005; MacLaurin, 2004; Ekinci, Prokopaki and Cobanoglu 2003; Shiming & Burnett, 2002; Choi, 2001; Paraskevas, 2000; Oh, 1999; Okumus & Hemmington, 1998; Mitchell, 1997; Abbott, 1996). There are

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some research studies of hotel websites. Law and Yeung (2007), for instance, adopt heuristic techniques to evaluate the usability of hotel web sites in Hong Kong. They find that misleading headlines, incomplete text or text that does not make sense most likely discourage people from using hotel websites. Chan and Law (2006) describe the development of the Automatic Website Evaluation System and apply it to 61 Hong Kong hotel websites to investigate the information which is pertinent to effective website design. In another study, Yeung and Law (2004) compare website usability between chain and independent Hong Kong hotels. Chung and Law (2003) develop a performance indicator for hotel websites. These studies give a general overview of website content but no detailed analysis of linguistic and image features have been undertaken.

Research on websites in other disciplines has focused on organisational culture and public relations (see Callahan, 2005; Wurtz, 2005; Esrock & Leichty, 2000; White & Raman, 2000). Studies on organisational culture have described cultural similarities and differences of website design; how culture is reflected in websites; culture and website quality expectation; and constructing frameworks for cross-cultural comparison of websites (see, Callahan, 2005; Wurtz, 2005; Zhao, Massey, Murphy & Fang, 2003; Singh & Baack, 2004; Fink & Laupase, 2000; Tsikriktsis, 2002; Okazaki & Rivas, 2002). The data of these studies are mainly university and corporate websites and the typologies adopted in most of these research studies are Hofstede (1980, 1991, 2001, 2002) and Hall (1976). Studies concerning the public relations functions of websites commonly use content analysis to discuss the extent to which institutions utilize websites to accomplish public relations goals, the prominence of different topics and feedback features of websites to different publics, and the relationship between website marketing strategies and organisational characteristics (see Kang & Norton, 2006; Esrock & Leichty, 2000; Bodkin & Perry, 2004). Based on the above literature review, the following is the research question of this paper.

2.   Research Question

The research question for the study reported in this paper is: What are the textual and image features that identify hotel homepages as a genre?

3.   Methodology

In this study, both textual and image analyses are made to investigate hotel websites. Bhatia's (2004) critical genre analysis model and Kress and van Leeuwen's (1996) framework of visual grammar are applied. Bhatia (2004) offers a comprehensive way of analyzing written discourse with the consideration of professional practice and social practice. Bhatia (2004) suggests that researchers have to account for four perspectives i.e., 'textual', 'ethnographic', 'socio-cognitive' and 'socio-critical' perspectives when analysing genres. Hence, apart from examining the textual aspects of hotel website, interviews with hotel website designers and participant observation will be carried out to collect data about website designers' practices and the physical situation that affects and shapes the construction of the hotel website as a genre. This paper, however, only focuses on the textual perspective with a view to investigating the language and image features which identify hotel

homepages as a genre. Building on Bhatia's (2004) framework, this study also adopts Kress and van Leeuwen's (1996) multimodal analysis framework for analysing images on hotel websites as visual images also create meaning in communication. The 'representational', 'interpersonal' and 'compositional' meaning of the images used on hotel homepages are investigated (ibid: 56). Representational meanings are about the representation of the world. They are revealed through narrative and conceptual images (ibid: 56). Interpersonal meanings refer to the social relationship between the participants. Contact, distance, point of view and modality contribute to the realization of interpersonal meanings (ibid: 160). Compositional meanings are the relations of the representational and interactive meanings of an image to each other. They are realized through the interrelated systems of information value, framing and salience (ibid: 212-214).

All of the twelve Hong Kong luxury hotel websites from the Five Star Alliance list were selected for analysis. Five Star Alliance is an organisation which offers reservation service of the world's best hotels via a website. All the international five- star hotels in Hong Kong are listed on the website. International five-star hotel websites were chosen because these hotels are big corporations, their website design and standard may influence other small or middle-sized hotels' website design in the industry. The data collection period was in January and February 2008. All the pages and images of the hotel websites accessible during that period were saved for analysis.

4.   Analysis of the Hotel Homepages

The analysis of the twelve hotel homepages is divided into four parts: the moves of the text on the hotel homepages, the lexical-grammatical features and hyperlinks of the hotel homepages, and images.

4.1   Move structure of the welcoming text on hotel homepages

Analysis of the twelve hotel homepages has identified eighteen moves (Table 1). Five moves are obligatory; eight moves are optional; and five moves are highly optional which occur only once. The order of the moves is arranged based on the reading practice of English texts from left to right and from top to bottom.

Table 1

Frequencies of Moves in Twelve Hotel Websites

Move Structure	Obligatory/Optional	Frequency	Percentage
1. Identifying the brand	Obligatory	12	100%
2. Introducing the contents list of the hotel website	Obligatory	12	100%
3.Establishing contact	Obligatory	12	100%
4. Greeting/ a lead	Optional	5	42%
5. Establishing credentials	Obligatory	12	100%
6. Introducing the location and views of the hotel	Optional	9	75%
7. Introducing accommodations	Obligatory	12	100%
8. Introducing restaurant	Optional	10	83%
9. Introducing leisure facilities	Optional	9	75%
10. Introducing facilities for business	Optional	3	25%
11. Introducing guest service	Optional	4	33%
12. Introducing the awards received	Optional	6	50%
13. Informing the local time	Optional	8	67%
14. Describing the renovation and enhancements that the hotel has undergone	Highly Optional	1	8.3%
15. Introducing function rooms	Highly Optional	1	8.3%
16. Introducing local attractions	Highly Optional	1	8.3%
17. Offering career opportunities	Highly Optional	1	8.3%
18. Introducing the creative hub	Highly Optional	1	8.3%

Among all the eighteen moves, the five obligatory moves are identifying the brand, introducing the menu of the websites, establishing contact, establishing credentials and introducing accommodation. They are described in the following:

Move One - Identifying the Brand

The move of 'identifying the brand' is textualized by the logo of the hotel. All the twelve hotels put this move as the first move. Six of them place the logos on the top right hand corner, four on the top left hand corner, and two of them place on the very top middle of the homepages. Hotel homepages which belong to the same hotel chain place their logos in the same area. For example, the Langham Hong Kong and Langham Place Mongkok, Hong Kong both put their logos on the top right hand corner. The InterContinental Hotel and InterContinental Grand Stanford Hong Kong place their logos on the top middle of the homepages. This suggests that the placement of logo is institutionalized by following the practices of individual hotels, that is, hotels belong to the same hotel group follow the same web design convention to create unity. When readers are browsing other pages of the website, the logos of the hotels can be activated as a link back to the homepages.

Move Two - Introducing the Contents List of the Hotel Website

The move of 'introducing the contents list of the hotel website' is realized by the navigation menu. The navigation menu includes all the main topics (links) of the hotel, which is similar to a table of contents for print material. A main navigation menu enables site visitors to quickly and easily identify content channels and switch between them. Eleven hotel homepages have both horizontal menus and vertical menus, and one has only a horizontal menu. The use of both horizontal and vertical menus is commonly found on websites.

Move Three - Establishing Contact

The move of 'establishing contact' provides contact information (address, telephone, fax and email) of the hotel to the reader. Corporate websites are created with the purposes to represent a company, sell company's name, attract more visitors, generate more business leads, promote company's products and services, and ultimately, help to gain more return on investment (Lepcha, 2006, p. 1). Readers may look for someone who claims accountability and responsibility for the content. The provision of e-mail address, telephone, fax and physical address can enhance the readers' confidence in the hotel.

Move Five - Establishing Credentials

Based on Bhatia's (1993, p. 49) analysis of sales promotion letters and a product review letter (Bhatia, 2004, p. 94), the move 'establishing credentials' in the sales promotion letters is to fulfill the needs of the potential customer and establish the company's reputation in the market. On hotel homepages, the move 'establishing credentials' serves to establish a positive image of the hotel and to inform readers of the competitive advantage of the hotel. For example, one of the hotels introduces the long history and the international fame of the hotels, and highlights the hotel as a place that offers a blend of the best of Eastern and Western hospitality with classical grandeur and timeless elegance.

Move Seven - Introducing Accommodations

The move introducing accommodation describes the accommodation facilities of the hotel. Eight of the twelve hotels describe the number of rooms; and six describe room views and facilities. Numerical evidence is sometimes provided to make the claims more credible to the readers, for example, *the 578 luxuriously-appointed rooms and suites either present the best harbour views of any of the five star hotels in the Hong Kong or overlook the vibrant streets of Tsim Sha Tsui East* (InterContinental Grand Stanford Hong Kong, 2008).

4.2   Lexical-Grammatical Analysis

The corpus comprises twelve hotel homepages with 2750 words. Oxford WordSmith Tools 4.0 (Scott, 2004) was used to generate a wordlist. The Wordsmith Tools Concordancer was used to examine the first 100 most frequently occurring words to find out the specific words that are predominantly used in the texts of the hotel homepages. The following shows some examples of these words.

Concordance of *Hong Kong's* (N=9)

Concordance	
1. in Asia, Gaddi's is	**Hong Kong's** most elegant dining experience
2. offers breathtaking views of	**Hong Kong's** Victoria Harbour and is
3. with magnificent views of	**Hong Kong's** renowned Victoria Harbour
4. have positioned it as	**Hong Kong's** most stylish hotel. These
5. feng shui inspired ambiance, is	**Hong Kong's** ultimate spa retreat with
6. The InterContinental Ballroom	**Hong Kong's** largest and 11 harbour view
7. Asia World Travel Awards (UK)	**Hong Kong's** Leading Hotel Elite Traveler
8. Hong Kong's Leading Hotel	**Hong Kong's** Leading Spa Hotel TTG
9. Oriental is situated	**Hong Kong's** most prominent address

Hong Kong's has no strong collocation to the left. It is used 2 times when referring to the view of Hong Kong's Victoria Harbour. At N+1, ***Hong Kong's*** collocates with the adjective *most* 3 times and also with some other favourable adjectives such as *renowned, largest, leading*, etc. This suggests that the writers of the hotel homepages attempt to convey a positive image of the hotel, and at the same time, inform the readers that the hotel(s) is/are located in an area with a spectacular view of Hong Kong.

Concordance of *Hong Kong* (N=68)

Concordance
1.   spacious hotel rooms and suites in **Hong Kong.** Each one of the hotel's opulent
2.   most exclusive and most elegant in **Hong Kong.** Renowned as one of the best
3.   in Asia and the largest   in **Hong Kong** at 7,000 square feet
4.   just a luxury spa hotel   in **Hong Kong**, it is the PLACE.
5.   state of the art Heath Club   in **Hong Kong** and outdoor heated pool
6.   Leading Hotels of the World   in **Hong Kong**, the hotel offers 495
7.   an appreciable feat   in **Hong Kong**. The bathrooms are quite
8.   true five-star luxury Spa hotel   in **Hong Kong,** Langham Place, Mongkok

Hong Kong has a strong collocation at N-1 with the preposition *in* 12 times but no strong collocation to the right. The writers describe the hotels as good hotels *in Hong Kong* with *spacious hotel rooms, most exclusive and most elegant, largest* etc.

Concordance of *Spa* (N=28)

Concordance
1.   The luxurious I-   **Spa**, with its feng shui
2.   retreat with private   **spa** suites, each with its own Jacuzzi
3.   500 Hotels Five Star   **Spa** Hotel in Hong Kong Langham Place
4.   true five-star luxury   **Spa** hotel in Hong Kong,
5.   a luxurious residential   **spa** with hotel accommodation
6.   is not only a day   **spa** but a luxurious residential spa
7.   our extraordinary   **spa** space. Our legendary staff
8.   Hong Kong's Leading   **Spa** Hotel TTG (Travel Trade
9.   the world's leading   **spa** consultancy, ESPA, offering

SPA occurs 28 times. It is the highest among all the other words about leisure facilities. *SPA* collates at N+1 with the noun *hotel* 6 times. It collocates at N-1 with leading 2 times and *luxury* (3 times)/ *luxurious* (1 time). Nowadays, consumers value spas. According to Paul Kerr, Joint Managing Director of Small Luxury Hotels of the World, *"Spas are still seen as one of the key 'luxury experiences' highly coveted by leisure and business travelers"* (Milburn & Hall, 2007, p. 9). Numerous hotels are seeking for out-of-room revenue growth opportunities. Apart from food and beverage outlets, spa is one of the choices. Moreover, there is an increased perception of spa

experiences as rejuvenation exercises, increased level of branding within the spa industry in hotels and increased disposable incomes. These factors explain a growth in spa facilities in hotels in 2007 (Milburn & Hall, 2007, p. 9). Globally, 3.2% of the hotels have a spa component. For luxury and super-luxury hotels, approximately 35% of the existing hotels have a spa. In the future, hotels are expected to have spa component (Milburn & Hall, 2007, p. 9).

Concordance of *Best* (N=15)

Concordance	
1. a blend of the	**best** of Eastern and Western
2. Renowned as one of the	**best** French restaurants in Asia
3. Global Traveler Magazine (USA)	**Best** Individual Hotel in Asia
4. Virtuoso Luxe Report (USA) The	**Best** View in the World
5. suites either present the	**best** harbour views of any

Best collocates at N-1 with the definite article *the* 12 times and there is no strong collocation to the right. It occurs mostly when the writer is listing out the names of the awards of the hotel, suggesting that some hotels present themselves as the best hotel in the world, or offering the best catering service to prove that they are the leaders in the hospitality industry.

Concordance of *Top* (N=15)

Concordance	
1. one of the world's	**top** hotels for business and leisure
2. ranks amongst the	**top** hotels in the world in
3. ranks amongst the	**top** hotels in the world in
4. named as one of "75	**Top** Hotels in Asia"
5. List: Editors' Hotel Picks:	**Top** Hotel in Asia 2005

Top collocates at N-1 with *the* 3 times and N+1 with *hotels* 13 times. Similar to *best, top* occurs mostly when the writer is listing out the awards of the hotel. Some hotels show awards from some famous hospitality and tourism magazines. This suggests credibility offered by an objective third party endorsement (Pollach 2005: 293).

Concordance of *Our* (N=9)

Concordance	
1. and bars enhanced by	**our** warm and caring people
2. has renovated all of	**our** guest rooms and opened
3. redesigned interior. We offer	**our** guests 502 rooms and
4. contemporary first class travel	**Our** restaurants have been recreated
5. staff welcomes you back to	**our** hotel and this unique destination
6. extraordinary spa space.	**Our** legendary staff welcomes you

Our occurs 9 times and it collocates at N+1 and N+2 with *guests rooms* 2 times and hotel staff (such as *caring people, legendary staff)* 2 times. The pronoun *our* tends to colligate with nouns like *guest rooms, staff* and *restaurants* in the hotel discourse. The semantic preference of *our* is related to the facilities and people of the hotels.

Concordance of *You* (N=8)

Concordance	
1. international treatments and massage	**you** have come to expect
2. the island. Above all,	**you¡¦ll** be delighted by the warm
3. the delights that await	**you**. We look forward to welcoming
4. forward to welcoming	**you** to The Excelsior soon
5. Our legendary staff welcomes	**you** back to our hotel and this
6. are excellent. Every detail	**you** could wish for, and even those

You collocates at N-1 with *welcome/welcoming*. There is no strong collocation to the right. *You* tends to colligate with verbs at N+1 such as *have, could* and *will* and co-occurs with words related to cognition and emotion such as *wish, expect* and *delighted*. This suggests that the writer is trying to convey the message that the hotel offers good services, and that hotel guests will be pleased.

The use of personal pronouns like *our* and *you* can be regarded as a relationship management strategy which helps to build a closer relationship between the hotels and the guests (Pollach, 2005, p. 296). By using the personal pronoun *you*, the writers seem to engage the readers in a personal conversation via the hotel website giving readers a sense of identity and respect instead of selling the business as a third person or making readers feel they are reading content generated by a text-generator software programme. The writer treats the mass readers individually as if each message was tailor-made for each individual. This also suggests that every detail of the message and services received by hotel guests are tailor-made for them.

4.3   Analysis of Hyperlinks

Apart from investigating moves and lexical-grammatical features, hyperlinks are also examined with the aim to found out the common embedded information shown on the twelve hotel homepages. Table 2 shows the typical hyperlinks found on the twelve hotel homepages.

Table 2

Typical Hyperlinks on Hotel Homepages

Links	Frequencies
Accommodations	**12**
Dining	**12**
Hong Kong Information	**12**
Leisure facilities	**12**
Meetings & events	**12**
Reservations	**12**
Contact Us	**11**
Special offers	**11**
Photo gallery	**11**
Logo	**10**
Language	**10**
Email	**10**
Careers	**10**
Privacy statement	**9**
About Us	**9**
Home	**8**
News	**8**
Site map	**8**
Development	**6**
Spa	**6**
Best rate guaranteed	**5**
E-brochure	**5**

Common links found on the twelve hotel homepages are accommodation, dining, Hong Kong information, leisure facilities, meetings and events and reservations. All of these typical links are intertextual links which connect single pages within the same website (Storrer, 1999, p. 39). These links bring users from a point of entry of the general topic to a deeper level of information on the website.

There are also intratextual links which connect links on the same web page (Storrer, 1999, p. 39). Five hotel homepages have one intratextual link, i.e., 'back to top' at the bottom left hand corner. 'Back to top' links are on hotel homepages with a long text with more than one screen which brings readers back to the top of the page. However, the text length of these five homepages is within two screens. The length of one to two full screens is the optimal length for homepages and has been common advice for homepage length as scrolling disorients web users (Lynch & Horton, 2001; Price & Price, 2002; Jones, 2007). This supports the belief that hotel web designers conform to the page length design convention.

Only two hotel homepages do not have extratextual links which lead users to other websites (Storrer, 1999, p. 39). The rare occurrence of extratextual link implies that browsers may not be lost to other external websites, and that the hotel has some degree of control in individual messaging linking. Readers' attention is kept within the pages of the company's website.

4.4   Image Analysis

Based on Kress and van Leeuwen (1996), some notable patterns of the representational, interpersonal and compositional metafunctions of the photographs have been identified.

From the perspective of representationl metafunction (Kress & van Leeuwen, 1996), hotels put conceptual images on their homepages. Generally, the conceptual images convey the idea of relaxation (e.g., Shangri-La Kowloon, Le Meridien Cyberport and Landmark Mandarin Oriental), prosperity of Hong Kong (e.g., InterContinental Hong Kong, InterContinental Grand Stanford Hong Kong and Excelsior Hong Kong), grandeur and elegance (Peninsula Hong Kong, The Langham Hong Kong and Shangri-La Kowloon) and hospitality (Mandarin Oriental Hong Kong). The choice of these conceptual images enhances the hotels' intent as five-star luxurious hotels.

Apart from conceptual images, two hotels include narrative images. Each of them places one narrative photograph among their flash photographs in the introductory section. One hotel shows a photograph with a woman walking towards the front door of the hotel (Figure 1.1). The woman's handbag forms the vector directing the eye to the name 'Meridien Cyberport' marked on the front door of the hotel to indicate the brand of the hotel. The woman entering the hotel is the only narrative image among the ten flash photographs. The remaining eight photographs from Figure 1.2 to Figure 1.10 are conceptual images showing the interior of the hotel namely suites, swimming pool, restaurant, gym room, meeting room, and also the exterior of the hotel, namely the front and the back of the hotel. However, regardless of whether the photograph is narrative or conceptual, with a flash effect of the webpage, the narrative and the conceptual photographs together create a narrative which illustrates an experience of touring the hotel.
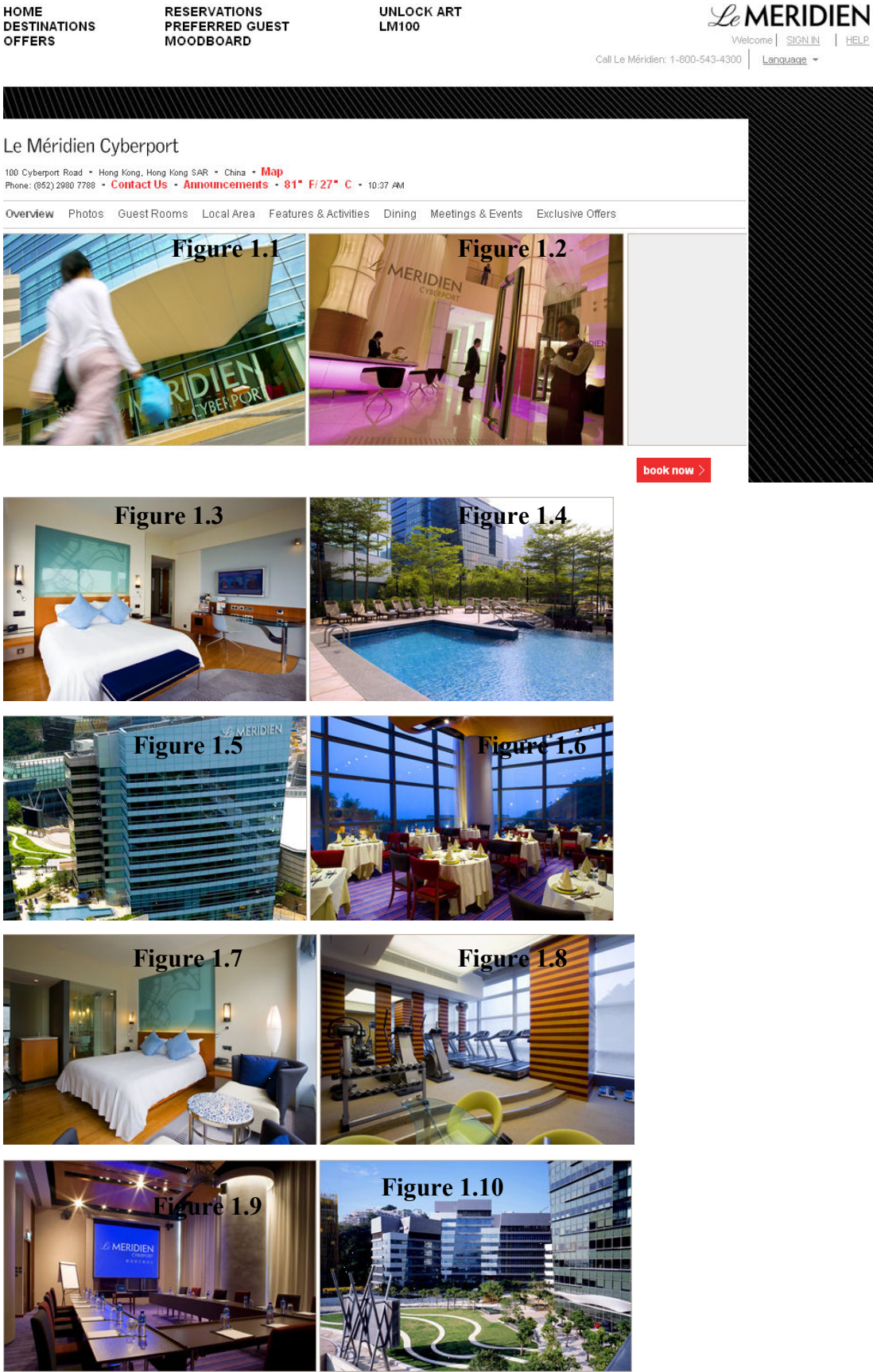
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DESTINATIONS
OFFERS

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Overview   Photos   Guest Rooms   Local Area   Features & Activities   Dining   Meetings & Events   Exclusive Offers

Figure 1.1

Figure 1.2

book now ›

Figure 1.3

Figure 1.4

Figure 1.5

Figure 1.6

Figure 1.7

Figure 1.8

Figure 1.9

Figure 1.10

Figure 1. **Homepage of Le Meridien Cyberport.**

Regarding the interpersonal function (Kress & van Leeuwen, 1996), there are only four out of twenty one images which make a demand with a direct gaze on viewers, for example, in Figure 2.1. Hotel homepages prefer offering goods and services to viewers as 'items of information, objects of contemplation, impersonally, as though they were specimens in a display case' (Kress & van Leeuwen, 1996, p. 124). The use of close, medium and long shots on the twelve hotel homepages is even in terms of frequencies of occurrence. Although the hotels are five-star and prestigious, hotel website producers seldom use a high angle in the photographs to suggest that they are looking down on the viewers. Instead, they mainly use a horizontal angle to establish an equal relationship with the viewers which creates a greater sense of involvement to suggest friendly hospitality.

Figure 2. **Homepage of Mandarin Oriental Hong Kong.**

There are cases which show that Kress and van Leeuwen's (1996) visual grammar framework may not be wholly applicable to all photographs. Kress and van Leeuwen (1996) suggest that an oblique angle creates greater detachment. For example, in the photograph in Figure 1.1, it seems that the producers make use of the oblique angle to capture a broader view of the hotel entrance and provide more details about the hotel in the photograph rather than trying to create detachment

from readers. Imagine if the photograph was taken at the horizontal level, the woman may have blocked the entrance view of the hotel and the name of the hotel would not be shown. Similarly, the photograph in Figure 1.2 is also taken from an oblique angle in which the participants are presented obliquely to the viewers. However, the use of the oblique angle from the left may not suggest that the producer wants to create a detached feeling with the readers. It can be argued that the intent is to create a consistent style with the use of angle in the first photograph. It creates the effect that readers are following the woman in the hotel all the way.
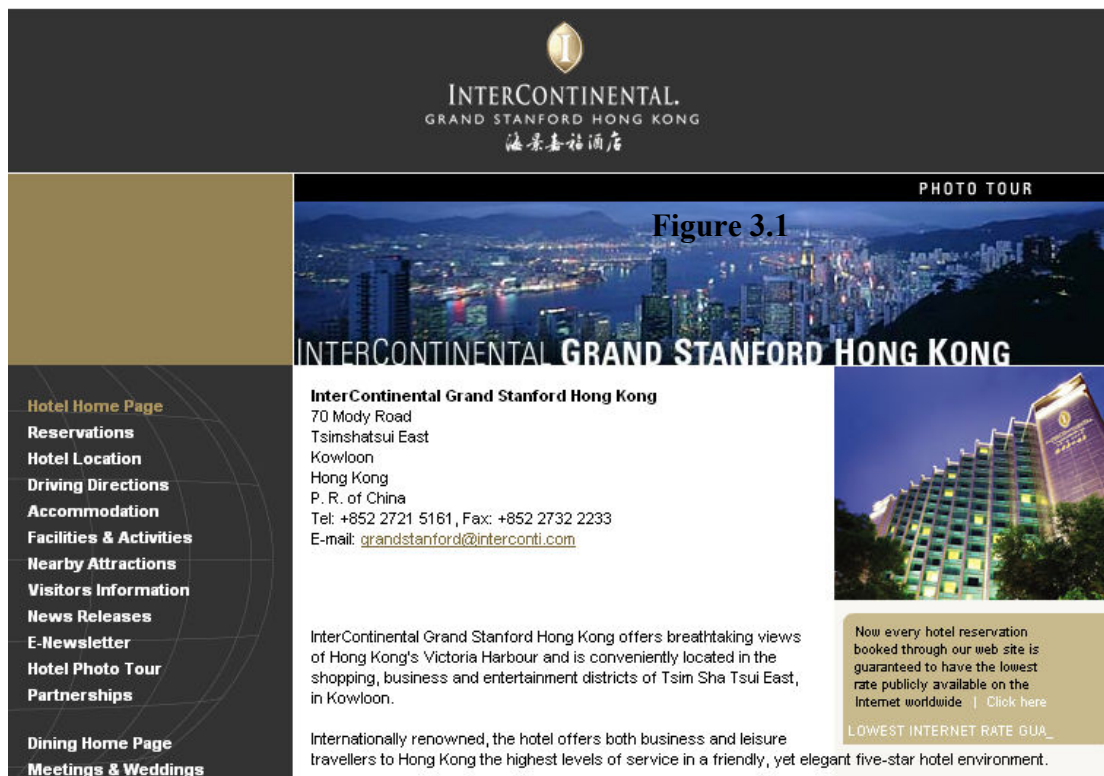

Figure 3. **Homepage of InterContinental Grand Stanford Hong Kong.**

According to Kress and van Leeuwen (1996), a very long shot and a long shot suggest a distant relationship between the viewers and the viewed. However, in the photograph in Figure 3.1, it seems like the purpose of the use of the very long shot in this photograph, which is taken from the second floor of the hotel, is to create a spacious environment of the hotel lobby as if readers were standing on the second floor observing the on-going activities of the hotel more than creating a distant relationship. The hotel does not seem to depict such a distant and respectful relationship with the readers. The depiction of the within reach idea is shown through the use of angle. The photograph in Figure 3.1 is taken from a frontal and high angle. The frontal angle suggests that readers are involved with the represented participants in the photograph and are part of them which is opposed to the idea of 'strangers' realised by the very long shot. Moreover, the high angle suggests that readers have power over the represented participants (Kress & van Leeuwen, 1996, p. 146). These suggest that although the hotel is a luxury hotel, it is not out of reach. Readers can be part of the guests in the

photograph and enjoy the hotel service. This shows that the interpersonal meaning created through the use of angle is dependent on how the other aspects (i.e., the social distance, involvement and power) of the framework co-ordinate and interact with each other. The interpersonal meaning can be observed through investigating which aspect, i.e. the angles that reflect social distance, involvement and power, is more prominent in the photographs at the first glance. It also depends on what types of objects are depicted in the photographs. For example, if the photograph is showing a broad natural landscape or scenery, it is very likely that the photographer will use a long shot. For instance, in Figure 3.1, the photograph showing the night view of Hong Kong depicts a cinematic sense by using a long shot. In other words, the photograph is taken from a long distance and readers are placed from a 'look-out' position, a place that is not in the landscape but affording an overview of the scenery (Kress & van Leeuwen, 1996, p. 134).

Regarding the compositional metafunction (Kress & van Leeuwen, 1996), eleven of the twelve hotels use a top and bottom approach to the design of their homepage layout to provide information, a practice that is common to many different homepages (Baldry & Thibault, 2006, p. 105). The welcoming image of the hotel is placed both on the top of the webpage and in the text at the bottom. The elements on the upper part of the page appeal to the viewer's emotions, expressing 'what might be'. The bottom elements have an informative appeal, showing 'what is' (Kress & van Leeuwen, 1996, p. 183). These contrasting appeals can be assigned the values of ideal and real, where ideal elements are more salient and simply contain the general essence of information; and real elements give practical and specific information (Kress & van Leeuwen, 1996, p. 183). Placing the photo of the hotels on the top functions to give the readers a general idea of the hotels, followed by providing the details of the hotels in the text underneath. Moreover, the images presented on the twelve hotel homepages are large covering one third of the homepage with great salience to catch the readers' attention. Regarding modality, since most of the hotels use photographs to present their ideas on the homepage, the visual modality is high. Photography suggests a reality that is far stronger than that of drawings, illustrations and paintings (Harrison, 2003, p. 56). Photographs suggest realism and may be seen to provide 'evidence' of the appearance of the hotel and the on-going activities inside the hotel. The web designers use the high modality photographs on the top of the homepage so that the ideal will not be depicted as 'what might be' but will be described as 'what is' (Harrison, 2003, p. 56).

5.   Conclusion

From the analyses of moves, lexico-grammar, hyperlinks and images, four communicative purposes of hotel homepages have been identified, namely to introduce the hotel, to inform readers of the facilities of the hotel, to establish the image of the hotel, and to promote the hotel. The analyses show that hotel homepages are partly informational and partly promotional.

This paper investigates the hotel homepages by using the textual perspective of Bhatia's (2004) multidimensional and multi-perspective model of genre analysis, as well as Kress and Leeuwen's (1996) visual grammar model. Future studies will examine the same hotel websites by

adopting the ethnographic, socio-cognitive and socio-critical perspectives (Bhatia, 2004) to obtain a more comprehensive picture of the genre through examining practitioners' advice and how the physical situation affects the construction of hotel websites as a genre. The study contributes to the disciplines of applied linguistics, professional and institutional culture and communication, and web marketing. It offers insights into different ways of designing appealing and effective websites not only in the hotel industry but also other key industries of Hong Kong's economy.

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Humor as an Indicator of Workplace Socialization

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Abstract

As a consequence of frequent changes in employers and workplaces, professionals are often faced with the challenge of having to learn "how to do things" in their new workplaces and "how to become fully integrated members". Learning how to communicate appropriately is an important aspect of this socialisation process (Wenger, 1998). We look at one of the particularly interesting discursive strategies in this context, namely humor.

Drawing on more than nine hours of authentic discourse collected in three workplaces in Hong Kong supplemented by over 15 interviews with newcomers, this paper contributes to research on the role of humor in the socialisation process. In particular, we employ the community of practice framework to illustrate how newcomers in different workplaces actually learn (and at times resist) to use humor appropriately in ways that characterise the discursive repertoire negotiated among members in their new work environment.

Findings illustrate that for newcomers, humor is a double-edged sword, which may be an advantage as well as a handicap: it enables them to participate without being fully responsible for the consequences, but it may also exclude them from participation marking them as outsiders. For researchers, however, investigating humor is an excellent way of gaining insights into workplace socialisation.

1.   Introduction

Language and communication play a crucial role in the workplace in that most of the tasks which people perform in this context involve interactions with subordinates, superiors, colleagues, clients and partners (e.g., Holmes & Stubbe, 2003; Mullany, 2007). However, workplaces differ from each other with regards to normative "ways of doing things around here". This also affects workplace communication: what is considered as normative ways of talking also varies considerably across workplaces (e.g., Holmes, 2000).

In today's fast-paced society people often change workplaces. As a consequence they are regularly faced with various challenges this may cause, such as having to learn how to become a fully integrated member into their new workplace community. One of the crucial aspects of this kind of workplace socialization is acquiring knowledge and practice of how to communicate appropriately in various communicative encounters in the new organizational environment (e.g., Louis, 1980; Van Maanen, 1977). We use the term "workplace socialization" here to describe the various processes through which newcomers acquire the knowledge and practical skills that are needed for them in order to participate as fully integrated members in their new organization (e.g., Bauer et al., 1998; Van Maanen & Schein, 1979).

One of the particularly interesting and versatile linguistic strategies in this context is humor. Humor has been identified as a multifunctional device which may assist people in performing a

myriad of different functions in a workplace context. In particular, humor was found to increase employees' job satisfaction and performance (Caudron ,1992; Clouse & Spurgeon, 1995; Consalvo, 1989), as well as their creativity and productivity (Caudron, 1992; Morreall, 1991). Furthermore, humor has been identified as facilitating teamwork and creating a sense of belonging (Caudron, 1992; Duncan et al., 1990; Morreall, 1991), boosting employees' morale, for example by defusing conflict and spicing up routines (Caudron, 1992; Clouse & Spurgeon 1995; Ehrenberg 1995; Morreall, 1991). And it has been argued that humor may help employees deal with stress and change (Caudron, 1992; Clouse & Spurgeon 1995; Duncan et al., 1990; Morreall, 1991). Moreover, humor may also assist newcomers in learning the specific norms and practices that characterize their new working environments (Vinton, 1989; cf. Brown & Keegan, 1999), becoming fully integrated members, and even testing boundaries of acceptable behavior (Graham et al., 1992; Holmes, 2007; Linstead, 1985; Martineau, 1972).

In this paper we aim to explore how a linguistic analysis of the ways in which newcomers employ and participate in humor when interacting with their colleagues can provide interesting insights into the complex processes of workplace socialization. Our focus is on humor since this discursive strategy, perhaps more so than others, strongly reflects the norms and characteristics of a particular workplace (e.g., Collinson, 1988; Consalvo, 1989; Vinton, 1989), and because it may function as an indication of acceptable and unacceptable behavior (Linstead, 1985), i.e., as a means through which people learn how to communicate appropriately in the context of their new workplace.

Interestingly, people in the workplace seem to be aware of existing norms about appropriate ways of using humor that characterize their specific workplaces. In interviews, people in a range of different workplaces, for example, commented that there are only certain members who initiate humor. These members may be of high or low status depending on the specific workplace context:

> "Most likely it is the ICs [i.e., superintendents] or other superiors who raise humor first. We normal colleagues dare not raise it sometimes, because some ICs are not happy with these things." (Interview with Wanda, a new caretaker in a residential area)

> "Usually it is the staff in low positions who raise them first. The ICs and administrative staff need to retain their dignity." (Interview with Lillian, a new security guard in an educational institution)

However, while common in most workplaces, members of a small number of workplaces commented that humor is rather uncommon in their organization:

> "We have little humor because colleagues are not allowed to have it. We need to look professional." (Interview with Howard, a new interpreter of a department store serving tourists)

> "Workers in this store are prone to seriousness and aggressiveness. They do not create an atmosphere of joking or peacefulness."(Interview with Sam, a new sales associate of a department store selling brand-name products)

This awareness of how to use humor appropriately is reflected on various levels of communicative behavior, and includes, for example, appropriately responding to humor and choosing appropriate types and styles of humor (see also Schnurr, 2009; Schnurr & Chan fc).

2.   Data and Framework

In order to explore some of the ways through which an analysis of newcomers' participation in and use of humor may contribute to an understanding of the processes involved in workplace socialization, we draw on the CofP framework.

The notion of a community of practice (henceforth CofP) focuses on the ways in which people construct their membership of certain groups through their language use. Eckert and McConnell-Ginet define a community of practice as:

> An aggregate of people who come together around mutual engagement in an endeavor. Ways of doing things, ways of talking, beliefs, values, power relations- in short, practices- emerge in the course of this mutual endeavour. (Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 1992, 464)

Wenger (1998) identifies three crucial criteria for distinguishing different CofPs, namely, mutual engagement (including regular interaction), a joint, negotiated enterprise (e.g., the shared organizational objectives of the team or group), and a shared repertoire developed over a period of time (which may include specialized jargon, routines, running jokes, etc.). Using this framework highlights the importance of membership of a particular CofP in relation to distinct ways of behaving appropriately in the workplace, and in particular of learning these norms of how to behave and communicate appropriately.

Our data consists of authentic discourse collected in three different workplaces in Hong Kong: a small commercial enterprise, a marine engineering company, and a large educational setting. Our participants have different positions and job titles including assistant merchandiser, supervisor, and security guard, but all are newcomers to their organization. That is, all participants had been with their current employer for less that one year at the time of the data collection. In each workplace we asked the newcomers over a period of several weeks to record a range of interactions that are typical for their everyday work life. The data that we received from each participant is very different, largely due to differences in the specific tasks that their jobs involve. For a detailed summary of the kinds of interactions participants recorded, please see appendix A.

This authentic discourse recorded in three workplaces is supplemented by in-depth interviews conducted with these newcomers and some of the people they work with. In addition, we have also conducted interviews with 18 newcomers in other organizations in Hong Kong. The interviews provide valuable additional information about how newcomers' perceive and experience their socialization into their new workplace. For a detailed summary of the particulars of the interviews and participants' job titles and organizations, please see appendix B[1].

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[1] The names of all participants and their organizations are pseudonyms. We are very grateful to Emma, Lillian, Kevin and their colleagues for agreeing to record some of their workplace interactions. We would also like to thank the participants who agreed to be interviewed for this research.

3.   Analysis

We look here at two ways in which an analysis of workplace humor may provide insights into newcomers' socialization processes: i) the occurrence of humor may signal mistakes made by the newcomer, and ii) humor may be used to exclude newcomers.

3.1.   Signaling Mistakes Made by the Newcomer

Example 1 was recorded by Emma, an assistant merchandiser, who at the time of data collection had been with G45, an American-owned company involved in design and commerce of plastic flowers and relevant accessories, for 7 weeks.

Example 1

Context: During less busy (office) hours, Gavin and David teach Emma how to work with a kind of software. Gavin is the deputy, and David is an assistant merchandiser with longer working tenure than Emma. Emma recognizes that she has made a mistake, and Gavin and David humorously ask her to fix it. After some time, Gavin and David humorously ask Emma to do another exercise again.

1	Emma:	oh I under-tick the ( ) box
2	David:	what? /this\
3	Emma:	/yeah\ yeah I find out the problems + oh
4	David:	oh you tick it ( ) give you zero (point) one minute
5	Gavin:	you make it /[laughs]\
6	David	/[laughs]\
7	Emma:	/oh HELP\ (5) I leave that flower box blank is it?
8	Gavin:	Yeah
9	Emma:	no more + no more other
10	David:	no more /other\
11	Gavin:	/this\ this two all first + and then just + just keep this
…		
12	Gavin:	( ) this for for future + if the customer want to ( )
13	Emma:	so me seems MO2 + not marked
14	Gavin:	Yes
15	Emma:	okay ( ) other + two minute
16	Gavin:	two minutes
17	David:	[laughs] thirty + second
18	Gavin:	twenty sec twenty seconds
19	David:	[laughs] thirty [laughs] oh not more than twenty
20	Emma:	ten times of it /[laughs]\
21	Gavin:	/[laughs]\
22	David:	/[laughs]\

This example illustrates how Gavin and David make fun of their colleague, Emma, a newcomer. In lines 1 and 3 Emma tells her colleagues how she has accidently ticked the wrong box for an order of flowers. This admission of a mistake is then picked up by her colleagues and is used as

the source for humor: David humorously suggests Emma fix the problem in six seconds (line 4), and Gavin continues this amusing suggestion by humorously encouraging Emma (line 5). Emma's reply 'oh HELP' (line 7) could be interpreted as playing along with the humor, while also signalling that she needs some more advice on how to process the order appropriately. However, the humor does not end here, but is picked up again in lines 17-19 when David and Gavin ask Emma to complete another task within an impossibly short period (i.e., a few seconds). Here, too, Emma skilfully plays along with her colleagues' humor by providing further non-serious suggestions for extremely short timeframes (see line 20).

This example not only illustrates how mistakes made by newcomers may be used as the source for humor, but it also shows how Emma, a newcomer, learns to acquire part of the norms of communicating that characterises her new workplace. More specifically, this extract demonstrates that she has learned to appropriately respond to humor (of which she is the butt), namely by playing along.

Another instance of how humor may be used to signal (and respond to) mistakes made by the newcomer is shown in example 2, which has also been recorded by Emma.

Example 2[2]

Context: G45 is going through a small business crisis. A company in California suddenly withdraws a large amount of orders for G45's flowers, but G45 has already bought the materials and its partners have started the production. The colleagues discuss who is to blame and how the problems can be fixed.

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[2] Small caps indicate that these utterances were originally in Cantonese and have been translated into English.

1	Gavin:	OR YOU TELL ME WHAT I CAN DO /[LAUGHS]\
2	Rebecca:	/IN\ XIA-MEN RIGHT? WE GO TO XIA-MEN RIGHT? OUR TRIP IS TO
3		XIA-MEN RIGHT? OKAY + JUST DIRECTLY TELL THE FACTORY
4		WITH THE INVOICE
5	Emma:	or why don't flow to X-Top? a thousand five hundred
6	David:	fly to X-top [laughs]
7	Rebecca:	X-top ( )okay + this weekend you go to X-Top
8	Emma:	oh no
9	Rebecca:	oh no [laughs]
10	David:	/[laughs]\
11	Rebecca:	/the first\ factory + in the afternoon on April fifth April + okay
12		first + you go to X-Top + cancel order [laughs]
13	Emma:	no /[laughs]\
14	Rebecca:	/[laughs]\
15	Gavin:	/[laughs]\
16	David:	/this good idea [laughs]\
17	Emma:	oh /no\
18	Gavin:	/GIVE\ THEM A RED PACKET[3] AT ONCE
19	Rebecca:	and then the next step is out [laughs] you leave immediately
20		[laughs] THAT MUST BE WHEN WE REACH THE ENTRANCE GIVE
21		THEM + A PRESENT FIRST + AND THEN X-TOP THEY ASK US TO
22		LEAVE IMMEDIATELY PLEASE
23	Gavin:	LEAVE IMMEDIATELY INDEED
24		THEY USE A BONE-MADE BROOM /SWEEPING US AWAY\
25	Rebecca:	/no no no\ this item + cannot make the delivery don't pick it up
26		this item + is too expensive you customer cannot buy it don't
27		pick it up + okay nothing pick up
28	Emma:	oh not leaving first + complete the conversation
29	Rebecca:	no complete the conversation but you still need to pay the
30		sample order okay you cannot make it

In line 5 Emma suggests to have a meeting with the company "X-Top" in order to discuss the problems with the project. This serious suggestion is then responded to by humor: Rebecca, a senior member of the team, humorously asks Emma, the status lowest member, to be their representative and to meet with the people from X-Top (lines 7, 11 – 12). She extensively dwells on this humor by creating a fantasy scenario (with the support from her other colleagues) in which Emma is talking to and reassuring their business partners at X-Top (lines 19 – 22, 25 – 27, 29 – 30). Interestingly, Emma seems to realise her "mistake", i.e., her inappropriate suggestion about flying over to meet with X-Top

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[3] A red packet which contains money is a kind of gift given to friends and relatives during some Chinese festivals. Giving red packets to someone means wishing the receiver good luck.

(line 8), but when her colleagues continue teasing her, she eventually joins them and plays along with their humor (lines 13, 17, 28).

It is important to note that although (and perhaps even because) Emma is used as the target of her colleagues' humor, she seems to have become an integrated member into this CofP. By including Emma in their humor, her colleagues signal that she is becoming "one of them". This function of humor to signal group membership is further enhanced by Emma skillfully playing along with the humor. In the next section we look at how humor may not only function as a means of reinforcing solidarity and creating a sense of belonging among interlocutors but may also be used to exclude newcomers.

3.2.   Excluding Newcomers

Example 3 is also taken from the recordings of Emma at G45.

Example 3

Context: Gavin and David teach Emma how to locate a company. The former two make fun of the transliterated English name of that company.

1	David:	okay we need to find the (2) /factory number\
2	Emma:	/factory number\
3	David:	yes in the (2) two nine zero (3) Fei Cai
4	Gavin:	FEI /CAI [laughs]\
5	David:	/CAI [laughs]\
6	Gavin:	FEI CAI
7	David:	[laughs] address
8	Gavin:	J + JJ one zero (3) Alight
9	David:	[laughs]
10	Emma:	[laughs]
11	Gavin:	Fei Cai + all in KFS? [company name]?
12	Emma:	[company name]

At G45 code-switching between Cantonese and English is common, and most employees can speak both languages. However, Emma, the newcomer, does not know much Cantonese. As a consequence, she is not able to understand and participate in the humor that her colleagues utter in Cantonese (lines 4-6). The humor derives from the translation of the company's name: "Fei Cai", which has the same pronunciation as "fatty" (肥仔) and "hooligan" (飛仔) in Cantonese. Through their choice of language they exclude Emma and prevent her from participating in their conversation and their humor. What is particularly interesting about this example is the observation that although Emma does not know why David and Gavin laugh, she nevertheless participates in the laughter (line 10) – in what could be interpreted as an attempt to signal group membership. In the interview Emma mentioned that although she does not know Cantonese, she tries to guess "what is going on" by looking at interlocutors' facial expressions. So by participating in the Cantonese humor (even if only

marginally) Emma seems to try to become a member of this particular group and to signal her belonging to it.

Interestingly, Emma's problem of not understanding her colleagues' humor seems to be typical for newcomers, and may not only occur between colleagues who speak different languages. Many of the participants in our interviews made similar comments about not responding to and playing along humor which they did not fully understand.

> "For those who have a good relationship with me, I will join in their humor talk. But for those whom I am not familiar with, I will not even laugh with in order to avoid creating any embarrassing circumstances." (Interview with Cass, a new management trainee of a property management agency)
>
> "If they are having humor I will laugh on the face of it. But I will not laugh from the bottom of my heart. […] After all we are working in the same place, so I am likely to be forced to laugh."
>
> (Interview with Sam, a new sales associate of a department store selling brand-name products)

The next example illustrates that humor may not only be used to exclude newcomers from participation, but that sometimes newcomers may exclude themselves by not responding appropriately. They thereby also signal that they have not yet fully learned the communicative norms that characterize their new workplace.

Example 4 was recorded by Lillian, a security guard at an educational institution. At the time of data collection Lillian had been with her new organization for 4 months.

Example 4

Context: Lillian is about to be off duty, while Joey is about to start working. It is their first encounter today. Joey is talking about a schedule change of one of their male colleagues. "531" in line 3 is the code of a female colleague on Joey's shift.

1	Joey:	HE SAID HE'S SHIFTED DOWN HERE FOR FIVE DAYS + SO THAT
2		PEOPLE CAN TAKE DAY OFF + THEN I
3		YESTERDAY 531 ASKED HIM + BECAUSE MORE PRETTY GIRLS ON
4		THE AFTERNOON SHIFT? YOU LIKE AFTERNOON SHIFT
5	Lillian:	[laughs]
6	Joey:	THEN HE REPLIED + WHAT? WHAT? WHAT? PRETENDED HE
7		COULDN'T HEAR + MORE WHAT WHAT? OH STUDENTS + MORE
8		STUDENTS [laughs]
		(3 sec pause)
		[Joey raises another topic]

Example 4 shows how Lillian, a newcomer, fails to respond to her colleague's humor in ways that are considered appropriate in this CofP. In lines 1-4 Joey tells Lillian how one of their colleagues who has been teased by another colleague ('531') for allegedly having agreed to change shifts because of 'more pretty girls on the afternoon shift' (lines 3 and 4). While Lillian initially responds with laughter (line 5), when Joey continues her humorous account (lines 6-8), Lillian does not reply at all,

which results in a relatively long pause (3 seconds). Eventually, Joey ends the silence by bringing up another topic.

This example is a good illustration of what Lillian has commented on in the interview: "I prefer to say less to avoid miscommunication". However, while it may be understandable from Lillian's perspective to avoid verbal participation in order to prevent miscommunication, this kind of passive behaviour may also be interpreted negatively by her colleagues. And indeed, in the interview Joey mentioned that she thought Lillian was a boring newcomer lacking a sense of humor. However, at the time of the recording Lillian had been with the company for just four months, so she is still in the process of learning how to communicate appropriately with the other members of this CofP. And appropriately responding to humor is one aspect of the shared norms that characterize the linguistic repertoire negotiated among members of this CofP.

4.   Discussion and Conclusion

Our analyses of authentic discourse data recorded in a range of workplaces in Hong Kong as well as interviews conducted with newcomers have illustrated that humor plays an interesting role in the socialisation process. Due to its versatility and multi-functionality humor was used to perform a wide range of functions relating to newcomers' socialisation processes. The humor in our data was used to signal mistakes made by the newcomers thereby teaching them how "to do things" in their new workplace, and it was also used to include as well as to exclude newcomers from their new CofP.

Moreover, newcomers seemed to be generally aware that specific ways of using (and responding to) humor characterize their new workplaces. As the interview comments have shown, people seemed to know who was allowed to use humor to whom and on what topic. Acquiring this knowledge together with the ability to implement it in everyday workplace interactions, are important aspects of workplace socialisation.

Clearly, an analysis of humor may provide valuable insights into the complex processes that are involved in the learning and teaching of how to become a fully integrated member into a new workplace. It is particularly useful for an in-depth analysis of the specific ways in which newcomers i) negotiate and construct group membership, and how ii) they slowly acquire the communicative knowledge to become fully integrated members of their new CofP.

5.   Practical Applications

Our academic research of the linguistic processes involved in newcomers' socialization into workplaces also has a range of practical applications. We believe that our findings can be used for consulting activities and to devise training materials, for example, with the aim of facilitating peoples' transition between workplaces. In particular, analyses of linguistic behaviour like the ones we have conducted in this paper may help consultants and other trainers in preparing newcomers for the difficulties they may face when starting to work in a new environment. In fact, insights gained from linguistic analyses may even equip newcomers with valuable skills on how to survive the first crucial weeks and months in a new workplace.

As our analysis has shown, knowing how to use and respond to humor and, more generally, how to talk in ways that are perceived as "appropriate" in a new environment, are important aspects of becoming "one of them", i.e., of becoming a fully integrated and highly efficient member in any new workplace.

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Appendix A

Participants (pseudonyms)	Collars	Time Recorded	Number of Recordings	Interaction Nature
Emma (F)	White	About 220 minutes	10	Talk on the job Talk between jobs Mentoring talk
Kevin (M)	Blue	About 300 minutes	18	Talk on the job Talk between jobs Talk in meals Talk in physical exercise session One meeting
Lillian (F)	Pink	About 50 minutes	6	Talk before and after duties

Appendix B

Names of Interviewee (pseudonyms)	Age	Names of Organization (pseudonyms)	Work Sites	Collars	Positions
Emma* (F)	About 30	G45 Holdings Limited	Middle office	White	Assistant merchandiser
Kevin* (M)	47	F23 Engineering Company Limited	Ship	Blue	Supervisor
Lillian* (F)	About 50	GHI Guard Security Limited	University	Pink	Guard
Theresa (F)	49	ABC Jewellery	Store	Pink	Sales clerk
Helen (F)	48	DEF Technic Limited (textile business)	Small office	White	merchandiser
Wendy (F)	49	MNO Grocery	Store	Pink	Supervisor
Karen (F)	20	JKL Computer Limited (software agency)	Middle office	White	Marketing assistant
Sam (M)	25	PQR Department store	Department store	Blue	Sales associate
Cass (F)	23	STU Property management Limited	Small office	White	Management trainee
Rose (F)	21	WXY Club (restaurant)	Restaurant	Pink	Customer relation assistant
Harry (M)	26	Z01 Finance Group Limited	Small office	White	Account executive
Leon (M)	25	A23 Commercial Bank	Bank	White	Operation clerk
Howard (M)	23	B45 Department store	Department Store	White	Interpreter
Sunny (M)	About 50	C67 Industry Limited (chemical industry)	Warehouse	Blue	Warehouse worker
Grace (F)	About 25	D89 Bank Limited	Bank	White	Business analyst
Wanda (F)	40	E01 Property Management Limited	Residential area	Pink	Care-taker
Brian (M)	26	H67 Management	Small office	White	Marketing

		Limited			executive
Wilson (M)	22	I89 Retailer	Middle office	White	Administrative assistant

The Impact of Culture on Media Choice:
The Role of Context, Media Richness and Uncertainty Avoidance

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Abstract

This paper reports on an explorative study which investigated whether receivers from the Netherlands, Spain and Morocco differ in the communication media that they regard as appropriate for receiving a message from their manager. Based on a combination of the Context Theory of Hall (1976) and the Information Richness Theory of Daft and Lengel (1984), it is expected that high-context cultures prefer media that are high in richness and that low-context cultures prefer media that are low in richness. The expectations are tested through experiments in a between-subject design with 354 respondents from a high-context culture (Morocco), a medium-context culture (Spain) and a low-context culture (the Netherlands). Only a small part of the expectations prove to be true. The results that are not in line with the expectations can be explained by taking account of differences between the Netherlands, Spain and Morocco regarding uncertainty avoidance and by the fact that the study is performed from the perspective of the receivers of the message.

1.   Introduction

Since the last half of the 19th century the number of communication media has increased enormously. Herlé and Rustema (2005, p.23) show that in between 1800 and 1992 twelve new media were introduced, such as telegraph, phone, PC and www. After 1992 even more new media were introduced, such as text message, videophone, skype, and twigger and twitter. In spite of the increasing number of possibilities to communicate, business cultures around the globe have not become one and the same yet. It appears from the literature such as Beamer and Varner (2008), Lane, Distefano, and Maznevski (2006), Saee (2005), Samovar and Porter (2004) and Victor (1992) that there are differences between cultures in business ethics, organization, management, preferred leadership style, the aspects that motivate employees, business letters, annual reports, argumentation, presentation and negotiation styles.

An aspect that has not been studied until now is whether cultures also differ in communication media, such as face-to-face communication, telephone, e-mail, and letters that they regard as appropriate for different types of business communication. There is anecdotal evidence that cultures actually differ in the communication media they regard to be appropriate for a message. The Swiss architects Herzog and de Meuron who built the Olympic stadium of Being, the Bird's Nest, said in an interview in August 2008 that they were extremely amazed that the commission to build this stadium, an order worth millions of dollars, had never been drawn up in writing. This nicely illustrates that cultures may differ in the communication media that they regard as appropriate for a certain message. A multi-million order has to be drawn up in Switzerland, but in China an oral agreement is sufficient.

It is not only on the basis of anecdotal evidence that it can be expected that cultures differ in the communication media they regard as appropriate for a certain message, but also on the basis of a combination of two theories: the Context Theory of Edward T. Hall (1976) and the Information Richness Theory of Daft and Lengel (1984).

1.1   Context Theory

According to the Context Theory (Hall, 1976), cultures differ in the extent to which they use context and situation for the interpretation of a message. In high-context cultures, most of the meanings of a message is deduced from the context in which the words occur, for example, non-verbal communication, and the setting of the communication. In low-context cultures, the meaning of a message is primarily deduced from the words. Low-context cultures communicate explicitly, high-context cultures implicitly. In Figure 1 a number of cultures are arranged in a decreasing order of context. Since the context of cultures has not yet been studied as systematically as, for example, the cultural values of Geert Hofstede (Cardon, 2008), the arrangement is mainly based on incidental observations. Although there is an urgent need to develop instruments to measure context and investigate the context of more cultures (Cardon 2008), there is also a collective feeling among culture specialists that the classification as presented in Figure 1 is true (Beamer and Varner, 2008; Victor, 1992).

High context   Asian cultures

Arabic cultures

Latin-American cultures

Italian and Spanish cultures

British cultures

French cultures

North-American cultures

Scandinavian cultures

Germanic cultures

Low context   Swiss-German

Figure 1. **Rough Classification of High- and Low-Context Cultures (From Victor 1992, p.160).**

Since high-context cultures rely on context and non-verbal communication for the interpretation of a message, we can expect that persons in high-context cultures prefer communication media that allow them to use these aspects in order to interpret an utterance, such as face-to-face communication or a videophone, whereas persons from low-context cultures will have less preference for communication media that allow them to interpret non-verbal information. This brings us to the Information Richness Theory as developed by Daft and Lengel (1984).

1.2   Information Richness Theory

The Information Richness Theory makes a distinction between media high in richness such as face-to-face-communication and media low in richness, such as memos, reports, and tables. The extent of information richness is defined on the basis of the number of cues a medium passes on and how easy it is to give feedback. The more cues can be passed on and the easier it is to give feedback, the higher the information richness (Daft and Lengel, 1984). Daft and Lengel (1984) analyse managerial information behaviour in the United States with the help of the Information Richness Theory. According to them, managers have two information tasks in the internal communication: reduce equivocality about the working environment and give enough information to employees in order to be able to fulfil their job. Media high in richness are used to give information about complex organizational topics and to reduce ambiguity and uncertainty, whereas media low in richness are used to communicate relatively simple, easy to understand messages.

Webster and Trevino (1995) have tested the Information Richness Theory among managers in the United States. The results of their study showed that managers indeed prefer information-rich media to information-poor media for complex messages and that they prefer information-poor media to information-rich media for simple messages. Other factors also played a part in the media choice of these managers: distance between sender and receiver (close: information-rich media; far away: information-poor media), number of receivers (a few: information-rich media; many: information-poor media), social influences (work group norms and attitudes of co-workers and supervisors) and symbolic cues of media (for example, written communication for formality and legitimacy, face-to-face communication to express a desire for teamwork) (Webster and Trevino, 1995).

1.3   New Avenues of Research for the Information Richness Theory

Although the Information Richness Theory offers very useful insights into which information medium should be used best for which types of messages, it also calls for further research. We want to point out two aspects: the receiver's perspective and cultural variation.

Until now it has been mainly investigated which communication media senders of a message want to use and which they can use best. From a communication point of view, however, the receiver of the message is as important, perhaps even more important. If a sender uses a medium that the receiver does not appreciate in the same way as the sender, communication breakdowns may occur easily.

The second problem with the Information Richness Theory is that it is exclusively based on research in the United States. With Webster and Trevino (1995) we wonder whether the factors that play a part in the choice of media in the United States also play a part in other cultures, and if this is the case, whether they play the same role. We have seen in Figure 1 that the United States is a rather low-context culture and it is plausible that the choice of media and media appreciation will be different in cultures with a higher context.

In this paper we will report on explorative research in progress on choice of media. Our research differs from former research in this field in two respects: We study cultures with different contexts and we also study the appreciation and preference of communication media from the receiver's perspective.

2.   Expectations Based on Context Theory and Information Richness Theory

We performed our experiments in three countries that differ in context (see Method, countries): Morocco (high context), Spain (medium context) and the Netherlands (low context). On the basis of a combination of the Context Theory and the Information Richness Theory we formulated the following expectations about cultural differences in appreciating a communication medium.

1.   In order to receive a message from their manager

1a.   Receivers from Morocco regard information-rich media as more appropriate, compared to receivers from Spain and the Netherlands.

1b.   Receivers from Spain regard information-rich media as more appropriate, compared to receivers from the Netherlands.

1c.   Receivers from the Netherlands regard information-poor media as more appropriate, compared to receivers from Spain and Morocco.

1d.   Receivers from Spain regard information-poor media as more appropriate, compared to receivers from Morocco.

We assume that there is also a relationship between appreciation of a communication medium and preference for a medium; in other words, we assume that the medium that is appreciated most will also be preferred. This leads to the expectations presented in 2.

2.   In order to receive a message from their manager

2a.   Receivers from Morocco prefer information-rich media more than receivers from Spain and the Netherlands.

2b.   Receivers from Spain prefer information-rich media more than receivers from the Netherlands.

2c.   Receivers from the Netherlands prefer information-poor media more than receivers from Spain and Morocco

2d.   Receivers from Spain prefer information-poor media more than receivers from Morocco

3.   Method

3.1   Countries and Respondents

Our study was carried out in three countries: Morocco in North Africa, the Netherlands in Western Europe and Spain in South Western Europe. These countries were chosen because they differ in context according to Figure 1. Morocco, an Arab culture, can be regarded as a rather high-context culture, Spain as a culture with a medium context and the Netherlands as a culture with a low context.

The respondents were 354 students of Business Administration or Management living and studying at the Université Mohammed V in Rabat, the capital of Morocco (N=116), at the Universidad Carlos III in Madrid, de capital of Spain (N=144), or at the University of Nijmegen in Nijmegen, a large town in the Netherlands (N=94). The age of the respondents ranged from 17 to 26 (M = 20.5), 64% was female and 36% male.

Questionnaires were administered in the official language of the Netherlands (Dutch) in the Netherlands, the official language of Spain (Spanish) in Spain and the second language of Morocco (French) in Morocco. All Moroccan respondents studied at a university where French was the official language and had a great command of French.

3.2   Materials

We composed four cases in which an employee had to receive a message from a manager who was located five hundred metres away in a different building, however at the same premises as the employee. We chose this situation because the study of Webster and Trevino (1995) shows that distance plays an important part in the choice of media. Managers are more easily inclined to use information-rich media for conveying messages to an employee nearby than to an employee further away. In order to maximize the chance that employees from low- and medium-context cultures will react differently to the case than employees from higher-context cultures, we chose situations with a distance between manager and employee that could be bridged, but not too easily.

Half of the cases had a simple message and half had a complex message, half a positive message and half a negative message. In line with Daft and Lengel (1984) and Webster and Trevino (1995) we expected that information-rich media would be preferred more for complex messages than for simple messages and more for negative messages than for positive messages The cases are presented in (1) to (4).

(1)   Simple positive message

Your superior has to inform you that you have been promoted. Your superior is located five hundred metres away in a different building, however at the same premises.

(2)   Simple negative message

Your superior has to inform you that your contract will not be extended due to a reorganisation. Your superior is located five hundred metres away in a different building, however at the same premises.

(3)   Complex positive message

Your superior has to inform you that you can have a promotion, provided that you work one extra day per week and provided that the project you are currently working on will be finished within the next four months. Your superior is located five hundred metres away in a different building at the same premises.

(4)   Complex negative message

Your superior has to inform you that your project will not continue over the next six months, but that after those six months it can continue, provided that you can obtain a subsidy and that you do not need any extra secretarial help. You have already put a lot of hard work into the project. Your superior is located in a different building five hundred metres away.

3.3   Measuring Instruments

In order to measure the *appreciation* of a communication medium for a message, respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which they found the medium appropriate on a five points scale (1 = absolutely not appropriate, 5 = absolutely appropriate). The communication media they had to rate were: email, personal conversation, telephone, letter, videophone, fax and text message. The media were presented in this order. Reliability analyses showed that these media could be arranged according to two categories: Information-rich media (personal conversation, telephone and videophone, Cronbach's $\tilde{}$ ı) and information-poor media (email, letter, fax, text message, Cronbach's $\tilde{}$). We calculated the composite means of the items for the information-rich media and we did the same for the items of the information-poor media. In this article we will only deal with these composite means.

In order to ascertain which communication medium was preferred for a certain message, the same communication media as for the appreciation measurement were presented to the respondents and they had to encircle which communication medium they absolutely preferred. They were also asked to write down their motivation for their choice.

For each message respondents had to first rate the appreciation scales and then indicate which communication medium they preferred.

3.4   Design, Procedure and Statistical Analyses

Our experiment was a between-subject design. A quarter of the respondents, equally divided among the three countries, completed the questionnaire for case (1), another quarter for case (2) and so on.

The questionnaire was handed out in classrooms or at workspaces in corridors of universities. The respondents completed the questionnaires individually in the presence of one of the researchers. The data for Morocco were gathered by Jacqueline van Woerkom, those for Spain by Astrid van Zutven and those for the Netherlands by Lisette van Engelen, Renee Henckes and Charlotte Heeres.

Analyses of variance with the factor country and a post hoc Tukey test were performed in order to test the expectations about differences in appreciation of communication media (expectation 1). Chi-square tests were used to determine whether there were statistically significant differences between the countries regarding their preference for a communication medium. The criterion used for statistical significance was .01 for all tests.

4.   Results

It appeared that the pattern of significant differences between low-, medium- and high-context cultures in appreciation of and preference for a communication medium was very similar for all cases. It is striking that the type of message – simple, complex, positive, negative – had no impact on our respondents' answers, because this is not in line with the findings of Webster and Trevino (1995). However, we will not examine these results in this paper, because the focus of our study is on differences between countries in appreciation of and preference for communication media. In the remaining part of this paper we will therefore only deal with the data for all four cases combined.

Table 1 shows the appreciation of media high in richness and media low in richness for the Netherlands, Spain and Morocco for all cases combined and the significant differences between the countries according to one-way analyses of variance and post hoc Tukey tests.

Table 1

***Appreciation of Media High in Richness and Low in Richness for All Four Cases Together** (1= absolutely not appropriate, 5 = absolutely appropriate)*

Information richness of communication medium	The Netherlands (low context) N=94		Spain (medium context) N=144		Morocco (high context) N=116		Significance differences between countries according to one way analyses of variance and post hoc Tukey tests	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
High Personal conversation Telephone, Videophone	3.47	.66	3.76	.71	3.76	.83	Netherlands-Spain Netherlands-Morocco Spain-Morocco	.009** .01** NS
Low Email, letter, fax, text message	1.91	.61	2.33	.69	2.57	.98	Netherlands-Spain Netherlands-Morocco Spain-Morocco	.000*** .000*** NS

There are significant differences between the three countries for both the information-rich media (F (2,352) = 5.29 p= .005) and the information-poor media (F (2, 351)= 18.25, p= 000).

In order to receive a message from their manager, receivers from the high-context culture of Morocco find information-rich media more appropriate than receivers from the low-context culture of the Netherlands, but there is no significant difference in this respect between respondents from Morocco and respondents from Spain (expectation 1a). Receivers from the medium-context culture of

Spain find information-rich media more appropriate for the messages in the cases than receivers from the Netherlands (expectation1b).

Furthermore, Table 1 shows that receivers from Morocco and Spain regard media low in information more appropriate for messages in the cases than respondents from the Netherlands (Expectation 1c) and Moroccan and Spanish respondents do not differ in their appreciation of media low in information richness (expectation 1d).

Table 2 shows the preference of the Dutch, Spanish and Moroccan respondents for either a communication medium with great richness or a communication medium low in richness in order to receive a message from their manager.

Table 2

Preference for Media High and Low in Richness for All Four Cases Together

Information richness of communication medium	The Netherlands (low context) N=94		Spain (medium context) N=144		Morocco (high context) N=114		Significance differences between countries according to Chi-square test	
	N	%	N	%	N	%		
High Personal conversation Telephone, Videophone	90	95%	121	84%	95	83%%	Netherlands-Spain Netherlands-Morocco	.005** .005**
Low Email, letter, fax, sms	4	4%	23	16%	19	17%	Spain-Morocco	NS

Table 2 clearly indicates that in low-, medium- and high-context cultures, the media that are high in information richness are highly preferred to the media low in information richness. There are nevertheless differences between the cultures. Moroccan and Spanish receivers prefer information-rich media less and information-poor media more than receivers from the Netherlands (Netherlands-Morocco, χ^2=.8.07, p= .005; Netherlands-Spain, (χ^2=2.76, p= .005) (expectations 2a, 2b and 2c). There is no significant difference in preference for either information-rich media or information-poor media between the Spanish and the Moroccan respondents (expectation 2d).

5.   Discussions of Findings

Our study shows that there are indeed differences between the respondents of the cultures in the communication media they prefer in order to receive a message from their manager. This is an

important result for organizations that have managers and employees from different cultures, such as multinationals. Managers in these organizations should realize that the communication media they regard as appropriate for a certain message might not be considered to be appropriate by their employees from another culture, and that miscommunication could be avoided by choosing the right communication medium for a receiver of a message. Although we have found differences between cultures, the results of our study are quite different from what we expected on the basis of a combination of the Context Theory and the Information Richness Theory.

5.1   Appropriateness of Communication Media

Only the two expectations on the differences between high-, medium- and low-context cultures regarding the appropriateness of information-rich media are confirmed to a large extent (Table 1). In order to receive a message from their manager, receivers from the high-context culture of Morocco find information-rich media indeed more appropriate compared to receivers from the low context culture of the Netherlands (expectation 1a), and receivers from the medium-context culture of Spain find information-rich media more appropriate than receivers from the Netherlands (expectation 1b). On the other hand, part of expectation 1a is not confirmed: the Spanish respondents do not regard information-rich media as more appropriate compared to the Moroccan respondents. This part of the study seems to indicate that there is indeed a relationship between context and richness of communication media: the high-context culture regards the information-rich media as more appropriate for a message than the low-context culture. Surprisingly, the statistical significant differences in ratings for the appropriateness of communication media low in richness are precisely the opposite. Respondents from the high-context culture of Morocco and from the medium-context culture of Spain regard information-poor media more appropriate than respondents from the low-context culture of the Netherlands (contrary to 1c).

In short, the respondents from Morocco and Spain always regard all communication media they had to rate more appropriate than the Dutch do. This is in line with our expectations in the case of information-rich media (expectations 1a and 1b), but not in the case of information-poor media (expectations 1c and 1d). It is still unclear why the Moroccan and Spanish respondents appreciate all media higher than the Dutch. It could be the case that this is due to cultural differences in filling in scales, and that Moroccan and Spanish respondents have a stronger acquiescence also called Yeah saying strategy than the Dutch. When respondents apply this strategy they tend to agree with everything that is presented to them. It is not likely though, that the Moroccan and Spanish respondents have used this strategy since those countries do not fall in the categories where acquiescence occurs often (Herk, Poortinga, Verhallen, 2004; Johnson, Kulesa, Cho & Shavitt, 2005).

5.2   Preference for Communication Media

Although information-rich media are far more preferred than information-poor media in all the countries of our study, there are significant differences between the cultures in preference, and all these differences are contrary to what we expected (Table 2). The Moroccan and Spanish respondents

prefer low richness media more than the Dutch respondents (contrary to expectation 2c). In contrast with the cultural differences that we found in the appropriateness ratings of the information-rich media, which were largely in line with our expectations (1a and 1b), receivers from the Netherlands prefer information-rich media more than receivers from Morocco (contrary to 2a) and receivers from Spain (contrary to 2b). These are the only issues that show different results for the appropriateness and the preference measurements. This is probably due to the difference in eliciting answers. Respondents can give high grades in the appropriateness scale for as many communication media as they want, but when they have to indicate their preference for a communication medium, they are forced to make a choice.

5.3   Unexpected Results

The unexpected results of our study can be summarized as follows:

- The medium-context culture of Spain and the high-context culture of Morocco find communication media low in richness more appropriate compared to the low context culture of the Netherlands.

- The medium-context culture of Spain and the high-context culture of Morocco have a higher preference for communication media low in richness compared to the low-context culture of the Netherlands.

- The medium-context culture of Spain and the high-context culture of Morocco have a lower preference for communication media high in richness compared to the low-context culture of the Netherlands.

- There are not any differences between the high-context culture of Morocco and the medium-context culture of Spain in either appropriateness rating or preference for both communication media high in richness and communication media low in richness.

When one finds so many results that are contrary to what was expected, one is easily inclined to assume problems with the design of the study, the respondents, test items, measuring instruments, the idea or the initial expectations. All these aspects have been carefully reviewed. The unexpected results could have been due to the fact that we have overlooked an important interfering cultural value, uncertainty avoidance.

5.4   Interference With Uncertainty Avoidance

Uncertainty Avoidance is one of the five cultural values that Geert Hofstede (2001, p.145-208) uses in order to categorize the cultures of the world. He defines uncertainty avoidance as follows:

Uncertainty Avoidance Index (UAI) deals with a society's tolerance for uncertainty and ambiguity… It indicates to what extent a culture programs its members to feel either uncomfortable or comfortable in unstructured situations. Unstructured situations are novel, unknown, surprising, different from usual. Uncertainty avoiding cultures try to minimize the possibility of such situations by strict laws and rules, safety and security measures … The opposite type, uncertainty accepting cultures, are more tolerant of

opinions different from what they are used to; they try to have as few rules as possible … (Hofstede's home page at http://www.geert-hofstede.com/)

Cultures with a high uncertainty avoidance have a much greater need for clarity, preclusion of ambiguity and uncertainty, and legislation than cultures with a low uncertainty avoidance (Hofstede, 2001, P.146, 161, 174 & 180). One of the things that might help to meet the needs of persons with a high uncertainty avoidance is communication. It is likely, though, that not all communication media will equally put their heart at rest, and that communication media that communicate in such a way that the message can be read and reread will be appreciated more than a communication medium in which the message conveyed disappears in the air. From the perspective of the Communication Richness Theory, this means that the media that are low in richness, such as email, letter, fax and text message, will be appreciated more in cultures with a high uncertainty avoidance. The question arises as to whether our unexpected results might have been due to differences between the cultures of our study with regard to uncertainty avoidance. Figure 2 shows Hofstede's indexes for uncertainty avoidance for the Netherlands, Spain and Morocco.

The Netherlands	51 [a]
Spain	86 [a]
Morocco	68 [b]

[a]   Based on Hofstede (2001, 500)

[b]   Estimate (see http://www.urbanministry.org/wiki/geert-hofstede-cultural-dimensions)

Figure 2. **Uncertainty Avoidance (0 = Low, 100 = High).**

We can see that the uncertainty avoidance is higher in Spain and in Morocco than in the Netherlands. As a consequence, it is plausible that our unexpected results concur with the uncertainty avoidance of these countries, viz., that the respondents from the medium-context culture of Spain and from the high-context culture of Morocco regard communication media low in richness as more appropriate compared to respondents from the low-context culture of the Netherlands (contrary to expectation 1c), that the former prefer these media low in information more than the latter (contrary to expectation 2c), and that the former prefer the media rich in information less than the latter (contrary to expectations 2a and 2b). This idea is also supported by the motivations that the respondents from Morocco and Spain state that they prefer a communication medium low in richness.

It is important to have a written piece of evidence of the message

(Morrocan respondent 836)

It is important to be able to read and reread the message

(Morrocan respondent 828)

It is more formal and you have the possibility to preserve the message

(Spanish respondent 408)

It is a matter of fact that a written piece of evidence of a message from a manager is particularly important from the perspective of the receiver of the message. It is quite plausible that it is less important for managers to have evidence of their message and that uncertainty avoidance plays a less important role in their media choice than in that of their employees. We can, therefore, wonder whether we would have had similar results if we had performed our study from the perspective of managers.

We can cautiously argue that at least the interaction of two cultural values plays a role in the preference for communication media: context and uncertainty avoidance. Persons with a high context and a low uncertainty avoidance prefer communication media high in richness. Persons with a low context and a high uncertainty avoidance prefer communication media low in richness. In cultures with cultural values that are coupled with communication media that are the opposite in richness, such as high-context cultures with a high uncertainty avoidance and low-context cultures with a low uncertainty avoidance, the question is which value predominates. The unexpected result that no differences were found between the high-context culture of Morocco and the medium-context culture of Spain in either appropriateness rating or preference for both communication media high in richness and communication media low in richness (expectations 1d and 2d, and part of 1a and 2a) can be explained by such an interaction of values. Spain is a medium-context culture with a high uncertainty avoidance (89) and Morocco is a high context culture with a lower uncertainty avoidance (68).

6.   Directions for Further Research

Our explorative experimental study has shown that culture indeed plays a role in the appreciation of and the preference for communication media in cases where employees receive a message from their manager. At least three aspects interact: context, information richness of the medium and uncertainty avoidance. It goes without saying that this study is no more than a first step to unravel the factors that play a part in the choice of media. There are numerous aspects that have to be examined in more detail. Two of these aspects will be dealt with below: culture and the receiver's perspective.

With regard to *culture* four aspects call for further research. First of all, it could be interesting to study choice of media in cultures with a low context and a high uncertainty avoidance (e.g., Belgium and Germany) and in cultures with a high context and a low uncertainty avoidance (e.g., Hong Kong, Philippines, and Singapore) in order to see whether the former have a preference for communication media low in richness. Secondly, it would be important to examine whether cultures differ in the social and symbolic meanings that they ascribe to communication media. It is quite possible that they differ, and that this interferes with the impact of cultural values. Thirdly, it seems worth the effort to see whether there are no other cultural values that play a part in the choice of media. Webster and Trevino (1995) argue, for example, that the use of a certain medium by managers might influence employees more in a collectivistic culture than in an individualistic culture. A last

point with regard to culture that should be considered in future research is measuring cultural values such as uncertainty avoidance and context of the respondents. We have taken it for granted in this study that our respondents from the different cultures had the context and uncertainty avoidance that is found for these countries in the literature (Hofstede, 2001; Victor, 1992), but it is possible that they do not because there could be individual differences within a national culture.

We have studied the appreciation of and preference for communication media from the perspective of employees who receive a message from their manager: *the receiver's perspective*. However, the perspective of the sender is also important. It is quite plausible that managers prefer other media than their employees, even if both have the same cultural background. The Uuncertainty Avoidance value probably has a greater impact on the choice of media by employees than on the choice of media by managers. It is important to gain insights into the similarities and differences between managers and employees in their choice of media, since understanding these differences may help to remedy communication breakdowns that are the result of differences between managers and employees in their appreciation of communication media.

Acknowledgement

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From Research Idea to Workplace Project: Gaining Access to the Corporate World

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Abstract

This paper explores the challenges that researchers interested in workplace communication may experience when endeavouring to gain access to the corporate world. It compares differences in (1) the extent to which the researcher as 'salesperson' can involve the potential stakeholder in joint problematisation, and (2) the communicative resources available to the researcher or 'salesperson' to strategically frame the research/sale of a product so that benefits are both recognisable to, and valued by, the stakeholder. The paper first outlines the approach taken during the sales cycle by a salesperson when courting actual prospects. The product to be sold was a workplace productivity training program developed by a global organisation and delivered by a Sydney franchisee at which both the researcher (as trainer) and the salesperson worked. The paper then reports on responses from and uptake by a selection of companies contacted in Sydney, Australia, as potential research sites for my own doctoral research topic: the transition to management. The paper argues that researchers can benefit from an understanding of the communicative expertise developed by salespeople to influence the outcome of stakeholder decisions.

1.   Introduction

Researchers undertaking workplace-based communication research typically need to gain access to worksites as the precondition to finding willing research participants from a suitable sample of workplace practitioners employed in a particular worksite. Gaining access to potential research participants often requires the consent of research sponsors or other stakeholders representing the interests of the organisation. Workplace-based communication research incurs a potential cost to an organisation in terms of the opportunity cost of foregone core production time. The researcher therefore needs to convince stakeholders that her research brings benefits that counterbalance or exceed this opportunity cost.

Sarangi (2002) argues that researchers need to engage with workplace practitioners at the site of research in a joint enterprise characterised by "a sense mutual usefulness" (p.101).   Sarangi and Roberts (1999) further suggest that collaboration between researchers and practitioners contributes to both the identification and solving of the practitioners' problems, and the knowledge of the researcher's own academic community. The process of joint problematisation is a communicative one involving negotiation between the researcher and potential sponsors; the discursive acts of the researcher are designed to result in the stakeholders recognising and valuing the potential benefits of the research to their organisation. However, the communicative capabilities of the researcher may not

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be sufficient to lead in, in a natural way, to the desired phase we are calling joint problematisation. The researcher may well be an emerging expert in her own field, but this does not mean she will be an expert at introducing or facilitating the kind of mutual understanding, interpersonal trust and collaborative discourse needed for the joint problematisation of the practitioners' workplace functions.

In this paper, I document a reflexive approach to the issues described above. I first explore the strategy that I initially adopted when contacting potential research sites for my doctorate research. I then analyse selected responses that reject my overtures before outlining how my communicative approach could benefit from strategies designed to increase the likelihood that potential stakeholders will decide to meet with me. However, I then explain that due to my limited sales experience, I lack the communicative resources necessary to improve my sales performance.

Next I outline how I sought the assistance of a salesperson with extensive experience selling products and services to the corporate sector. I selected one sales professional with whom I have worked closely in an international training franchise. I report on an interview with this sales professional, during which we focus upon how he prepares himself before he contacts and then meets with prospective buyers and on the types of communication strategies that he employs that enable both the prospective buyers and the salesperson to jointly identify an organisation's problems and their potential solution. In the following section I compare the strategies employed by both researcher as 'salesperson' and sales professional. Based on these differences, I finally identify and recommend a number of changes to the communication strategies that researchers could adopt to more effectively negotiate with stakeholders access to their organisation.

2.   Background to the Paper

The researcher is currently exploring the period of transition that individuals experience following a promotion to their first management role. Prior to promotion, these individuals are producers of core business functions with no experience in managing others. The research is longitudinal in nature, new managers potentially being involved for ten months. As the researcher's own career has been predominantly in the private sector, she decided to target commercial organisations. She then decided to contact large organisations as these were more likely to be promoting a number of employees to their first management role at a time that would coincide with her data collection phase.

3.   Initial Contact and Responses from Prospective Sponsors

The researcher decided to target Human Resource (HR) professionals as the most likely type of employee to sponsor her research. As she didn't know any HR professionals, she contacted individuals working in another department that she either knew directly or through colleagues. The researcher phoned and/or emailed these individuals, asking them to forward on an email that introduced both herself and her research to the relevant HR professional. A total of 19 individuals were contacted and they all forwarded the researcher's email onto an HR employee. The researcher received responses from six HR employees: three responses were in the affirmative, their replies sent

within 24 hours and requesting a meeting, while the remaining three responses were in the negative, their replies sent with a lag of between 10 days and two months.

The types of qualifications that these HR employees hold, selected characteristics of their organisation, and their decision are displayed in Table 1. All organisations are publicly listed companies. Although the researcher achieved some level of success, the responses from Org D and Org E provided no opportunity for further negotiation. Each of these responses will be explored in greater detail below.

Table 1

Comparison of Respondent Companies

ORG	TYPE	EMP*	H.O.	QUALS	ACCESS	REASON
A	Biotech	< 2000	Aust	HR	✘	Resources for research already fully allocated
B	Telco	> 10,000	Aust	HR	✔	Corporate citizen
C	Telco	> 10,000	APac	Teacher	✔	Program development
D	IT	3500	USA	Psych/ Org Dev	✘	Limited resources due to restructuring
E	IT	4000	USA	HR?	✘	Research already done by Global team
F	Financial	> 10,000	Aust	Comms	✔	Program development

* Refers to No. of Employees in Australia

3.1   Org D

The researcher's contact at Org D is an IT professional with extensive managerial experience. The researcher advised him that she was interested in conducting her research at his organisation as her own experience of working with technical staff suggested that these types of employees might find moving into a management role challenging. This contact confirmed that he had both forwarded the researcher's email onto the HR department and that there may be a shared perception of technical staff:

I personally can't help you directly, but I may be able to assist in encouraging Org D's HR department.

I know a few of these people and am sure that some of your frustrations have been observed in Org D. However, the response that the researcher received from the Vice-President of Human Resources (VP) suggested otherwise (see Table 2 below).

Table 2

Email from Org D

1 2 3	Thanks for your email seeking candidates to be involved with your communication research, which has been forwarded to me by Employee X. Apologies for the dated reply.
4 5 6 7	Org D is undertaking a company wide transformation at present, which unfortunately means that the availability of our managers is somewhat limited. So whilst we may not be able to provide candidates for your research, you may be interested to learn more about ORG D's experience and learnings in this field.
8 9 10 11 12	Transition into management is certainly an area of focus for Org D, particularly when we have employees from primarily technical backgrounds being promoted into people management roles which require a different skill as well as mindset. Org D has implemented a number of programs to assist managers through this change including our Secrets to Managing course and Future Leaders journey.
13 14	Secrets to Managing is a series of workshops, application sessions and assignment aimed at first time leaders or managers…….
15 16 17	The Future Leaders (FL) program is one of Org D's key strategic initiatives and example of our commitment to ongoing professional development, culture change and leadership excellence….
18 19	Various tools are incorporated into the programs including the Employee Management System (EMS) and Leadership Competencies.
20 21	If you would like to learn more about these and Org D's other leadership programs, I would be happy to refer you to our Organisational Development & Learning team.

VP appears to be apologetic that employees are currently unavailable to participate in the research due to organisational change (lines 4-6). However, she seems to soften the impact of her refusal by offering an account of Org D's experience (lines 6-7). VP notes that Org D already recognises the problem that employees in technical roles experience when commencing their first management role (lines 8-10) but that the organisation has their training well in hand (lines 11-19). She further offers to provide additional details through her team (lines 20-21).

Although lines 20-21 could be interpreted as a 'consolation prize', VP did not need to make this offer. She could have used a stock phrase of encouragement as a positive politeness strategy in the closing section (Roger, 2001, p.120). Instead, VP appears to offer access to the organisation but only to the area responsible for operationalising existing programs. Furthermore, her unmitigated, factual account suggests that VP has complete confidence and implicit belief in the validity and effectiveness of the programs and tools: they achieve the outcomes that they are designed to achieve. Finally, the tone of the email suggests that it is VP and her team who are the experts, and from this position can provide benevolent advice to a student.

3.2   Org E Response

Org E is another global IT company based in the USA. The researcher received the response below from the Sydney-based Learning and Development (L&D) Manager:

Table 3

Email from Org E

1 2 3 4	We have a global team responsible for development of leadership and management curriculum (such as the Managing For Impact program) and they undertake similar research when designing development activities for new and experienced managers.
5 6 7 8	The only thing I can do is forward the email to that team and see if it is something that they are interested in following up. Without understanding the scope of Janet's research (global perspective? Virtual management? Etc) it would be very difficult to see what value this might bring to the team's current development process.
9 10	I'll forward on the email with [your] email address and the team can decide if there is value in any follow up.

This response suggests that the role of the locally based Learning and Development Manager (LD) is limited to that of delivering programs developed elsewhere (lines 1-2). Although LD is unclear as to the scope of the researcher's own research (lines 6-7) and how it differs to that already done in Org E (lines 3-4, 7-8), he doesn't invite any elaboration of the exact nature of the research. Instead, LD offers to forward the researcher's email to the global team (line 5) freeing himself of any responsibility for further action and preventing any opportunity for further negotiation by nominating the global team as the final decision-makers (lines 9-10).

4.   Reflections

A number of observations can be made regarding the strategy that the researcher adopted when she initially contacted potential research sites. Prospective sponsors who decided to meet with her were locally based employees responsible for developing learning and development programs in their organisations. Timing also appeared important, those sites receptive to the researcher's email already identifying the need to develop training programs for new managers. The educational background of prospective sponsors could also be relevant, those that were primarily interested in this research because of its potential benefits to them holding qualifications from non-traditional HR disciplines. These disciplines included communications (public relations) or early childhood education. Size may also matter, the small organisation unable to commit resources to research perceived as peripheral to its core business, biotechnology research. Finally, the researcher decided that relying on email as her primary mode of contact allowed potential sponsors to reject her request before she had even had the chance to meet with them. The researcher felt that she lacked the necessary communicative resources to become her own research salesperson and as a result, sought assistance from someone who could help: a work colleague who is a sales professional (SP).

5.   Exploring the Discursive Practices of a Sales Professional

Janet: I just sent an email of thanks to my sponsor

SP: That was a very salesy thing to do

Janet: But I meant it!

SP: People have a funny idea about sales people

As the researcher reflected on her interaction with SP above, she realised that she held an implicit assumption about sales people that they don't care about their clients (but that she did). The researcher then considered all the sales people with whom she had worked and found that they shared a number of characteristics. All of these sales people were successful professionals from other disciplines, including accountancy, nursing, geology, and information technology, before moving into a sales role. They considered that the product or service that they sold was of a high quality and could provide potential benefits to the client. These sales people also aimed at developing a long-term relationship with client organisations, and often sought permission from a buyer to use that person as a reference with prospective clients. These sales people also sold to a wide range of commercial and government organisations, the buyers comprising knowledge workers (i.e., other professionals). Finally, they all displayed high levels of professional communicative expertise, and it was this expertise that the researcher now sought to explore in order to improve her own communicative performance during interactions with potential sponsors.

6.   Introducing the Sales Professional and the Interview

The sales professional (SP) that the researcher interviewed for this paper once worked in the Information Technology sector. He developed large back office computer systems that ran on mainframe operating systems prior to the introduction of personal computers. Following 15 years designing and programming these systems, and a further three years managing a staff of 20 in the role of professional services manager, SP successfully applied for a sales position in the same company. After working in this sales role for two years, SP was retrenched during the recession in the early 1990's. In an economic climate of high interest rates, he commenced work as a commission-only salesman with a local branch of an international training franchise. It was a case of succeed or perish, the lack of retainer necessitating SP to create an income from scratch each month in order to support his young family and high mortgage repayments. SP gradually built up his client base and was awarded the company's silver medal for the highest sales worldwide for two consecutive years.

The researcher worked as a trainer and consultant at the same franchisee, frequently working with employees from client organisations who bought the training product from SP. More recently our paths have crossed again as colleagues, SP becoming a full time salesman at a business intelligence company where the researcher once worked full time and for whom she continues to train clients on a contract basis. When working with both companies, the researcher has listened to SP making countless telephone calls to prospective clients (prospects), attended sales meetings together, and listened to SP making follow up phone calls or taking a purchase order (closing a sale).

As SP had provided the researcher with some contact details for potential sponsors for her research, she decided to ask him if he would also agree to participate in an interview. The researcher discussed the strategy that she had used and how she wanted to learn how to improve selling her research to organisations. More specifically, she wanted to understand how he prepares himself when moving to a new sales role, and the communication strategies that he uses when first approaching a

prospective client. Although the researcher had become familiar with the activities that SP undertook in his role and many of the categories that he used, she decided to approach the interview as though she was a stranger to his practices and prepared a list of questions to guide the interview (see Appendix A).

The interview lasted for ninety minutes. Although SP discussed all aspects of a sale, only those activities and communication strategies that correspond to gaining access to a research site are discussed below. These activities and strategies include the types of employees that SP would contact, how he prepares what he might say to them, how he prepares himself for a sales meeting, and the stance that he adopts during the meeting.

6.1   Who Do You Phone?

SP advises to go to a General Manager of a business or operational unit. Although this is a practice that SP has done since commencing selling, his recent MBA studies in logistics theory confirmed this preference. Quoting from Porter (1985), SP used Value Chain analysis to explain that operational units are the organisation's core units as they produce the saleable products or billable services. In contrast, the IT or HR functions are termed the enablers, performing functions that support the core business units. Although he has sold a training product, training usually being a function of HR, he advises against going directly to the HR department:

> I always prefer to go to the Business. They're the people who are hurting, and then Business can talk to HR and say, look, we're interested in this…A business unit, your operational unit is there in the middle of real life, and your HR department is generally abstracted from real life. They have their models, they have their processes, their systems. Maybe it's very scientific, but it systematizes, it locks them away.

SP also advises to use the phone rather than email when contacting the person for the first time. He advises that although he introduces himself during the phone call, the objective of the phone call is to make an appointment to meet the person(s), not to sell.

6.2   What Will You Say?

SP prepares a sales brochure or flier, the writing activity helping him to clarify his own understanding of what it is that he is selling. From this brochure, SP then develops his script. This script contains the words that SP plans to say when speaking with a prospective client (prospect). He also practices saying the words out loud. When he makes his phone call, SP thus utters those words that resonate harmoniously within whilst intending that they also resonate within his prospects:

> You want to come up with a clear understanding in your own mind of what it is that you do,…how you're going to add value to an organisation...It's really a short description saying 'this is what we're interested in, this is how we're interested in helping you, this is our focus'…So you get down to a few core concepts that then people should be interested in.

6.3   Preparations for the Sales Meeting

SP goes through a number of stages as he prepares himself to meet with prospects. After preparing the draft brochure and script (Stage 1), SP organises a number of meetings with individuals

that he knows in a variety of companies (Stage 2). These meetings are his test cases, and provide a site at which SP discusses his ideas and plans with trusted critics. His goal is to test the validity of his assumptions regarding the market for his product, and to gain feedback on his presentation. Based on the data that emerges from these test cases, SP then redrafts his sales brochure and script. He further reviews how he frames his product to ensure that he incorporates the advice that he has received about the market:

> Rather than coming from a business process first angle at the moment, I'm now coming from a productivity angle…because…I tend to see them more interested in the productivity aspect, as increasing productivity rather than the business process side.

As SP further refines his understanding of the market, and the words that he selects to best frame what he is selling, he then contacts prospects (Stage 3). After these sales meetings, SP again reflects upon his performance and adjusts his script in preparation for subsequent meetings. Using this continuous cycle of meet, reflect and refine, SP gradually develops his communicative expertise so that his performance displays "a 'feel for the game'…[that] enables an infinite number of 'moves' to be made, adapted to the infinite number of possible situations" (Bourdieu, 1990, p.9) (Stage 4). The four stages in the acquisition of communicative expertise and accompanying cycles of activities are represented in Figure 1 below.
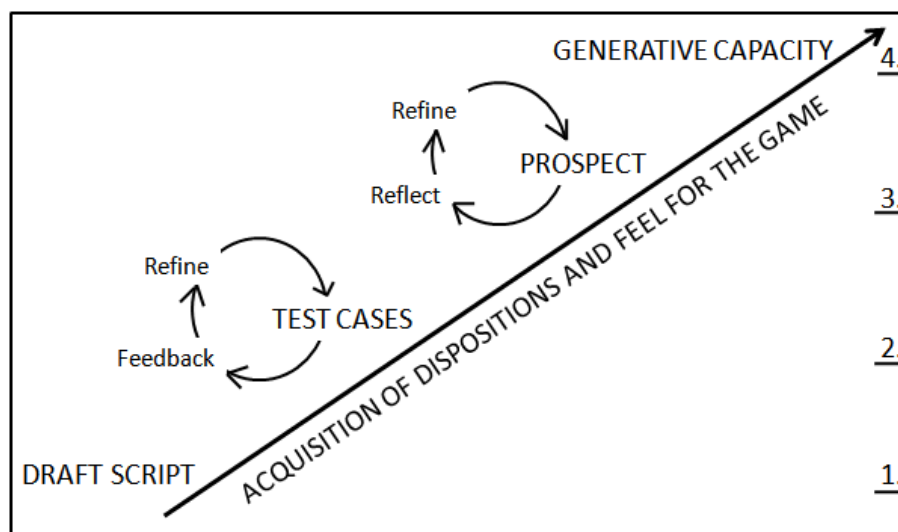

Figure 1. **Sales meetings: From novice to expert.**

6.4   The Sales Meeting – The Site of Performance

SP uses a questioning process that provides an overall structure for his sales meetings. This process is called SPIN (Rackman,1988). The acronym represents questions that

S – allow the salesperson to understand the client's current Situation

P – identify the Problem(s), both known and unknown

I – explore the Implications or Impact of these problems

N – demonstrate the Need-payoff or actual benefits to the customer.

SP describes a number of communication strategies that he employs as he asks his questions. The first strategy relates to adopting the language used by the prospective buyer:

> When you're actually having dialogue with someone in the sales process, you want to "mirror" their language; you want to use their language in order to be sure that you understand what they mean by their language… If someone uses a terminology and you think you understand it, ah, do you mean **this**, is this what it means to you…The actual language used with one person may be totally different to anything you've used with anyone else before.

The second strategy is to notice then adopt the same type of emotion displayed by the prospect. For example, if the prospect's behaviour suggests a levity, then joke; if a certain level of seriousness is displayed, then be serious:

> The second thing is their emotion. If they're serious, I want to feel serious. I want to join that, that person in their seriousness, or in their brevity, um, ah, you know, sales is always, you're always coming down to a need, so… it's important to actually stay at the level of the person that you're talking with until you actually get down to what the problem is and things become a little more focused, and then you can focus.

Ultimately, however, SP believes that a successful sales outcome depends upon the salesperson's ability to develop a relationship with the person:

> People tend to buy from a person through a relationship as opposed to buying a product for the sake of buying a product.

Finally, although he didn't describe it as listening, SP noted that he spends a lot of time saying nothing. In those times of silence, he is busy assessing what the prospect is saying against his framework, his potential solution. As he listens, SP is preparing to demonstrate how his solution can resolve the problems that the client has just identified using the client's own words:

> The key thing then is to come back to what is, from a selling perspective, it's always looking at what's in it for the person that you're talking to.

7. Applying the Communicative Expertise of a Sales Professional

Comparing the researcher's own experience as a novice researcher as 'salesperson' to the practices and communicative expertise of a sales professional, there are a number of communication strategies that the researcher could adopt when seeking future research sites. These strategies are summarised in Table 4 below.

Table 4

Differences Between Researcher-As-Salesperson and Sales Professional

RESEARCHER-AS-SALESPERSON	SALES PROFESSIONAL
Focus on research gaps	Focus on prospect's problems
Tendency to tell	Expert at asking questions
Detailed oriented	Supplies details when asked
Lexically dense	Reformulates using prospect's language
Difficulty unpacking complex concepts	Simple everyday examples
Focus on research findings	Focus on solutions
Potential relevance may be abstract	Frames solution using their problems
Research and identify intertwined	Categorises research as product

First, the researcher would need to resist the temptation to discuss the research gaps and tell the prospective sponsor details about her research. This requires recognising that there are certain academic practices such as literature reviews and seeking gaps in knowledge that may appear abstract to workplace practitioners caught up in operational problems. The researcher would therefore aim to ask prospective sponsors questions that allow them to identify their problems and to only supply them with details when requested.

Second, the researcher would need to listen carefully to prospective sponsors in order to understand how they categorise their world, their problems and their perceived needs. Rather than using the language of her academic discourse, the researcher needs to be able to translate her terms into their language so that they are speaking the same language: their language. She would also need to recall some stories or anecdotes from her own life to illustrate the meaning of a construct.

Third, rather than focusing on how potential research findings could be of use to their organisation, the researcher would need to explore how her research could assist them develop solutions to resolve their problems.

Finally, the researcher considers that her research is an integral part of her identity: it is not simply an activity that she 'does', but rather part of who she 'is'. In contrast, SP views research as a product with special features such as ethical requirements and the use of company resources instead of an exchange of monies. Viewing research as an additional genre in the suite of services that the researcher has provided to client organisations during her career would indeed enable the researcher to more effectively frame her research to potential sponsors.

8.   Conclusion

The comparison of the researcher's own experience as a novice researcher as 'salesperson' to the expertise of a sales professional illustrates the skill by which the sales professional enables joint problematisation to occur during those activities analysed in this paper: the initial phone call and sales meeting.

Novice researchers as 'salespeople' can improve their chances of successfully negotiating access to organisations if they change their stance from one that outlines their research to one of

assisting workplace practitioners to identify and explore their problems. This stance further facilitates the researcher to reformulate the potential benefits for the sponsoring organising in the language of that organisation. Learning the language of the business world from newspapers and websites prior to initial contact can also help researchers become familiar with the language used by potential sponsors. Researchers can develop a translation table that compares business terms to corresponding academic terms. The role of employees first contacted can also impact upon the reception to the research idea. Researchers should consider meeting first with a potential stakeholder from a core business unit (the decision-maker) rather than limiting those contacted to an HR employee (the enabler).

The scope of this paper has been to explore then compare the capacity of a novice researcher as 'salesperson' and a sales professional to facilitate joint problematisation with potential sponsors or prospects. The ability to achieve this may result in the researcher as 'salesperson' gaining access to an organisation. However, there are more steps in the sales process and the analysis of the interview with SP remains incomplete. In addition to the activities supporting the preparations for the initial phone call and sales meeting, in our interview SP also outlines the full activity sequence that forms the sales discourse schema (Machin & van Leeuwen, 2007, p.63). He further provides rich examples of dialogue during impromptu role plays of meetings with imaginary prospects. The entire interview could be analysed to provide a more complete overview of the Discourse of Sales. In an era where academic staff are under increasing pressure to operationalise the Discourse of Business (Fairclough, 2001), learning how to gain access to the corporate world does not stop at the first meeting but also requires an appreciation of all the steps required to close a sale.

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Appendix A: Interview Questions

1.   How long have you been working in sales?

2.   Have you always worked in sales?

3.   Why did you decide to move into sales?

4.   What sort of products or services have you sold?

5.   I've heard various terms being used by salespeople, such as sales pipeline, sales cycle, on-selling, handling objections. Could you outline what the various terms are and what they mean to you?

6.   I'd like to explore the work you did with the training franchise. Can you describe the types of clients that bought your product?

7.   Can you describe the types of individuals that undertook the training?

8.   I'd like to now explore how you went about selling the training. First of all, can you outline how you went about finding prospective clients?

9.   How do you go from having a name to contact to a sale?

10.   Do you find that you approach prospective clients differently now compared with when you sold the training product?

11.   You are familiar with the topic that I have chosen for my research. How would you go about selling this type of research to prospective clients?

12.   What do you think is the most difficult thing for someone in research to learn when contacting a potential research site and then selling the research idea?

13.   Are there any questions that I've forgotten to ask?

Author Note

All the names relating to organisations, training programs and individuals in this paper, excluding myself, have been de-identified. Although my doctorate research has ethics clearance, the interview that I conducted specifically for this paper was not included in my ethics application. The appointment with the sales professional was made one week in advance. He was advised that the interview would be audio-recorded and transcribed, and included in this paper. Finally, he suggested that we could sell his intellectual property instead of giving it away in this paper.

Quality Management Through Professionalization and
Didactics in Transdisciplinary and Transcultural Research Alliances

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Abstract

Current trends in research and development policies such as cuts in basic resources, tougher competition, management by results, higher acquisition and accountability obligations are all global phenomena affecting the management of research alliances. There are various other issues, too, that can be added, which also call for professionalization in foreign language and foreign language didactics such as interdisciplinary communicative difficulties, language difficulties, discrepancies in method selection and excellence criteria, alternating ignorance and mutual prejudices. All these necessitate quality management and professionalization in research alliances. Quality management pervades all realms and criteria in today's research. To mention some focal areas, the following can be listed: input quality (conception, planning, offer), throughput quality (infrastructure), professionalization, didactics and output quality (conclusion, success and personal development). Professionalization must develop from the mere attribute model to the model of reflexive professionalism (cf. Nowotny, Scott, & Gibbons, 2003, p. 179). It is clear that much more is now required than the classical canon of professional criteria has to offer: reflection, mastery of own thinking and working, collaboration with laity, social responsibility and tolerance to a high degree of uncertainty in the research process. Relevant didactics can be created by supervision, coaching, organizational learning, monitoring, moderation and cooperation management (cf. Rabelt, Büttner, & Simon, 2007), modelling and scenario techniques, systems theory (cf. Defila, Di Giulio, & Scheuermann, 2008) and by following the principles for designing transdisciplinary research (cf. Pohl & Hirsch Hadorn, 2007).

Keywords: transdisciplinary, transculturality, transcultural competence, management, professionalism

1.   Introduction and Presentation of the Research Problem

Since the 1970s both interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary programmes as well as alliance research have gained more momentum in order to respond to complex questions posed by research and to produce innovation in science (cf. Scheffler, 2007, p. 100). However, in recent years these research paradigms have met a range of problems. These can briefly be categorised into three main areas: current trends in research and performance policy (cf. Defila, Di Giulio, & Scheuermann, 2006, p. 25), various transdisciplinary problems such as difficulties with process formation (cf. ibid., 17) and interdisciplinary communicative difficulties (cf. ibid., 18). All of these necessitate transdisciplinary and transcultural research alliances and quality management. An essential criterion of success in transdisciplinary and transcultural research alliances lies in the intensive co-operation and communication of several very dissimilar partners to be able to master processes of coordination

and synthesis (cf. Scheffler, 2007, p. 100). Professional management is needed since in many research alliances processes of transdisciplinary communication and co-operation are not managed in a goal-oriented manner nor are they professionally shaped. With regard to research alliances successful teams tend to form more specific questions and goals for individual projects than unsuccessful teams (cf. Defila, DiGiulio, & Scheuermann, 2006, p. 78). Regrettably the dominance of factional interests has on occasion led to the failure of teamwork having a negative effect also on the project alliance. In order to avoid jeopardizing the success of the research alliances, the ability for subsequent growth should be incorporated into important working and decision-making processes (cf. ibid., 127). Central requirements for problem formulation include that the scientific interests of the partners should be respected in order to achieve an optimal level of transparency of co-operative work processes, which enable comprehensive control and monitoring over the process (cf. Stärk, 2006, p. 20). It is by now already apparent that the management of a research alliance is an extremely demanding scientific undertaking (cf. Defila, Di Giulio, & Scheuermann, 2008, p. 26) which without a doubt requires professionalization (cf. N.N., 2006, 8). Managing a research alliance exceeds technocratic management or mere administrative handling by a business manager or even by a well-meaning professor despite her expertise in the field and the best of intentions. Moreover, there is a need for further professionalization to attain a high level of professionalism in managing research processes: the one in charge should be active in transdisciplinary and transcultural matters, ideally the person should have extensive experience in process and quality management, a high level of social intelligence including a special aptitude or personal quality for teamwork. Furthermore, the person should be able to interact with highly qualified, humorously inclined and sometimes highly complex partners (cf. Huber, 2008, p. 27). If we are concerned here with the training and organization of competences and abilities (cf. Thompson Klein, 2008, p. 399) under the auspices of transdisciplinarity, then this is in principle a problem of didactics.

2.   The Triad Quality Management – Professionalism – (Foreign Language) Didactics

2.1   Management and Quality Management and Transdisciplinarity

2.1.1   Management

Management is understood as functional mastery of tasks (from goal development to control), which is connected to a goal-oriented social system (cf. Defila, Di Giulio, Scheuermann, 2008, p. 8; Staehle, 1999, p. 71). Management (cf. Hollaender, Loibl, & Wilts, 2008, p. 385) equals the leadership of a goal–oriented social system as it exists in the form of a transdisciplinary and transcultural research alliance and as a part of science with its specifics (cf. Defila, Di Giulio, Scheuermann, 2008, p.8). Consequently, a research alliance unites research projects and several individual projects, which are geared towards common objectives and results (cf. ibid., 10). The term transdisciplinarity has already been mentioned several times therefore a small digression is in order.

2.1.2   Digression: Transdisciplinarity

The term transdisciplinarity was first used by Jantsch (1972, p. 97) at a conference of the Centre for Educational Research and Innovation (CERI) in his presentation "Towards Interdisciplinarity and Transdisciplinarity in Education and Innovation" in Nice in 1970 (cf. Grunwald & Schmidt, 2005, p.5). Transdisciplinarity is no panacea for accomplishing scientific work: what holds true is that the analysis and research of many problems in basic research are amenable to traditional, monodisciplinary methods. When traditional methods no longer suffice, transdisciplinarity is activated, which conceives science as a project, or a programme in teaching, learning and researching (cf. Rusch, 2004, p. 69). As an overarching scientific concept, transdisciplinarity can liberate itself from disciplinary borders, i.e., it can operate in a manner, which transcends fields, defines problems neglecting the traditional realms of disciplines, and finally, solve problems in a supradisciplinary manner (cf. Mittelstrass, 2005, p. 18). In the empirical-practical realm of transdisciplinary research, some things have occurred which concern its established status, perspectives (cf. Brand, Schaller, & Völker, 2004) and development (cf. Hirsch Hadorn et al., 2008, p. 19). In the field of methodology, already a range of methods have emerged (cf. Pohl & Hirsch Hadorn, 2008; Defila, Di Giulio, & Scheuermann, 2006, p. 144), of which the following will be focused on in this article: quality criteria (cf. Bergmann et al., 2005), creative principles (cf. Pohl & Hirsch Hadorn, 2007) and recommendations (Wiesmann et al., 2008, p. 169) as they are of particular interest for transdisciplinary research. Management, the way it was defined above does not yield to encompass the issues mentioned last. Therefore we need to move on to discuss quality management next.

2.1.3   Quality Management

Quality management, in analogy with Dubs (2006, p. 1209) comprises systematically applied action by means of which quality can be grasped, improved and ensured. The navigated objective is to grasp quality, develop quality and ensure quality (cf. Handt, 2003, p. 390). Quality management (cf. Zollondz, 2006, 207) pervades all fields and criteria such as input quality (conception, planning, offer) throughput quality (infrastructure, professionalization, didactics) and output quality (completion, success, personal development) (cf. Arnold, 1994, p. 7). In principle quality is also determined by the degree to which the desired goal is achieved (cf. Dubs, 2006, p. 1212). The claim for quality can be grasped through the terms consensus, integration and diffusion (cf. Defila, DiGiulio, & Scheuermann, 2008, p. 12).

What is meant by consensus is that all those involved in a research alliance must reach agreement regarding objectives, questions and procedures as far as their pursuit is concerned. This means that the concerned parties must arrive at a common view of the problem and language and be able to evolve a common theoretical basis. Consensus has to do with establishing what it is that integrates disparate perspectives and what are the features that are valid to all (cf. Defila, DiGiulio, & Scheuermann, 2008, p. 12).

2.1.4   Integration and Synthesis

Integration and synthesis means that the results emerging from diverse disciplines and professional fields can be forged into a whole. The whole is thus an analogy to a core pronouncement of system theory more than a pure addition to the results. Here the integration and synthesis should not commence only towards the end of the work, but rather must from the very outset go along with the processing of the results (cf. Defila, Di Giulio, & Scheuermann, 2008, p. 12). In quality management and quality assurance – as far as good transdisciplinary research is concerned – scientifically guided disputation is absolutely essential (cf. Bergmann & Schramm, 2008, p. 9). Through this debate an improvement of the combined performance of the research intention (commission, instruments and methods, integration of knowledge, project management, dissemination of results achieved in science and in social praxis) should be achieved. Good examples of this process are plentiful in literature (cf. Hirsch Hadorn et al., 2008). However, no explicit connection is made with the know-how provided there and the ring around excellence criteria and the connection with the know-why question is only partially connected (cf. Bergmann & Schramm, 2008, p. 9).

2.1.5   Diffusion

Diffusion means that the knowledge achieved must be understood by those for whom it is intended and rendered useful. And here the stakeholders are frequently not of the discipline, i.e., scientists, but are frequently laypersons. From this it follows that the results achieved need to be formulated, presented and publicized situationally and with an orientation to target groups as their (pre)understanding, reception and use requires. From the endeavour connected to transdiciplinary work there must emerge concrete demands such as shared goals, questions, language, and common research object, agreement regarding methods, contributions worthy of mention, a synthesis (common result or common answers to common questions) and something prepared for the public (cf. Defila, Di Giulio, & Scheuermann, 2008, p. 13). The declared objective of quality management should always be the improvement of transdisciplinary research, which concerns one or more of the following: the effectiveness or then the efficiency of the individual research alliance, a quality comparison between such alliances, the achievement of recognition for steering and development of knowledge systems and the grasping of the reality of scientific innovation (cf. Maasen, 2008, p. 26). In practice it is possible to conduct quality management (QM) in the form of an external accreditation and certification, a meta-evaluation (QM system monitoring) and an internal self initiated quality improvement (with self-evaluation) (cf. Dubs, 2006, p. 1230). Ultimately it needs to be noted that quality without professionalism is inconceivable (cf. Arnold, 1997, p. 60).

2.2   Professionalism and Professionalization

In the long run professionalism has no credibility without quality assurance (cf. Arnold, 1997, p. 60). A perfect harmony between professionalism and management is arrived at in research alliances when an alliance meets the requirements for a transdisciplinary or then transcultural research alliance (cf. Defila, Di Giulio, & Scheuermann, 2008, pp. 21, 23). Professionalization should no longer

orientate itself to the classic attribute model but through Modus 2 of transdisciplinary knowledge production (cf. Nowotny, Scott, & Gibbons, 2003, p. 179) to the model of reflexive professionalism (cf. Dewe & Otto, 2005, p. 179). Much more is currently demanded regarding the classic canon of professionalism criteria (competence that is theoretical and practical), professional experience (including project and quality management), empathy, methodological competence, intercultural and intracultural competence (cf. Domenig, 2007, p. 165; Rebmann, Tenfelde, & Uhe, 2005, p. 112). To reflect and transcend one's own discipline and subject-specific ways of thinking and working (moderation), genuine disputation with alien ways of doing things, working with others to synthesize one's own knowledge with alien knowledge into a new entity (cf. Scheffler, 2007, p. 100), working together with laypersons, social responsibility and learning to tolerate a high degree of uncertainty in the research process (cf. Funtowitz & Ravetz, 2008, p. 361; Blättel-Mink, et al., 2003, p. 14). There are three potential perspectives for concrete measures with regard to the professionalization of transdisciplinary research alliances: 1. with a view to the establishment and demands of the level required (supplementing of criteria for bequests, proposal forms and certification procedures, training people to provide certification, planning and introduction of accountability and sanctions), 2. with a view to education and continuing education of those responsible for management (targeted offering of individual courses for the introduction of research alliance management, central handling and information dissemination on continuing education courses by various providers, development of a curriculum for education and continuing education of those responsible for management and providing spaces for reflecting and exchange of knowledge on research alliance management) and 3. with a view to external support of those responsible for management (provisions of advice for the search for external experts, drawing up procedures for involving external support in the course of a transdisciplinary and transcultural research alliance, building up a useful databank of those offering external support and certification of external experts (cf. Defila, Di Giulio, & Scheuermann, 2008, p. 24).

2.3   Didactics and Foreign Language Didactics

A relevant, yet still not existent but long-awaited didactics (cf. Göhlich et al., 2006; Flechsig, 2000, p. 7) can be created synoptically from the theory and practice found in supervision, coaching, organizational counselling, monitoring, moderation, co-operative management, modelling and scenario technique, system-theoretical approaches (cf. Rabelt, Büttner, & Simon, 2007; Defila, Di Giulio, & Scheuermann, 2008) and case studies. When management describes the conduct of goal oriented social systems (cf. Defila, Di Giulio, & Scheuermann, 2008, p. 8), the aspect of social integration of core interests is reflected precisely in the task packages of management of transdisciplinary research alliances: in shared goals and questions, in the networking of research work, in the construction of syntheses without which the work of a research alliance has no added value (cf. Daschkeit, 2008, p. 88), in the development of shared products, in the selection of individuals and in team development (team competence, transcultural competence), in the involvement of external

parties and in the internal and external communication and organization of the work. As already indicated transculturality comes into play particularly with Task Package 5 (selection of individuals and team development), and further in Package 6 (involvement of external parties) and 7 (internal and external communication) (cf. Defila, Di Giulio, & Scheuermann, 2008, p. 174).

2.3.1   Transculturality

The concept of transculturality by Welsch (1995, p. 44) creates a different image of the relation between cultures; not one of isolation and conflict, but of involvement, mixing and communality. It does not call for separation, but for understanding and interaction. The term was first used by the Cuban Fernando Ortiz (1940, 1970). In the 1990s it experienced a renaissance in various scholarly disciplines (cf. Reichardt, 2006, p. 2). Welsch's (2000, p. 346) concept can be traced back to the cultural term of Ludwig Wittgenstein, which in principle is pragmatic. Simply put, transculturality is about getting along with one another, or then developing a common praxis in life and sharing it with others (cf. ibid.). In the transculturalism theorem differences arise not as in a mosaic of clearly separated adjacent cultures but between different net versions. The mechanics of differentiation has become more complex, and now genuinely cultural. It no longer adheres to any geographical or nationally articulated terms, but rather to genuine processes of cultural exchange. Through these transcultural nets a new quality will be created: not merely of differences but also at the same time of similarities (cf. ibid., p. 347). Because of its structure the new type of understanding of culture favours coexistence as opposed to conflict (cf. ibid., p. 348). Welsch (2000, p. 348) even writes that the transculturally disparate forms are free from the old problems of separatist difference. Welsch (2000, p. 350) perceives two advantages of his transculturalism concepts over the competition concept, namely

1.   A descriptive one, which is able to render justice not only to the local but also to the global, universal and likewise particular spectra of current development and

2.   A normative and cautious one, which recommends that the transcultural perspective be tried out. For then one might discover that in the midst of what is allegedly a process of unification, a differentiation is also taking place and amidst the differences, similarities are also present which lay the foundations for connection and transitional processes.

This normative version by Welsch seeks to eliminate the unclarity, which produces the vague content of the intercultural dialogue. Thus the prefix 'trans' with its dynamic connotations stands for an orientation on the other side of the dichotomy implying the static friend-foe image of interculturality, which distinguishes between what is ours and what is theirs. This is the thought pattern, which unmasks transculturality as problematic and attempts (see above) to transcend it. If the elaboration is significant to the meaning of culture for the co-existence of modern societies, this point, if perceived critically, presents an opposition to Welsch, for his model is a hybrid theory. His claim for obvious

clarity must therefore collide by definition with the architecture of his thought structure (cf. Reinhardt, 2006, p. 4).

Welsch (2000, p. 460) formulates that the amazingly vehement denial of plurality is a specifically western phenomenon nostalgically binding itself faster and more absolutely to our orientation towards cultural issues.

Welsch (1995, p. 44) was very soon aware of the problematic nature of his concept when he says that it contains assumptions regarding the customs that have been acquired and the present reality and compared with other concepts sketched in the most amenable way. In his theoretical and empirical complexity, however, the concept of transculturality has so far not been completely grasped (cf. Hauenschild, 2005, p. 1). To transfer this into the realm of pedagogy requires us to strengthen and intensify basic empirical research. Only on the basis of empirically confirmed findings can a comprehensive construction of theory and consequently a necessary adaptation or modification of foreign language didactics and knowledge of institutions be addressed.

2.3.2   Transcultural Learning and Transcultural Competence

The analytical and graphical appearance of these terms has been described and presented by Kaikkonen (2002, p. 70). Therefore what remains to be delved into is the concept of other. Transcultural action as the goal for transcultural learning embraces

1.   reflection of one's own personal (unconscious) order of knowledge and thinking

2.   the opening up of the formerly subjective

3.   the attempt at a transformation in the sense of an incorporation where one's own meaning patterns may not serve as an exclusive-normative basis and

4.   filtering out similarities, commonalities, contradictions and differences in order to develop points of approach for a shared strategy of action. (cf. Uzarewicz & Uzarewicz, 2001, 171)

What transcultural learning strives for is to achieve a consciousness of the plurality existing between individuals and cultures in relation to one another, to promote cultural self-reflection and reciprocal understanding and to pursue a cultural creativity in order to develop new, common orientations and ways (cf. Friedenskreis Halle e.V o.J, 2008, p. 19). However, there are at least eleven stumbling blocks in our way before the transcultural learning approach can be properly introduced and implemented:

1.   The approach has its limits regarding cognitive and intellectual communicability.

2.   It is a matter of resolving the own-alien difference.

3.   There is no connection to the interdisciplinary scientific discourse.

4.   Where can this approach be located in pedagogy: a) as a common leitmotiv of postmodern education (social learning), b) as a corollary to intercultural learning or c) as an independent approach?

5.   There is a normative forming approach in the concept of transculturalism

6.   All cultures, if possible, should participate.

7.   What are the prospects regarding the motivations of those involved in transcultural learning processes?

8.   How will things work out with the association with the dominant thinking of the moment, namely the mainstream culture?

9.   Within societies there has always been/will always be a need for homogenous groups for purposes of identification and orientation.

10.   What are the prospects for the definition and comprehensibility of the "shared new"?

11.   The conception of culture is apparently becoming looser, however, it is still needed to account for transculturalism (cf. Friedenkreis Halle e.V.o.J., 2008, p. 24).

When considering this transcultural learning, at least eight reasons speak for its innovative nature:

1.   Transcultural learning leads to a further dynamic, complex, inclusive and transnational understanding of culture.

2.   There is an exclusive chance that cultural similarities, commonalities, connections and links can be experienced, identified, lived through and used.

3.   There evolves a constructive disputation with various youth cultures, future positioning, political and ideological views, gender identities and generational conflicts.

4.   This new approach to learning with its new ideas and postulates can make the cultural landscape a reality through its theoretical and methodological stimulations.

5.   Transcultural learning leads to a new expansion of the work of cultural education with an eye on new target groups.

6.   Transcultural learning pursues the active, egalitarian creation of cultural plurality in the social reality of the present day.

7.   The transcultural approach in education can have an impact against right-wing extremism and eventually contribute to the promotion of democracy.

8.   By reason of the extensive understanding of culture the transcultural ideal constitutes a counterbalance to fundamentalist, separatist and monocultural tendencies (cf. ibid., 23).

Thus integration can with the appropriate methods and procedures be described as a synthesis (cf. Daschkeit, 2008, p. 87).

3.   Conclusion and Further Prospects

The management of transdisciplinary and transcultural research alliances is an extremely demanding activity requiring a great deal of professionalization (cf. N.N., 2006, 8). There is clearly a need to meticulously continue refining methodology and confirm it by carrying out empirical research in order to achieve the overall goals of quality management and professionalization in foreign language didactics. A lot of work has to be done in the future: a better theoretical foundation, a more

fitting instrumentation of analysis methods and concerning a lot of desiderata much more research. By following the principles of process oriented research driven by the principles of research alliances and quality management it should be possible to improve the quality of the research process. What is also called for as far as scientific professionalism is concerned, is the better standardization in order to eliminate existing theoretical and methodological problems. When foreign languages are the focal area of inspection, didactics can support such processes too.

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How English Competence Impacts on
Chinese Expatriate Adjustment in International Business

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Abstract

China is now becoming an engine of world economic growth. A large population of Chinese expatriates works overseas. How these expatriates adjust to the overseas assignments and how their English competence affects their adjustment are crucial to the global operation of the organization they work in. However, little research has been conducted on this topic. The study reported in this paper is to fill this gap. The author will first provide background to the study by drawing on two areas of literature, expatriate adjustment and English competence. Then a theoretical model is proposed to describe the relationships between Chinese expatriates' adjustment and English competence. From this model, a series of hypotheses are generated and tested.

1. Introduction

With the rapid growth of the Chinese economy, research interest has shifted in the past decade from Western multinational companies (MNCs) in China to China-based MNCs. Such a change is described as "a huge step forward for both macro economy in China and individual Chinese companies" (Wang, 2004, p. 3). Extensive research on Western MNCs focused on expatriation and findings suggests that expatriation failure due to maladjustment not only results in huge costs to the companies－for example, the cost of a failed expatriate assignment is $50,000 to $150,000－but also causes damage to corporate reputations and results in loss of business opportunities (Black & Mendenhall, 1990). However, such important issues are rarely discussed in domestic studies of Chinese MNCs, which usually address macro-level issues such as corporate development trends, industry analysis, internationalization strategies, global operations, and the political environment of Chinese MNCs (see, for example, Deng, 2004; Li, 2002; Liu & Shi, 2003; Z. Wang, 2004; Y. Wang, 2006), with limited practical guidelines or references for Chinese MNCs' overseas operations. Obviously, in-depth research in Chinese expatriate adjustment is urgently needed.

Similar to their Western counterparts, Chinese expatriates find the language barrier (Goodall, Li, & Warner, 2006; Selmer, 2006) is one of the biggest negative factors in their adjustment, although the standard of English proficiency is rising in China (Selmer, 2006). The purpose of this study was to explore how Chinese expatriates' English competence affects their adjustment.

2. Review of Literature

To investigate how English competence impacts on Chinese expatriates' adjustment, I first review the multi-dimensionality of expatriate adjustment and how expatriation practices of Chinese MNCs influence the multiple facets of adjustment. Second, I discuss how English competence affects different dimensions of expatriate adjustment.

2.1   Expatriate Adjustment

Expatriate adjustment has been widely recognized as a multi-dimensional process (Aycan, 1997; Black, 1988; Shaffer, Harrison & Gilley, 1999). After reviewing research on expatriates, four variables are identified, which are job satisfaction, ability to cope with stress, interaction with headquarters, and relationship with locals.

Black and Gregerson (1991, p. 463) defined expatriate adjustment as "the degree of psychological comfort with various aspects of a host country", in which the aspects referred to adjustment to the work roles, general adjustment to the living environment and interacting with host country nationals. In Black's (1988) empirical study on American expatriates working in Japan, an eleven-item scale was developed to measure these three aspects of adjustment. To measure work adjustment, respondents were asked to indicate the degree they felt with their jobs and responsibilities, interacting with Japanese peers and subordinates. To measure the adjustment to everyday life, respondents were asked to report how they felt they had adjusted to general living conditions, the transportation, the food, shopping, the weather and entertainment. To measure interaction adjustment, respondents were asked to indicate their degree of adjustment to working with Japanese outside their company and their perceived adjustment to interacting with Japanese in general, everyday situations.

However, the three-aspect model seems inadequate to interpret Chinese expatriate adjustment. As for work adjustment, Black's (1988) findings do not disclose on what basis work adjustment could be achieved, and do not relate the fit between work requirements and the needs of expatriates. Job satisfaction, which includes both task satisfaction and emotional satisfaction (Breiden, Mohr & Mirza, 2006), could be a better variable to denote the outcome of the correspondence between an employee's work abilities and the requirements of a particular job.

The measure of adjustment to the living environment is also challenged by the changing expatriation practice of Chinese MNCs. First, more and more Chinese expatriates nowadays take their overseas assignments based on projects, rather than undertaking long-term service in just one country. They have to adjust to the stress brought by a new environment rather than to specific living conditions. Second, previous research showed that it was a spouse's adjustment to the general living environment often is the factor that most affects the adjustment of Western expatriates (Aycan, 1997; Black & Gregersen, 1991; Caligiuri, Hyland & Joshi, 1998; Harvey, 1997; Herleman, Britt, & Hashima, 2008; Takeuchi, Lepak, Marinova & Yun, 2007). While a majority of Chinese expatriates do not take their families with them due to the cost to their companies, they may spend more time adjusting to the stress brought by family separation rather than by the general living environment. Third, expatriation is a stressful event, because it involves substantial changes in social and professional life" (Aycan, 1997, p. 445). Expatriates' ability to cope with stress in general, therefore, should be a significant predictor for adjustment.

Another aspect that was neglected in Black's study was expatriates' interaction with headquarters. His research, together with previous similar research, assumed expatriate adjustment

was an isolated process taking place in host country. Actually expatriates play multiple roles in the interplay between headquarters and local unit, i.e., "agent of direct control, agent of socializing, network builder, transfer of competence and knowledge, boundary spanner and language node". Obviously, fulfillment of all these activities requires effective interaction between expatriates and headquarters (Dowling, Festing & Engle, 2008, p. 92-95). Meanwhile, compared to their Western counterparts, most Chinese MNCs centralize resources and power in headquarters at initial stage of internationalization. Maintaining good interaction with headquarters would affect their adjustment to both work and life.

The problem with measures of interaction adjustment is that it assumes that the way expatriates interact with local people who are not involved in their work will be different from the way the expatriates communicate with their host country colleagues. But the insider effect on the communication of Chinese makes a clear distinction between insiders (*zijiren*) and outsiders (*wairen*), and the distinction between the two helps Chinese position themselves in established hierarchical and role relationships (Gao, Ting-Toomey & Gudykunst, 1996). Host country nationals, whether in a workplace or not, are usually not considered as insiders, but rather as outside the Chinese expatriate community. Therefore, the expatriates' relationships with locals in general, not simply locals in non-work scenarios, need to be more precisely identified in order to measure how well the Chinese expatriates get along with local people.

In sum, four variables are identified to investigate the multi-faceted Chinese expatriate adjustment: job satisfaction, the general ability to cope with stress, interaction with headquarters, and relationships with locals. A model of Chinese expatriate adjustment is proposed as shown in Figure 1 and a set of hypotheses on inter-item correlations are generated to test the validity of proposed adjustment model:
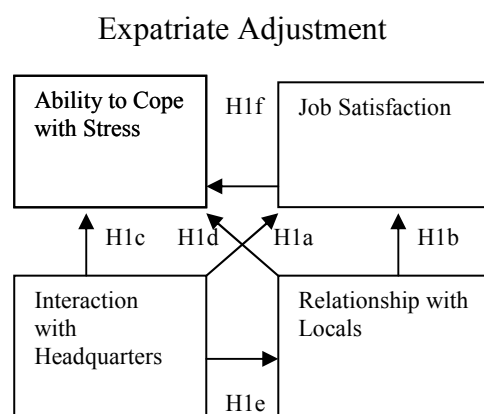

Figure 1. **A model of Chinese expatriate adjustment.**

H1a: Chinese expatriates who have better interactions with headquarters have greater job satisfaction.

H1b: Chinese expatriates who have better relationships with locals have greater job satisfaction.

H1c: Chinese expatriates who have better interactions with headquarters have a greater ability to cope with stress.

H1d: Chinese expatriates who have better relationships with locals have a greater ability to cope with stress.

H1e: Chinese expatriates who have better interactions with headquarters have better relationships with locals.

H1f: Chinese expatriates who have higher job satisfaction have a greater ability to cope with stress.

2.2   English Competence and Expatriate Adjustment

As a worldwide business language, English has been recognized as important to multinationals. Asuncion-Lande (1998) comments that English has developed its own momentum, aided by information technology and growing interactions in world economy and no other language has achieved similar status in the world. The International Research Foundation (TIRF, 2009, p. 4) for English Language Education reports "proficiency in English as a second or foreign language in particular, matters greatly in the global economy, and they matter to employers as well as to individuals." This increasing requirement of English competence poses salient challenges for Chinese MNCs (Chen, 2004; Ma, 2004). It could be inferred that English proficiency affects Chinese expatriate adjustment when they participate in international business activities.

H2: English competence is correlated with expatriate adjustment.

When examining English competence closely, it is evident that the common term *English competence* is not sufficient to describe the required English proficiency of expatriates. An expatriate with a good command of General English can deal with basic needs in his or her daily life, but he or she may find it difficult to participate in an in-depth business negotiation or profession-specific conversation. Such work-related English proficiency is related to workplace discourse.

Workplace discourse is categorized into genres. Bhatia (1993, p. 13) proposes the concept of "genre" and defines genre as "a recognizable communicative event characterized by a set of communicative purpose(s) identified and mutually understood by the number of the professional or academic community in which it regularly occurs." Du-Babcock (2007) applies genre studies to re-interpret management work in her research into business and organizational communication. She points out the techno-structure and shows how service staff and the middle line managers develop distinctive professional genres that vary in form among the different organization types. She argues that language can be categorized as Language for General Purposes (LGP) and Language for Specific

or Professional use (LSP). According to this categorization, English competence consists of competence in General English and in Professional English.

A related problem needs to be addressed. A Chinese expatriate may be able to articulate technical problems with fluent Professional English, but he or she may not be able to carry out effective small talk with clients at the dinner table, to foster a better relationship. Another term is needed to describe English in social situations that involve the exchange of ideas about history, economy, the political environment and the culture in a host country. As a supplement to General English and Professional English, this research proposes the term "Social English" to distinguish General English in common social life and English use in high-end social interaction.

As General English proficiency builds Chinese expatriates' confidence in communicating with host nationals (Xu, 2007) and facilitates their exposure to local culture, their anxiety and uncertainty (Gudykunst, 2004) could be reduced in the initial stage of their expatriation.

H2a: Chinese expatriates with a higher level of General English proficiency have a higher ability to cope with stress.

H2b: Chinese expatriates with a higher level of General English proficiency have better relationship with locals.

Chinese expatriates with higher Professional English proficiency are expected to fulfill their tasks, avoid frustrations, and achieve higher job satisfaction. Professional English proficiency could also increase Chinese expatriates' association with host nationals, both in the workplace and at social occasions.

H2c: Chinese expatriates with a higher level of Professional English proficiency have a higher degree of job satisfaction.

H2d: Chinese expatriates with a higher level of Professional English proficiency have better relationships with locals.

Social English could foster Chinese expatriates' relationships with host nationals, especially with their clients, because extensive social interactions help build positive images of expatriates in the perceptions of host nationals, facilitate mutual understanding, and expand the personal link from workplace to household.

H2e: Chinese expatriates with a higher level of Social English proficiency have better relationships with locals.

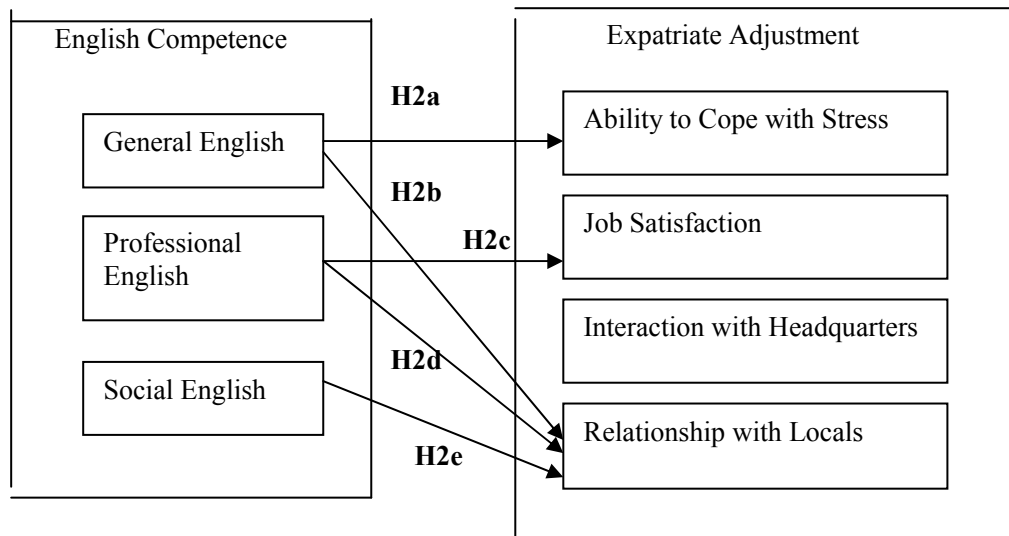The correlations proposed above are projected in Figure 2 as follows:

Figure 2. **A model of English competence's impact on Chinese expatriate adjustment.**

3.   Methods

3.1   Research Design—Case Study Approach

This study aims to examine the impact of English competence on expatriate adjustment. A case study approach was adopted, and data was collected from the large China-based multinational company XYZ, for the following reasons. First, a majority of Chinese MNCs follow a self-development strategy in overseas operations instead of entering into mergers or acquisitions, but little empirical research has been conducted on their expatriates' adjustment. Second, previous research into Chinese expatriates has usually been based on a sample from a variety of industries, and industry-specific features may have been neglected. Individual companies may find it is not easy to apply general research findings to their own settings. In-depth investigation within a case company helps extend an understanding from micro perspective. Third, the subject Chinese multinational company, XYZ, is one of the most successful Chinese companies in terms of internationalization, with rich data about expatriation practices. XYZ started its international business in the middle 1990s. Today, XYZ does business in over 150 countries with around 6000 employees working in the overseas market, in which over 60 percent is local.

Quantitative research method was used in this research. Data on informants' perception of overseas adjustment and English competence were collected through a questionnaire survey, and follow-up interviews were done based on the survey results, to further the researcher's understanding of their responses.

To avoid a low rate of response, the researcher took the advice given by the XYZ company and conducted on-site surveys, with assistance from related departments. In the beginning of 2009, during the peak season when a large number of Chinese expatriates returned home for meetings, training, and visa renewal, the researcher distributed and collected 190 questionnaires within eight

weeks. Missing items that were left blank were processed as missing case. Code numbers were assigned to surveys in order to match the expatriate surveys to interviewees upon receipt of the completed survey.

3.2   Sample

The survey sample of expatriates was selected at random. Among the 190 respondents, 60.5 percent worked in countries where English is not spoken as an official language; 90 percent held professional or technical positions in HR, financial, administration, IT, engineering, sales & marketing, and logistics, and 10 percent held managerial positions on a country level or regional level; 57.5 percent had worked for more than two years on their overseas assignments, which indicated above half of the respondents should have given full performance (Du-Babcock, 2000). The sample of interviewees came mainly from informants participating in the survey. When collecting data, the researcher browsed the feedback responses quickly and solicited explanations for unusual responses. In total, about 20 informants were interviewed briefly based on their on-site questionnaire responses.

3.3   Measures

The questionnaire consists of two parts. The first part measured the four dimensions of cultural adjustment which included job satisfaction, ability to cope with stress, interaction with headquarters, and relationships with locals. Subjects indicated how well adjusted they felt by using a 4-point Likert scale with "1=strongly disagree" and"4=strongly agree". The even-numbered scale was adopted to force Chinese participants to give a clear and specific judgment. The measurement of English competence in the second part adopted two methods. One was to collect self-reported data on proficiency with General English, Professional English and Social English. The second method was to measure how important the expatriates felt their English proficiency. It was assumed that expatriates who deem English competence to be important usually will be more willing to improve their English level, and hence may possess higher proficiency. A 4-point Likert scale was adopted for consistency of measurement.

3.4   Data Analysis

This study analyzed the reliability of the scores measured in the questionnaire. Cronbach's coefficient alpha of expatriate adjustment was .702, and the alpha of English competence, measured in two questions, was .890 and .795 respectively. The measure with higher α was adopted. Therefore, English competence was measured based on self-reported proficiency in general, professional and Social English. A Pearson Correlation Coefficient was also used to test the hypotheses 1a-1f and 2a-2e. A T-test was run to test whether English as an official language of a host country is related to cross-cultural adjustment.

4.   Results

Hypotheses 1a-1f examined the interaction among four predictors of expatriate adjustment. Pearson correlation coefficients operated among job satisfaction, ability to cope with stress, interaction with headquarters and relationship with locals. The results of the correlation analysis

presented in Table 1 show that all the correlations were satisfactorily significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). Support was found for H1a-f.

Table 1

Correlations Matrix of Expatriate Adjustment

Variables	J.S.	A.S.	I. H.	R. L.
Job Satisfaction (J.S.)	1			
Ability to Cope with Stress (A.S.)	.518**			
Interaction with Headquarters (I.H.)	.299**	.390**		
Relationship with Locals (R.L.)	.344**	.363**	.392**	1

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Hypothesis 2 examined how English competence affects expatriate adjustment. Inter-item correlations of each independent variable were tested. The results supported the construction of the independent variable of "English competence." The results are shown in Table 2.

Table 2

Inter-item Correlations of "English Competence"

	G.E.	P.E.	S.E.
General English (G.E.)	1		.
Professional English (P.E.)	.844**	1	
Social English (S.E.)	.647**	.726**	1

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The results showed that English competence was significantly correlated to expatriate adjustment at the .05 level as shown in Table 3. Therefore, hypothesis 2 was fully supported.

Table 3

Correlations Matrix of Independent Variables and Dependent Variables

	E.A.	Eng. Comp.
Expatriate Adjustment	1	.179*
English Competence	.179*	1

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The correlations between the three types of English proficiency and expatriate adjustment are shown as Table 4:

Table 4

Correlations Between Sub-variables of English Competence and Expatriate Adjustment

	J.S.	A.S.	I.H.	R.L.
General English	.122	.174*	.170*	.184*
Professional English	.083	.130	.159*	.157*
Social English	-.037	.052	.078	.157*

＊Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The results of t-test of English as the official language in the host country indicated that this factor is not correlated to expatriate adjustment.

Table 5

T-test of English as Official Language

English as Official Language	M	SD	N
Yes	12.2933	1.55766	75
No	12.1081	1.23841	111

t =.901, p = .369, df=184

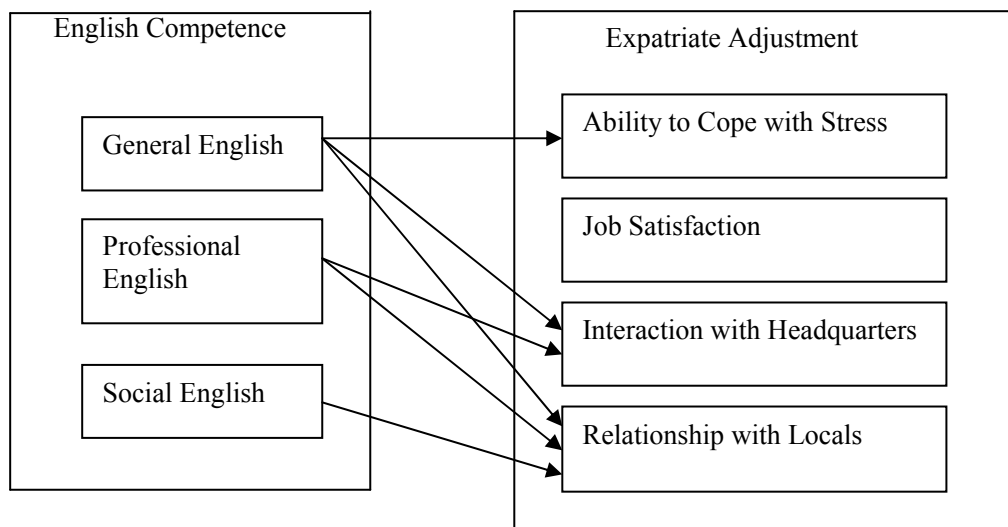Based on the findings above, the tested model is presented in Figure 3.

Figure 3. **A tested model of how English competence impacts on Chinese expatriate adjustment.**

5.   Discussion

The results of this study lend some support to the theoretical argument that expatriate adjustment is a multi-faceted process and closely related to headquarters' intervention. This is further supported by the qualitative data from the interviews with informants. According to the informants, time differences, English competence, and cultural awareness of headquarters are the major factors

that affect interaction between the two sides. Time differences lead to delayed responses, prolonged working hours, and low communication efficiency, which result in low job satisfaction. Insufficient English proficiency at headquarters blocks direct information flow to foreign employees, making them underperform; it complicates coordination and obstructs knowledge transfer (Welch & Welch, 2007), and brings an extra translation burden to Chinese expatriates. As a result, interaction with headquarters becomes an important resource of Chinese expatriates for establishing work relationships as well as personal relationships with local staff. Insufficient cultural awareness of headquarters often puts expatriates in a stressful dilemma between following standard policies and conforming to local practices. Effective negotiations may enable expatriates to deal with cultural-specific issues with more alternatives. In addition, frequent contact with headquarters helps relieve expatriates' loneliness, increase the chances of business trips back to China to be with their families, and create more opportunities to find suitable positions after they repatriate.

Concerning the impact of English competence on Chinese expatriate adjustment, as hypothesized, General English is related to Chinese expatriates' ability to cope with stress and develop relationships with locals. However, it is strange that General English is also significantly correlated to interaction with headquarters. Such a correlation perhaps suggests that expatriates with higher General English proficiency, due to good relationships with locals, act actively as a bridge between the parent company and its subsidiaries. As for Professional English, while the hypothesized correlation between Professional English and relationships with local staff is accepted, the findings do not support a correlation between Professional English and job satisfaction. Instead, Professional English is significantly correlated to interaction with headquarters. Such results may indicate that expatriates with a higher proficiency of Professional English possess a higher level of field knowledge, which forms an advantage in petitioning headquarters for support. Meanwhile, job satisfaction likely is affected by factors other than English. For example, the company expatriation policies and the individual expatriate's personal traits quite possibly affect expatriates' satisfaction with their work. Social English was found to be significantly correlated to expatriate adjustment. The inter-item correlations show that proposed Social English functions as a valid component of English competence. Surprisingly, among the three competences, General English acts as the most important one, as it is significantly correlates to three predictors of adjustment. A possible explanation might be that General English can be applied to more occasions and affect expatriate adjustment more visibly.

Despite the importance of English competence, many Chinese MNCs pinpoint field experience and company tenure of expatriates. The findings of this study imply that English competence should be one of the criteria in expatriate selection, and that proper English training for expatriates facilitates expatriate adjustment.

In conclusion, job satisfaction, the ability to cope with stress, interaction with headquarters, and relationships with locals are valid predictors of Chinese expatriate adjustment. English competence of Chinese expatriates impacts on expatriate adjustment significantly.

However, it should be noted that there are a few limitations to this study that should be considered. First, the use of self-report data to measure adjustment and English competence may involve psychological moderator. Some informants may associate their answers with the company's appraisal of them, and therefore they may be reluctant to give objective information. Second, there were few samples from the sales group, and yet this population has the most exposure to local culture over expatriates in other positions. For future research, a test is recommended to find out whether similar results could be obtained after supplemental data on sales expatriates is added to the current database.

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Managing Meetings in BELF (Business English as a Lingua Franca)

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Abstract

This paper discusses the use of English as a lingua franca (ELF) in the context of professional communication. While the number of studies on the use of ELF in general is increasing, only a few of them investigate how ELF "is used for conducting business within the global business discourse community" (Louhiala-Salminen, Charles and Kankaanranta, 2005, p. 404). Therefore, more empirical research on the use of English as a lingua franca in business contexts is needed. By investigating an authentic face-to-face group business meeting audio-recorded in January 2008 in Vienna, Austria, this paper seeks to contribute to a better understanding of how ELF is used by professionals in their daily lives.

The analysis focuses in particular on pragmatic strategies participants use to achieve mutual (linguistic) understanding while at the same time successfully conveying their sometimes differing views on business-related issues. After a short introduction in which the relevance of research into ELF in business contexts is demonstrated, the paper goes on to clarify key terms such as ELF (English as a lingua franca) and BELF (Business English as a lingua franca). Subsequently a brief overview of research into (B)ELF to date is given and the special requirements of lingua franca communication in general are discussed. These theoretical assumptions are then exemplified by extracts taken from the meeting data recorded in Vienna, which illustrate how BELF speakers in my data set skilfully manage to overcome challenging parts of meeting talk through collaborative and attentive discourse behaviour.

1.   Introduction

It is a well-known fact among linguists that non-native speakers of English have come to outnumber native speakers of English, as has, for example, been pointed out by Crystal (2003). Equally well-known is the fact that English may well be called the language of international business these days, and that English skills have become a basic requirement for almost any professional wishing to engage in our ever more globalized business world. However, not everyone involved in international business is a native speaker of English. In fact, English in business is increasingly being used as a shared language among speakers of different mother tongues, a so called *lingua franca*. Graddol (2006) emphasizes this function of English in his report to the British Council, *English Next,* when he stresses

> the increasingly important role that English is now playing in *economic processes*, in providing access to the kind of *global knowledges* available in English and the jobs which involve *contact with customers and colleagues for whom English is the only shared language* [italics added]. (p. 38)

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It is therefore not surprising that English as a lingua franca (henceforth ELF) is currently the most common use of English world-wide. As the Web site of the Vienna-Oxford International Corpus of English (VOICE) project states:

> Millions of speakers from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds use ELF on a daily basis, routinely and successfully, in their professional, academic and personal lives. (VOICE Web site, n.d., FAQ)

This widespread use of English as a lingua franca also has implications for research in the field of professional communication. Charles (2007), for instance, observes that "arguably, more international business is actually done in English between NNSs than between NSs" (p. 262). Nevertheless, empirical research on how English is used as a lingua franca in workplace settings is still scarce. My paper seeks to contribute to this research field by analyzing data from an authentic workplace meeting in which professionals from various European countries use ELF as a shared means of communication.

2.   Defining (B)ELF

Before I start with the empirical part of this paper I would like to clarify some of the key concepts underlying my analysis, notably my understanding of English as a lingua franca (ELF) in general and its use in professional contexts in particular.

Drawing on the original purpose of the Mediterranean *Lingua Franca* that was used in Europe's medieval ports by tradesmen from various countries to do business, Seidlhofer (2001) defines a lingua franca as "a language by means of which the members of different speech communities can communicate with each other" (p. 146). Firth (1996), another pioneer of ELF research, provides us with a second definition of ELF, stating that "*English … used as a 'lingua franca'* [is] a 'contact language' between persons who share neither a common native tongue nor a common (national) culture, and for whom English is the chosen *foreign* language of communication" (p. 240).

While these definitions look similar at first glance, there is a fundamental difference in their approach towards membership in the ELF speech community: Firth's definition explicitly excludes native speakers of English by claiming that ELF is "the chosen *foreign* language" of communication for ELF speakers. While this may have been true for the original meaning of the term lingua franca, recent research in the field has meanwhile come to acknowledge the fact that "ELF interactions often also include speakers from backgrounds where English is used as a first or second language" (VOICE Web site, n.d., FAQ). Therefore, ELF research nowadays frequently works with a less narrow definition of English as a lingua franca that includes native speakers of all English varieties, provided they do not outnumber non-natives or hold such a powerful position that they set the agenda of the conversation.

In principle, every language may function as a lingua franca, and many languages have been or are still being used for that purpose. Even so, these days it is English which is increasingly chosen as the global lingua franca in various domains, such as international business. In fact, the use of ELF

in international business contexts has become so frequent that the Finnish researchers Louhiala-Salminen, Charles and Kankaanraanta (2005, p. 403) have coined a separate acronym to describe this phenomenon: BELF (Business English as a lingua franca). As Charles (2007) maintains in one of her papers:

> BELF differs from ELF in that its domain is solely business, and its frame of reference is provided by the globalized business community. The *B* of BELF is thus the sociopragmatic backdrop against which language … is to be interpreted." (p. 264)

In BELF, corporate culture, company hierarchy, and speakers' roles within their workplace are taken into account, as well as features of certain generic forms of communication characterizing the professional context, such as memos and meetings. All potential cultural and linguistic differences notwithstanding, membership in the same globalized business community serves as the common ground that all BELF speakers share.

In light of this, Charles (2007) argues that "we can refer to the global business community as the 'culture' that has created BELF, and within which BELF evolves", not failing to add that "as with all cultures, the global business culture is diverse and dynamic" (p. 264). This is not to suggest that the culture of business (if it exists) is a uniform concept, but that it provides some form of common cultural ground for all BELF speakers since they all "have certain shared values (e.g., that of doing profitable business), and use it [BELF] for a shared purpose" (p. 264.). The issue of culture in BELF is also touched upon in the following definition by Louhiala-Salminen et al. (2005):

> BELF refers to English used as a 'neutral' and shared communication code. BELF is neutral in the sense that none of the speakers can claim it as her/his mother tongue; it is shared in the sense that it is used for conducting business within the global business discourse community, whose members are BELF users and communicators in their own right – not 'non-native speakers' or 'learners'. (pp. 403-404)

I would like to elaborate on two aspects of their definition in further detail. First, I would like to highlight the final words of their definition, where Louhiala-Salminen et al. (2005) emphasize that the members of the global business discourse community should not be regarded as language learners or deficient nonnative speakers. According to their approach, BELF users should be viewed as communicators in their own right and not be permanently contrasted and compared with native speakers of English. The traditional native-nonnative dichotomy thus becomes obsolete as Louhiala-Salminen et al. further remark that "by definition, BELF interaction has no 'native speakers'; neither does it have 'learners'. It merely has business communicators going about their every day jobs" (p. 417).

Secondly, a few words about ELF as a form of intercultural communication and the role of culture in ELF are probably appropriate here. While Louhiala-Salminen et al. (2005) call BELF a "neutral" communication code in their definition, they are aware of the potentially problematic nature of their phrasing and do not fail to point out that by describing BELF as culture-neutral they do by no means postulate that it is *cultureless*. On the contrary, they stress that "seeing *lingua francas* as

cultureless ignores the fact that the speakers *creating* the lingua franca do have a cultural background and, in fact, a diversity of backgrounds" (p. 404).

Meierkord (2002) argues along the same lines, observing that in ELF communication "it is not only national identity that the speakers might wish to express, but more generally their identity as members of specific groups, be they national, vocational, political or yet of a different type" (p. 110). She also points out that "communication in a lingua franca involves interaction of more than just two cultures" as participants bring along their various cultural and professional backgrounds as well as "to a certain extent the communicative norms of that variety of English they were taught in school" (p. 119).

The question of the role of culture(s) in BELF is thus a complex one and cannot be easily resolved. Nevertheless, membership in different cultural groups – national or corporate – is certainly important and may influence BELF interactions. In this respect, BELF is clearly intercultural communication.

3.   Previous Research

As Charles (2007) points out, research on BELF is still in its infancy; "the 'rules' of BELF, and its operational guidelines, … have yet to be defined" as BELF is "only at the beginning of its development" (p. 264). Much empirical research remains to be done. One of the most likely reasons for the scarcity of empirical work in the field of BELF might be the difficulties one encounters when trying to record authentic lingua franca business interactions:

> … anyone who has been involved in trying to get recordings from companies will appreciate the enormity of the challenges presented by this kind of data collection. Research cooperation in the form of surveys and interviews is one thing; permission to record interactions is another. Questions of confidentiality loom larger than anywhere else. (Charles, 2007, p. 270)

Some scholars in the field of BELF have nevertheless managed to overcome these difficulties and studied the pragmatics of ELF interactions in professional contexts. All of their studies are interdisciplinary in the way that they take into account the special features of lingua franca communication situations, as well as characteristics of professional communication. One could argue that BELF research needs to be interdisciplinary *per definitionem* and needs to draw from at least two large research fields.

One of them is the area of professional communication research. I am referring here in particular to sociolinguistic research projects that study oral communication and spoken language in business contexts, such as the Language in the Workplace project carried out by the University of Wellington in New Zealand.

Secondly, there is the growing field of ELF research dealing with the nature of English as a lingua franca. There are to date two noteworthy corpus projects that aim to capture the nature of ELF in spoken corpora and to make it available for large scale linguistic analysis. One of them is the ELFA (English as a Lingua Franca in Academic Settings) corpus, compiled at the Universities of Tampere

and Helsinki, Finland. The second large ELF corpus is currently being compiled in Vienna and is called the Vienna-Oxford International Corpus of English (VOICE). This corpus includes data from a multitude of settings including business settings, but the focus of the corpus project in general is not on professional communication.

As is illustrated by Figure 1, BELF research is situated at the interface of these two large areas, ELF research and professional communication research, as it investigates the use of English as a lingua franca in the domain of business. Naturally, these two domains mutually influence each other and both have an impact on the nature of BELF interactions. Empirical work in this field tends to be quite recent and – compared with the huge interest in professional communication in general – rather modest.
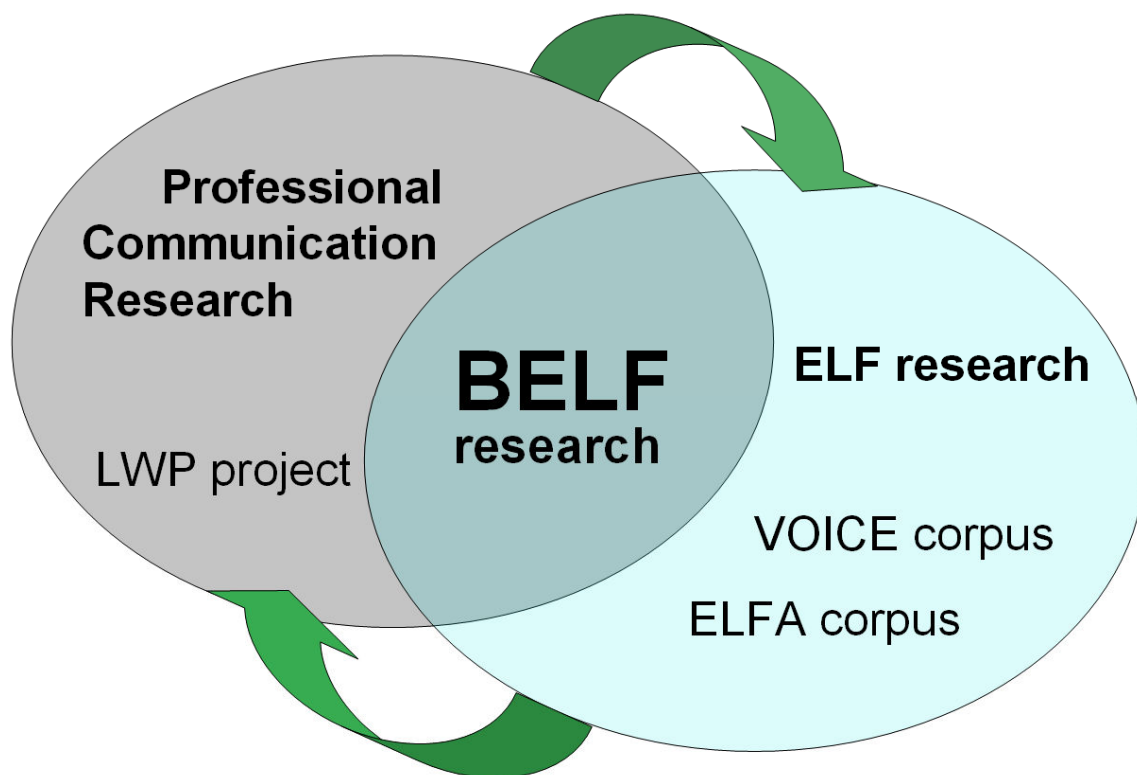

Figure 2. **BELF research, being interdisciplinary, is situated at the interface of professional communication research and ELF research and is influenced by both research fields.**

Studies on the pragmatics of ELF in business interactions include, for instance, Firth's (1996) groundbreaking work on let-it-pass behavior in dyadic telephone conversations in a Danish company. Gramkow-Andersen's (1993, 2001) extensive work on business calls focuses on the joint production of conversation and strategies of interactional collaboration. Pitzl (2004, 2005) investigates miscommunication in ELF conference calls. There is also empirical work on ELF face-to-face communication. Louhiala-Salminen et al. (2005) investigates discoursal (dis)similarities of Swedish

and Finnish BELF users in e-mails and meetings. On a similar note, Louhiala-Salminen and Charles (2006) investigate Finnish and Swedish characteristics of discourse in intra-company BELF meetings.

These are admittedly not too many studies, but as Seidlhofer (2004), one of the leading scholars in the field of ELF research, argues, the outcomes of the studies that already exist "illustrate the potential that empirical research holds for a better understanding of how ELF functions in international business settings" (pp. 221-222). It is with this call for more empirical research in the field of BELF in mind that my own study should be seen.

4.   My Own Study: Research Design and Data

The first step in the research process was of course the collection of the data. The prime method of data collection consisted of audio-recording authentic BELF interactions in four companies based in Vienna, Austria. The scope of situations in which English was used as a business lingua franca in these four companies in Vienna was immense, ranging from formal meetings to telephone conferences and informal jour fixes. For this study I decided to focus on face-to-face group meetings exclusively. Audio-recording was given preference over video-recording, since it was considered less intrusive and easier to handle in terms of setting up the technical equipment and protecting speakers' identities[2].

The audio-recordings were complemented by participant observation. I was always present at the events and used the opportunity to take field notes during the interactions. Unworded events, like someone leaving the room to take a phone call, puzzled facial expressions, nodding, shaking one's head and so on, were noted down specifically, because they would not be audible afterwards on the sound files but could nevertheless be important for the course of events in the interaction.

The next step was then to make the audio-recordings usable for my project which meant transcribing the recordings and turning them into written text files.[3] The analysis of the data admittedly cannot be clearly separated from the transcription process, because many features of the data caught my attention while transcribing the material. It is safe to say that these two steps mutually influenced each other and happened more or less concurrently.

In this paper, I will focus on one meeting that took place in January 2008 in Vienna. It was audio-recorded in a large Austrian bank which had recently expanded quite substantially in the CEE region (Central Eastern European). The participants in this business meeting included Austrian speakers as well as speakers from former East-Bloc countries of the Czech Republic and Slovakia (formally known as Czechoslovakia), as well as Romania. Altogether, six women and one man participated in the meeting. Among them, they had four different first languages, namely Austrian German, Czech, Romanian and Slovakian.

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[2] I am aware that these advantages might have been achieved at the price of sacrificing information richness of the data, since non-verbal cues like mimics and gestures were not recorded.
[3] I used the VOICE transcription conventions, but simplified and adapted them so that they suited the needs of my own study. The transcription conventions are downloadable from the project Web site http://www.univie.ac.at/voice/.

The meeting took place at the Department for Internal Communication and was 3 hours and 49 minutes long. It was transcribed completely, which resulted in about 40,200 words of transcribed speech. Figure 2 shows the office layout of the room in which the meeting was held. As can be seen, the speakers were loosely grouped on chairs around a big table. Individual speakers are represented by their national flags, the white circle labeled 'R' stands for 'Researcher' and represents myself, and the microphone indicates the position of the recording device.
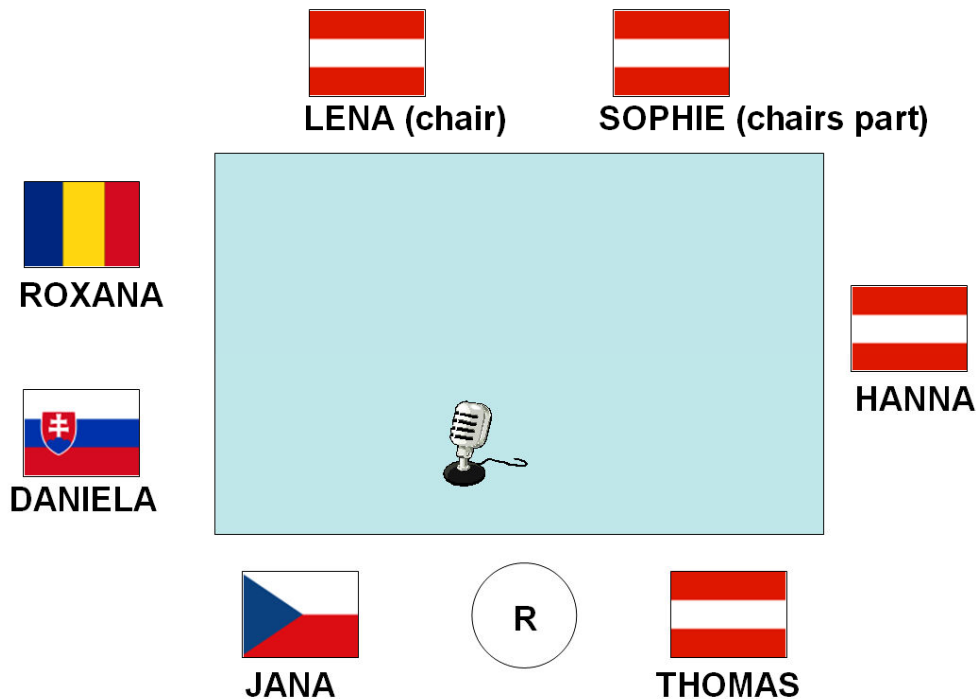

Figure 3. **The research site: National flags indicate individual speakers, the white circle labeled 'R' the researcher, and the microphone indicates the position of the recording device.**

Hanna, Jana, Daniela and Roxana[4] represented the internal communication department of the local banks of Austria, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Romania respectively. Lena, Sophie and Thomas, the other three speakers, represented the bank's headquarters, which are situated in Vienna and function as an umbrella organisation for the local banks in the individual countries. The participants described themselves as communication specialists whose general task it is to coordinate and ensure intra-company communication about events and company policies that are relevant for all countries in which XYZ Bank has subsidiaries.

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[4] The speakers' names are pseudonyms, as the data needed to be made anonymous. I also refer to the company as 'XYZ Bank' to protect the real company's identity.

In this meeting, the participants functioned as an editorial board for an online employee magazine that is published quarterly in the company's intranet. Lena was the chairperson, formally opening and closing the meeting.

5.   Data Analysis

I will now come to the theoretical foundations of my analysis and take up a finding by Juliane House, a German researcher in the field of English as a lingua franca. House has investigated the pragmatics of ELF in several of her studies (e.g., 1999, 2002, 2003), although not in business contexts. She argues that "the 'enterprise' in ELF talk is to successfully negotiate [*sic*] on the *content plane* (reach a common goal) *and* on the *level of linguistic (English) forms* [italics added]" (2003, p. 572).

Hence, one could claim that ELF communication has at least two dimensions to it: the language level, *how* speakers use ELF, and the content level, *what* speakers want to convey with their utterances. Comprehension can sometimes be more easily achieved through collaboration and mutual help, and this cooperative tendency has indeed frequently been pointed out as a feature of ELF talk. Seidlhofer (2003), for instance, observes that ELF interactions seem to be "overtly consensus-oriented, cooperative and mutually supportive" (p. 15).[5]

To achieve comprehension, the participants in the interactions I recorded generally used the same pragmatic and communicative strategies that sociolinguistic research has described for native speaker interactions. However, the unique setting of lingua franca communication situations requires additional strategies, or at least leads participants to direct their attention not only to what is said, but also to how it is said. In other words, there is an additional dimension to lingua franca interactions, as participants are not only monitoring the *content* of their utterances (and those of their interlocutors), but also the *form*. Part of their attention is devoted to processing what is being said and formulating their own utterances.

This leads to a two-fold need for communicative cooperation in BELF: firstly, participants are required to collaborate on the content level because they work for the same company, belong to the same team or, or have to find a solution to the same problem. Second, they have to collaborate on the language level as they need to make sure they understand each other. In contrast to native speaker meetings, where it can mostly be assumed that participants understand each other's utterances, interlocutors in lingua franca situations need to pay much more attention to language comprehension. They cannot take for granted that every single word they use in the meeting is understood by all the other participants. Thus they need to put effort into formulating their own utterances and at the same time monitor their interlocutors' reactions to their utterances and watch out for signals of potential miscommunication.

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[5] At the same time Seidlhofer (2003) agrees with House (1999, 2002) that there is "the danger that superficial consensus may well hide sources of trouble at a deeper level" and considers this "a caveat that certainly needs to be taken seriously and investigated further" (p. 15).

Especially in business contexts, where participants pursue different goals, for example in negotiations, a gap might open up between these two levels. Speakers utterly disagreeing on the content level may nonetheless find themselves forced to cooperate with their adversaries linguistically in order to be able to understand each other's utterances. The question is: How do ELF users master situations where there is disagreement on the content level and yet a need for cooperation on the linguistic level?

BELF users in my data used a variety of pragmatic collaboration strategies to ensure comprehension, but at the same time remained assertive when it came to differing views regarding the content of their utterances. The pragmatic strategies used can either be initiated by the speaker, by the listener, or be jointly constructed.

Speaker-initiated strategies in my data mainly take the form of appeals for help. These appeals in my data are either explicit, when speakers utter phrases like "please help me", or implicit, characterized by hesitation phenomena such as repetition, pauses, and filler words. An example of an implicit appeal for help is the following exchange where Jana is struggling to answer a question asked by Sophie. Due to an internal restructuring process in her branch office Jana cannot provide the desired information right now but promises to let Sophie know at a later point:

1   JANA: <3>yes (.) actually i will tell you</3> later (.) erm because it's it's it's er (.)
2   <4>change in [branch]</4> [office]
3   SOPHIE: <4>something new?</4>

The underlined part of Jana's utterance in line 1, where she pauses, uses filler words and repeats ''it's'' three times, is interpreted by Sophie as an implicit appeal for help. Sophie picks up on Jana's appeal for assistance and suggests "something new?" (line three), which indeed comes very close to the idea of "change in [branch office]" Jana manages to produce in line 2.

Furthermore, appeals for help in my data can be collective or individual, which means that speakers in my data appeal for help either to one of their interlocutors or to several of them, or even to the entire group. An example where the current speaker explicitly asks for assistance and addresses a particular speaker in doing so is the following extract from my data:

1   LENA: @@@@@@ so as you said (.) the content should be more (.) erm business
2   related more (.) closer to the employees' daily work (.) we said that er (.) we should
3   write or ask the employees something like or concerning their (.) daily work or their
4   main (.) er (.) now how could i say that (1) sophie please help me <6>@@@</6>
5   SOPHIE: <6><@>what do you</6> want to say?</@> (1)

Lena is talking about her ideas to make the content of the employee magazine more relevant for the employees' daily work but needs help in formulating her utterance. She therefore appeals to her interlocutors (line four) by making her difficulty explicit ("now how could I say that"). As none of her interlocutors reacts to her call for help, Lena, after a pause of one second, decides to utter an

individual appeal for assistance and addresses Sophie personally, who immediately signals her willingness to help (line 5).

However, it is not only the speakers in my data who take the initiative. I also found a number of pragmatic strategies initiated by the listeners. The first of these are clarification requests, which are used by listeners to signal potential non-comprehension. However, listeners not only use strategies to indicate that there is a danger of non-comprehension; they also signal that they *do* comprehend by using backchannels frequently. This device may also be seen as a means of encouraging the current speaker to continue with her turn. Frequent usage of back channel devices for these purposes is a finding that is supported by other ELF studies (e.g., Walenta, 2007).

Finally, collaborative turn-completions are another strategy employed by the speakers in my data. These are incidents in which one of the listeners completes a turn that was begun by the current speaker. Such turn completions in my data are not competitive interruptions, but supportive offers of help, often uttered in collaborative overlap.

These strategies are of course nothing new; they have been observed and described previously for native speakers' conversations. However, some strategies in my data take into account the special requirements of lingua franca communication.

One strategy employed by the speakers draws on the multilingual resources at their disposal. Code-switching in word-search situations in order to address interlocutors for help is an obvious choice. Naturally, the option of code-switching is not available to all participants in my meeting. The second strategy is word-search help, which is employed by the listeners in my data. This strategy is used in situations where speakers encounter a lexical gap when formulating their utterances, because they cannot recall a certain expression. Usually the listeners in my data offer their help immediately in such situations. Speakers react to these suggestions and acknowledge them either explicitly or implicitly, often just by repeating the word. In the first example taken from my data, acknowledgement of help is particularly obvious.

In the following extract, speakers are discussing options for a new column in their magazine. Their boss had asked them to come up with a new series of articles to promote a sense of togetherness among the various countries where the bank has subsidiaries. Hannah is not quite sure what this new column should look like and so Lena, the chair, once again explains what the purpose of this new series of articles should be:

1	LENA: the goal is to get a better under<4>standing</4> between
2	HANNA: <4>mhm</4>
3	HANNA: mhm (.) okay (.)
4	LENA: the the countries where the [org] bank (.) er is involved in (3) so (2) the the
5	goal about THIS goal (.) is to improve the (.) erm (.) <L1de>wir gefühl? {we-feeling}
6	</L1de> (.)
7	JANA: <5>group feeling</5>

8   HANNA: <5>the group feeling</5> yeah
9   LENA: <6>group feeling (1) thanks</6>
10   SOPHIE: <6>@@@@@</6>

Lena explains that the aim of this new section should be to increase the understanding between the various countries involved in XYZ Bank. Hannah is backchanneling during and after Lena's turn (lines 2 and 3) to signal that she is following and that she has now understood the purpose of the new format. Lena nevertheless continues with her turn and elaborates on the topic, stating that the ultimate goal behind this understanding is to create something she calls "Wir-Gefühl" (literally translated as *we-feeling*) in her mother tongue, German, but which she is at a loss for words to express in English (lines 5 and 6).

Lena's code-switching, in combination with rising intonation (indicated by a question mark), serves as an implicit appeal for help. She addresses a sub-group of speakers in the meeting, namely those able to understand German. Her request for help is picked up immediately by her fellow speakers, who simultaneously come up with suggestions for the word she is looking for: Jana and Hannah concurrently suggest *group feeling* (lines 7 and 8) as the word Lena is looking for, resulting in the overlap of these two utterances. Lena gratefully accepts the suggestion and acknowledges it by repetition. She even explicitly thanks her interlocutors for their help (line 10).

Interestingly Jana, the Czech speaker, is among those who immediately suggest the word Lena is searching for, even though she says at another point in the meeting that she is not able to understand German. The incident proves how closely Jana must have been following the interaction here, and how sensitive she is towards problems her fellow speakers' encounter, so that she was able to guess the desired expression from context.

That it is not so easy to help out with the exact word a speaker is looking for is proven by the next example. In this extract, participants are discussing the content of the next issue of the online magazine. They want to include a section in which employees are asked about their opinions about plans of the HR department to launch programs measuring employee performance. Hannah states that for her, assessing performance has to be seen in connection with education and training of employees. She wants to ask employees what they expect the HR department to do in order to help them improve their performance, but has trouble finding a word in her turn:

1   HANNA: so the question could sh- could go in the direction of erm (.) erm wha-what
2   i don't know the word er <L1de>fördern? {promote} </L1de> erm
3   SOPHIE: to encourage
4   HANNA: to encourage er (.) not not encourage to (1) mh (1)
5   SOPHIE: promote?
6   LENA: <5>support?</5>
7   HANNA: <5>promote</5> to support people in their education and their
8   competencies (2) …

Hannah encounters a lexical gap (lines 2 and 3) and appeals to her fellow speakers explicitly by admitting "I don't know the word". She then code-switches into her mother tongue, German, and says that she is looking for an equivalent for "fördern" [to promote]. Sophie suggests *to encourage* (line 3), and in the next line Hannah first repeats the word, but then declares that this is not what she was looking for. Sophie, however, is not discouraged by this rejection and comes up with another suggestion (*to promote*), albeit this time uttered questioningly, with rising intonation. Hannah repeats the word and is overlapped by Lena, proposing yet another alternative, which is *to support*. Hannah makes note of both suggestions, even though one of them is uttered in overlap, which shows that these BELF users are in most cases able to process and produce speech simultaneously (cf. Gramkow-Andersen, 2001, p. 96). Her acknowledgement of the suggestion is expressed implicitly by her continuing the turn without further insisting on a different word. This extract is an example of how meaning is negotiated on-line in BELF situations and how speakers, although they may be grateful for - and sometimes even dependent on - help, are still assertive when it comes to expressing the content of their utterances precisely.

6.   Summary and Conclusion

The interactions I have looked at are characterized on the one hand by collaboration on the language level, and on the other by precise negotiation of meaning on the content level. The interplay of both levels is vital for successful communication in English as a lingua franca in professional contexts.

Moreover, the analysis shows that BELF speakers in my data have developed specific practices for lingua franca interactions, taking into account the requirements of this special form of communication. A prominent form in which these strategies occur is appealing for help to a sub-group of interlocutors by code-switching into one's mother tongue and thus indicating the need for collaboration. In such word-search help situations, the interlocutors in my data are attentive and prepared to provide lexis help whenever necessary.

It is noteworthy that this does not disrupt the overall flow of the interaction in any way and seems to be perceived as entirely unproblematic by the speakers in my data. Such supportive turn interventions are employed and perceived as solidarity markers rather than as competitive 'interruptions', at least in the speaker constellation under investigation. This might well have to do with speakers' character traits and their individual personalities as well as with the supportive atmosphere that seems to prevail in this company in general. Code-switching for word-search help might be perceived differently in other contexts. Corporate culture appears to play a role in this case, and the various lingua-cultures of the speakers also appear to be influential.

As was rightly pointed out by a colleague at the conference, speaker interventions that are perceived as collaborative by speakers in my data might be considered intrusive by others. Politeness and face are both very culture-sensitive terms. Murata (1994), for instance, reminds us that

it is important that we bear in mind the differing values interactants convey in their use. It is possible that an interruption[6] which has been classified as 'intrusive', e.g. in English, could be interpreted as showing support and participation in other situations and cultures. (p. 390)

Hence, collaborative strategies involving overlap, such as supportive turn completions, are likely to be interpreted differently by speakers from different cultures. In my data, however, these incidents were interpreted as supportive offers of help. Participants are remarkably attuned to each other, which might also have to do with their being well-acquainted and familiar with each other. Lena and Sophie, for example, seem to be very close, as they work on the same team.

In general, all interactants in this meeting were very sensitive when it came to picking up signals from their fellow speakers and seemed to be aware of their mutual status as lingua franca communicators. Drawing on the overall theme of the APac LSP 2008 conference, I would therefore like to conclude this paper by claiming that the collaboration strategies participants use in my data can truly reveal the establishment of partnerships in action.

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[6] Murata (1994) uses 'interruption' as encompassing term for all types of simultaneous speech.

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Talk at Work: Interactional Challenges for Immigrants[1]

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Abstract

This paper analyses the ways in which professional migrants from different cultural backgrounds, using English as an Additional Language, manage the demands of constructing a positive professional identity while also negotiating the complex relational aspects of workplace talk. The well-established methodology of the Wellington Language in the Workplace Project was used to collect relevant data from migrant workers interacting in professional New Zealand organisations. The analysis focuses on the sociopragmatic strategies used by two skilled migrants to manage identity construction through social and transactional aspects of workplace interaction. Different ways of undertaking a task tend to be made relatively explicit by colleagues and mentors, but different ways of establishing social contact at work tend to be overlooked since they are taken for granted as "normal" and unmarked. The analysis suggests that in some areas migrants are interactionally very competent. They tend to manage well with the more technical, task-oriented talk required by their positions. And while they participate appropriately in much of the social and small talk in which other engaged them in the course of their working day, there are nevertheless some areas where interactional problems arise. The challenges facing members of ethnic minorities who wish to progress in professional work contexts crucially involve identifying the differences between their norms and those of the majority group.

1.   Introduction

New Zealand is increasingly attracting professional migrants from diverse cultural backgrounds with much-needed expertise and the potential to make a valuable contribution to New Zealand society. Employers, however, identify inadequate communication skills as problematic in workplace interaction, and cite this as a disincentive to hiring migrants. Identifying the communication challenges faced by skilled migrants is a complex task, complicated by the fact that culturally different ways of doing things are widely regarded with suspicion, and evaluated negatively by many New Zealanders.

One particular communication challenge which skilled migrants face in the workplace is the task of conveying the fact that they have extensive expertise and experience in a way that is compatible with the New Zealand egalitarian ethos in the workplace. The "tall poppy syndrome" which cuts down any who dare to raise their heads above the crowd presents a challenge for many New Zealanders in positions of authority (Jackson & Parry, 2001, p. 27). It is an even greater challenge for those from cultures where those with professional skills are expected and encouraged to display and (from a New Zealand perspective) even flaunt them. Managing the synthesis between behaving in an appropriately professional way, while also constructing strong collegial relationships at work requires considerable sociopragmatic proficiency. This paper describes the ways in which two professional migrants responded to this challenge.

2.   The research context

Sociopragmatic research indicates that migrants' communication problems can often be attributed to lack of understanding of culturally different communicative styles, and the negative preconceptions of native speakers of English, rather than to English proficiency per se (e.g., Bardovi-Harlig, 2001; Kasper, 2001; Rose, 2005; Rose & Kasper, 2001). Despite this widespread acknowledgement in the literature, there is relatively little research on the sociopragmatic factors affecting intercultural communication difficulties in professional contexts (but see Geluykens and Kraft, 2008; Hunter, 2007; Kotthoff and Spencer-Oatey, 2007). Moreover, much of the research that has been undertaken focuses on academic contexts or on the job interview situation both overseas (e.g., Campbell & Roberts, 2007; Johnston, 2008; Roberts, Davies & Jupp, 1992), and in New Zealand (Couper, 2002; Henderson, Trlin & Watts, 2006; Mace, Atkins, Fletcher & Carr, 2005; Ward & Masgoret, 2007), and very little is located in workplaces (but see Clyne, 1994; Hunter, 2007; Myles, 2005; Willing, 1992).

Sociopragmatic skills pose a particular challenge for skilled immigrants, because difficulties with subtle sociopragmatic aspects of communication are often perceived negatively (Akinnaso & Ajirotutu, 1982, p. 119; Jupp, Roberts & Cook-Gumperz, 1982, p. 234), and interpreted as (possibly intentional) impoliteness (Riddiford, 2007). But sociopragmatic skills are vital in the process of becoming an accepted member of a workforce (Holmes, 2005). The ability to use language effectively in intercultural interaction is key in gaining a job interview, and performing successfully in an interview situation (Akinnaso & Ajirotutu, 1982; Campbell & Roberts, 2007; Kerekes, 2005). And once this barrier has been successfully surmounted, sociopragmatic skills are crucial in constructing and maintaining good collegial relationships with workmates.

In the last decade, research has increasingly focused on the situation of professional migrants who find themselves unemployed in a new country with an unfamiliar set of cultural and interactional norms (e.g., Clyne, 1994; Henderson et al., 2006; Hunter, 2007; Kasper, 2001; Kerekes, 2006, 2007; Myles, 2005). This paper documents a contribution to this research in the New Zealand context. Using two exemplary case studies, we describe some of the sociopragmatic complexities faced by skilled migrants as they begin to engage in intercultural interaction in the workplace of a new society.

2.1   The Communication Skills course

The two professional migrants who are the focus of this study were enrolled in an English language course for skilled migrants who had been unable to find work in their chosen professions in New Zealand. The twelve-week course begins with a five-week in-class component followed by a six-week workplace placement (with each Monday afternoon spent back in class to de-brief and discuss any problems), and concludes with a final week in class. The course aims to assist skilled migrants to develop communication skills which will facilitate their attempts to gain employment within their chosen profession in New Zealand. One goal of the initial five week block is therefore to develop awareness of characteristic features of communication in NZ workplaces, and to assist the participants

to develop analytical skills which will empower them to make choices about how to interact in that context.

To this end the course draws on materials developed from authentic recorded workplace interaction between English-speaking New Zealanders, collected by the Wellington Language in the Workplace Project (LWP) team over a number of years.[2] In addition, the extensive analyses of this material by the LWP team provide valuable information about the range of sociopragmatic skills underlying effective workplace talk. The course prepares learners for encounters beyond those presented in class, and encourages them to see their role not as imitators of native speakers, but as social actors engaging with other social actors in a particular kind of intercultural communication and interaction which is different from that between native speakers (Byram, 1997, p. 20-21; 2006a, 2006b).

2.2   The participants

The participants in this study have been pseudonymed Helena and Andrei. Helena is in her late thirties, a professional accountant who came to New Zealand from Hong Kong. She had been in New Zealand for several years when she enrolled in the Communication Skills course. Andrei is in his early forties, a senior public relations advisor from Russia who had been in New Zealand for three years when he enrolled in the course. Both agreed willingly to participate in our research project which involved detailed monitoring of their progress in acquiring sociopragmatic skills from the beginning of the course to the end of their six week internship in an appropriate New Zealand workplace (cf. Williams, 2008). We recorded them for several weeks during their internships and in the analysis below, we focus on the workplace component of their data (see Riddiford fc for more details on the additional material collected).

3.   Method

Our data collection method has been thoroughly described elsewhere (Holmes & Stubbe, 2003). Its most distinctive feature is the fact that the participants themselves record their everyday workplace talk with as little interference from the research team as possible. In general, we minimise our intrusion as researchers into the work environment, while also carefully managing ethical matters and confidentiality which is always a prime concern, both to those being recorded, and to the research team.

Using our standard procedure, we first obtained permission to record from the managing director and any affected staff in the two workplaces where Helena and Andrei were placed for their internships. Each was assigned a workplace mentor and the cooperation of these people was especially important to the data collection. Each recorded about four hours of ordinary everyday workplace talk during the first two weeks and the last two weeks of their internship. This material was then transcribed and forms the basis of the analysis below.

4.   Analysis

In this section we discuss excerpts from the workplace data to demonstrate the ways in which these two skilled migrants managed both their professional identity in their respective workplaces as well as the challenge of relational talk at work, focussing in particular on areas that appeared to be problematic.

4.1   Doing professional identity

Our analyses demonstrate that both participants were able to engage effectively in the fundamental, unmarked, transactional talk which constitutes the bread-and-butter of workplace interaction (see Holmes & Riddiford, fc). But from their perspectives, this was not enough. Both migrants came from cultures where people are expected to assert their expertise quite explicitly, so that others are reassured about their competence and qualifications (cf Roberts, Campbell & Robinson, 2008). Excerpt 1 illustrates how, in line with this norm, Andrei constructs his professional identity in a very explicit way in an interaction with his mentor, Camille, who is older than Andrei and very experienced in the area of public relations in this organisation.

Excerpt 1

Context: Informal office interaction in the first 2 weeks of Andrei's internship. Camille and Andrei are discussing the parameters of Andrei's job in the organisation.

[XXX] has been used to protect the identity of the organisation in which Andrei is working.

1.	And:	I er [clears throat] I was involved in the same
2.		similar to the similar similar work back in Russia
3.	Cam:	oh right
4.	And:	er but for international er financial er institutions
5.		like international monetary fund //and the world\ bank
6.	Cam:	/oh wow\\
7.	And:	and the European bank for construction and development
8.	Cam:	oh
9.	And:	and for our ( ) of ch- chairman and deputy chairman
10.		and deputy director of some of the departments
11.		were [XXX] departments not just [XXX] //but\
12.	Cam:	/mm\\
13.	And:	[XXX] and then financial [XXX]
14.	Cam:	right yes
15.	And:	banking supervision and accounting
16.	Cam:	that's quite big work
17.	And:	yes //really big\ the whole um
18.	Cam:	/yeah\\
19.	And:	I was a team leader
20.	Cam:	mm
21.	And:	and five people reported to me ++
22.		and I w- and I coordinated the (role) for the first deputy
23.		chairwomen missus [name] she was right hand
24.		of chairman of the European bank bank of Europe
25.	Cam:	oh
26.	And:	chair govern reserve bank
27.	Cam:	oh okay one of my brothers is going to Moscow next week

Andrei begins appropriately by linking what he wants to say to the current context in which his responsibilities are being outlined. In lines 1-2, he indicates that he has relevant previous experience. He goes on to describe his previous position in considerable. In a typical interaction between New Zealanders, the information in the first two lines would almost certainly be considered enough. New Zealanders tend to play down expertise; it would be most unusual to hear someone elaborate their experience in the detail provided here by Andrei. He not only mentions the organisations he has worked for (lines 4, 5, 7), he also lists the important people he has worked for (lines 9-10), and the specific areas that he has worked in (lines 13, 15). He then goes on to provide a detailed account of his role as a team leader of five people (lines 19, 21), and finally his role in relation to an important woman, the right hand of the chairman of the organisation (lines 22-24, 26).

There is evidence from Camille's responses that she finds this elaborated, explicit professional identity construction a little over the top. Her first response, *oh right* (line 3), is a positive high-pitched polite response, with the *oh* indicating just a little surprise in response to the information being voluntarily proffered (Heritage, 1998). Her second response *oh wow* (line 6) suggests that she has recognised that the discourse has moved from the transactional into the personal realm, as this is the kind of enthusiastic supportive response one might expect in an informal social exchange rather than in transactional talk. As Andrei persists with his self-advocacy, her responses become less encouraging both in form and tone: *oh* (line 8), *mm* (line 12)*,* and her use of *right yes* (line 14) could be interpreted as a signal that it is time to move on to the next topic (Fung & Carter, 2007; Schiffrin 1987). Since this does not de-rail Andrei, she produces a positive utterance with falling intonation, which appears to be another attempt to finish the topic, *that's quite big work* (line 16). There is a noticeable absence of response after Andrei's *and five people reported to me* (line 21), suggesting Camille is adopting another strategy to discourage further elaboration. After two more polite but very minimal responses *mm* (line 20) and *oh* (line 25), she finally takes over firmly *oh okay,* and then changes the topic, though, considerably, she selects a social topic on which Andrei is likely to have something to contribute *one of my brothers is going to Moscow next week* (line 25).

This interpretation assumes Andrei regards it as important in this initial phase of his internship to supply evidence of his experience and competence, and that the appropriate amount of such information is much greater for someone of Russian origins than is normal in New Zealand. Research with Russian immigrants in Israel supports this suggestion. Zaldman and Drory (2001) report that Russian immigrants placed great emphasis on the importance of upward impression management in workplace contexts. It is equally possible that, because Camille is not overtly encouraging, or because in Andrei's opinion the response is not sufficiently appreciative, he keeps adding more information in the expectation that Camille will finally be explicitly complimentary about his previous experience. We cannot be sure of the exact reasons for Andrei's behaviour, but the first explanation, relating to Russian norms, is consistent with Andrei's subsequent behaviour in this

workplace. He is a confident and assertive man and he continues to inform people about his extensive and significant professional experience throughout the first couple of weeks of his internship.

From a New Zealander's standpoint, Andrei's exhaustive documentation of his previous experience, and especially the claims he makes concerning the importance of his role and status, are unnecessarily detailed, especially in the relatively informal context in which he and Camille are discussing his current work. Indeed, given the fact that it is a protracted instance, it would be likely to be classified rather negatively: i.e., regarded as unacceptable boasting. The "tall poppy syndrome" (Jackson & Parry, 2001, p. 27) requires New Zealanders to be modest and self-deprecating. Andrei's culturally different mode of operating is problematic from a New Zealand colleague's point of view.

In her workplace, Helena also manages to refer to her previous relevant professional experience, but she does so in a way that is skilfully integrated into the transactional exchange in which she is engaged with her colleague Edward.

Excerpt 2

Context: Informal office interaction in the first 2 weeks of Helena's internship. Edward and Helena are discussing the issue of assessment standards.

1.   Edw: that's another grey area that we have to solve
2.   Hel: always //yeah\
3.   Edw: /yeah\\
4.   Hel: I know always got problem like this
5.   when the time was I work in hong kong
6.   you know we have we used th- the standards
7.   Edw: yes
8.   Hel: the hong kong standards but when I touched
9.   when we touched th- the account in china + as
10. Edw: different
11. Hel: different and how did they never listen
12.   //they never listened\ [laughs]
13. Edw: /[laughs]\\

Helena's syntax and lexis is often not native-like (e.g., *always got problem like this* (line 4), *touched* (lines 8-9) rather than "accessed"), but, sociopragmatically, her talk indicates a good grasp of how to manage the insertion of a claim to relevant experience using an appropriately modest, indirect and off-record strategy. She refers to her previous employment in Hong Kong in order to draw a parallel with the kinds of accounting problems Edward is discussing. The main clause focuses on the issue of the standards to be used: *we used th- the standards … the hong kong standards* (lines 6, 8). Her experience is effectively referenced through the subordinate, embedded clause, *when the time was I work in hong kong* (line 5), which leads up to the main point. She also adds a light touch of humour implicitly lining up herself and Edward as insiders who share the same experiences: *they never listen***,** *they never listened* (line 11-12). The repetition is a very effective rhetorical device here signalling rapport. The exchange gives a strong impression that Helena is on the same wave-length as Edward, and in contrast to Andrei, she has managed to integrate the reference to her earlier professional

experience in a way that conforms to New Zealand norms which require self-deprecation, subtlety, and at least superficial modesty.

4.2   Relational talk at work

Operating effectively in New Zealand workplaces requires attention to the relational as well as the transactional aspects of interaction. Often this entails providing appropriate feedback to others and responding in a pro-active way to their talk. An example from the first two weeks of Helena's internship illustrates that she has developed good skills in this area too.

Excerpt 3

Context: Informal office interaction in the first 2 weeks of Helena's internship. Edward and Helena are discussing the advantages of working with a diverse set of colleagues.

```
1.    Edw:      there is some who are quite um quite fast so quite busy
2.    Hel:      yes yes it's not hard to imagine //and understand\
3.    Edw:      /yeah yeah\\ yeah and um er what's well I call it
4.              good about it is that you you you
5.              you quite learn how to talk to people
6.              with those kinds of attitudes and different ones
7.              so it's different every day you know you you um
8.    Hel:      talk to face to face may be easier
9.    Edw:      no but it's too far eh + so the government might spend
10.             for me to go to auckland and that's not practical
11.             /+ so yeah\\
12.   Hel:      /[laughs]\\ [laughs]: yeah you got a point:
```

Helena first provides supportive feedback *yes yes it's not hard to imagine and understand* (line 4) indicating agreement and elaborating to show she has taken Edward's point. Her next comment is a suggestion that *talk to face to face may be easier* (line 8), demonstrating engagement with the topic; she is suggesting that dealing with people with different attitudes face-to-face may be easier than on the phone. When he disagrees with her suggestion on the basis of the expense of flying to Auckland, she responds very appropriately and comfortably, *yeah you got a point* (line 12). At a later point in her internship, Edwards says to her in relation to a task she has been set, *haven't you finished yet,* a comment that could be regarded as a criticism or indirect complaint. Rather than getting flustered or defensive, Helena responds in a relaxed and reassuring tone, *oh er better have a quick look again*, and Edward responds positively *sure*. This is nice evidence of her awareness of the importance of attention to the interpersonal dimension in interaction.

While Andrei also often managed this aspect of talk competently, his recordings also provide examples where, from a New Zealand perspective, he strikes a wrong note in some respect. Excerpt 4 provides a brief illustration.

Excerpt 4

Context: Informal office interaction in the first 2 weeks of Andrei's internship. Emma is explaining to him what he is required to assist in planning a conference (a "national forum"). She suggests he reads a set of files to find out how the previous conference organiser went about the task.

1.	Emm:	some of the information that's in there
2.		might help you towards the national //forum\
3.	And:	/and\\ where did they happen
4.		when did they take place
5.	Emm:	they happened just at quite recently
6.		they were in march and april I think
7.	And:	mhm wh- what in what places
8.	Emm:	they happened in hamilton
9.	And:	mhm
10.	Emm:	auckland no I don't know maybe it was
11.		I can't remember whether it was
12.	And:	no no mm it's alright
13.	Emm:	christchurch

In this interchange, Andrei takes the initiative and asks questions of Emma: *where* (line 3), *when* (line 4) *in what places* (line 7), and when finally Emma says she can't remember, he responds with *no mm it's alright* (line 12). Questions are an effective means of taking control of an interaction, and it is typically the superior in an interaction who asks direct questions such as these.[3] Given Andrei's position as an intern, working with an experienced and senior colleague, his questions seem rather challenging and even confrontational in this context from a New Zealand point of view. Indeed his workplace mentor explicitly commented to him in a feedback session on what she regarded as inappropriately direct questioning behaviour. Subordinates are generally expected to be deferent and attentive, rather than assertive and demanding. His final reassuring response similarly appears rather patronising. If the roles were reversed and Andrei were the superior, this exchange would be unremarkable. And from his perspective, given that he is trying to enact a professional and experience identity, he is behaving in an appropriate way, taking control of the interaction and asking for the information he needs (cf. Larina, 2008; Thomas, 1984, p. 227). This is a very interesting example, then, since it exposes the extent to which people expect newcomers in a workplace, however well-qualified and experienced, to behave in a submissive and deferential way until they have become well integrated into the relevant community of practice.

Small talk also presents challenges to many migrants in New Zealand workplaces. Clyne (1994) has discussed the puzzlement of migrants in Australian factories when faced with the expectation that they would engage in small talk while at work. Migrants from Vietnam, for example, interpreted friendly social talk as intrusive cross-questioning about personal matters (Clyne, 1994, p. 180). Given our awareness of the importance of social talk in New Zealand workplaces, as demonstrated in the LWP data and analyses (e.g., Holmes & Stubbe, 2003; Holmes, 2005), the course members had been given a good deal of practice in engaging in small talk.

Excerpt 5 illustrates how Helena successfully manages a small talk episode. Following some transactional talk, Edward asks her where she lives.

Excerpt 5

Context: The first day of Helena's internship and Edward is explaining the job to her.

1.	Edw:	how about p cs two p cs mm three two eight five (4)
2.		do you have a nice (place) where do you go \
3.		where do you come from
4.		where do you er you where in wellington are you
5.	Hel:	lower hutt //+ yeah\
6.	Edw:	/oh okay\\
7.	Hel:	so I catch a train and then I went into the campus
8.		to do some um school work [laughs]
9.	Edw:	wow [laughs]
10.	Hel:	[laughs]: quickly: walk [laughs] from the railway station
11.		to here um that's okay less than fifteen minutes though
12.		that's really really good walking exercise [laughs]
13.		in the morning # what about you where do you //+ live\
14.	Edw:	/oh\\ in churton park
15.	Hel:	churton park so you //+ own your own transport\
16.	Edw:	/yeah ( )\\ no I ride a bus
17.	Hel:	oh yeah ( )
18.	Edw:	um we can't +++ [laughs]
19.	Hel:	so when you do the offshore one +
20.		I think they'll be much more difficult
21.		than this one + yeah

Helena not only maintains her end of the small talk appropriately (lines 5, 7-8, 10-12), she also adeptly and considerately returns the interactional baton to Edward after she has made her contribution (line 13). And, interestingly, she also has the confidence to shift the talk back to transactional matters (their offshore accounts) after an appropriate pause (lines 19-21).

While he often manages small talk perfectly well, on occasion Andrei's contributions are not so adept, as excerpt 6 illustrates.

Excerpt 6

Context: Andrei is being introduced to people on his first day of work. He has just informed them that he did a one year Diploma course at the University of Otago in Dunedin.

1.	Con:	my family's down in Dunedin
2.		it's a lovely //place I lived there for a while\
3.	And:	/oh so really I know I know I know\\ all Dunedin
4.	Cam:	mm //[laughs]\ //[laughs]\
5.	And:	/it's a very small place [laughs]\\
6.	Con:	/it is it's got character though\\
7.	And:	it's become er just ( ) city when I- er when
8.		students are gone
9.	Con:	oh yeah I know I was in the fire service down there

Given that Conrad responds in a friendly way to Andrei by telling him that his family lives in Dunedin, it would seem diplomatic to be careful with comments about the city. But after asserting that, on the basis of a year there, he knows *all Dunedin,* Andrei goes on to describe it as *a very small place*. Conrad responds *it's got character though,* indicating that indeed he does feel positive about the place. There is nothing inaccurate in what Andrei says–Dunedin is certainly a relatively small place by international standards**,** but his comments appear rather critical and negative in the context of his first social conversation in this new workplace. They could also be seen as somewhat self-promoting, implying that Andrei is a man of experience in the world and is accustomed to living in much larger cities. Of course, anyone could make a faux pas of this sort, but it is important to recognise that such apparently irrelevant talk has considerable significance in laying the foundation for smooth (or less smooth) work relationships.

5.   Discussion

Adapting to culturally different organisations provides many challenges for new migrants, and managing intercultural workplace interaction is often particularly demanding because cultural differences are not always easy to identify. Our analyses suggest that migrants are often interactionally very competent. Both our focus participants managed well with the more technical, task-oriented talk required by their positions. However, there were some areas where interactional problems arose.

In the context of enacting professional identity, it was apparent that Andrei's approach was often too explicit and, from a New Zealand perspective, unacceptably self-promotional. Roberts et al. (2008) comment that one of the challenges facing members of ethnic minorities who wish to progress in professional work contexts are the differences between their norms and those of the majority group interviewers who hold the key to their promotion. Some minority group members simply assume they are expected to be very direct and explicit concerning their qualifications and expertise in relation to the promotion they are seeking. "Candidates born abroad expect more opportunity to talk explicitly about their different life experiences" (Roberts et al., 2008, p. 5). Those who are explicit and state their qualifications and experience baldly are judged negatively.

> Differences in communicative style mean that this group of candidates are judged either as too 'harsh' or 'emotional' because they do not euphemise their self-presentation or, in contrast, they come across as 'lecturing' and using generalisations because they do not give accounts of themselves as active agents (Roberts et al., 2008, p. 143)

Although their data is based on promotion interviews in Britain, their comments are obviously relevant in interpreting the kind of self-promotional talk in which Andrei engages in his new workplace, as illustrated in excerpt 3 above. The material is presented too bluntly and overtly in relation to the cultural norms of the workplace.

Roberts et al. (2008, p. 143) go on to say: "[candidates] do not blend the discourses of the job interview into a synthesised whole". They need to work them "seamlessly into their overall self-

presentation" (Roberts et al., 2008, p. 81). Interestingly this is what Helena manages much more successfully than Andrei, as illustrated in excerpt 4. By introducing her relevant experience incidentally or "by the way" in relation to a current problem, she manages to convey the relevant information in a culturally acceptable way, as judged by New Zealand organisational norms.

The same point applies to social talk. As mentioned above, migrant workers are often bewildered by the way in which social talk is intertwined with transactional talk in New Zealand workplaces. New Zealand colleagues switch easily between discussion of personal matters and task-oriented talk with very little obvious signalling from an outsider's perspective. Note, for example, the switch by Camille to a topic involving her brother in line 27 in excerpt 3, and the switch from work-talk to small talk by Edward in line 2, excerpt 5. This is typical of what Campbell and Roberts, following Gee, Hull and Lankshear (1996), identify as the 'new work order' where "the seamless synthesis of personal and work-based identity has to be artfully performed to produce a convincing synthetic personality which embodies certain 'competencies' and dispositions" (Campbell & Roberts, 2007, pp. 244-245). This synthesis is clearly a real problem for many migrants who are used to keeping their personal and professional identities quite distinct (see also McCallum, 2008).

Careful examination of the workplace discourse we have recorded indicates that such switches are generally marked by short pauses as they begin and often also by discourse markers such as *right* or *ok* as the switch back to transactional talk occurs (Marra, 2008). But these are subtle signals, and migrant workers need to be alerted to them. From a minority group employee's perspective, the interleaving of social and work-related talk is often very confusing.

Finally, it is worth commenting on the extent to which newcomers are expected to be deferential and submissive when they begin work in a new organisation, regardless of their skills and experience. It takes time to join a new community of practice, and the New Zealand norms require that during that time people observe and respond rather than initiate. Even a new boss will be expected to first learn about the distinctive features of a workplace culture before beginning to throw their weight about. For members of an ethnic minority joining a workplace as an intern, the constraints are even more stringent. Asserting oneself, taking the initiative by asking lots of questions, being critical and dominating the talk time are all unacceptable ways of behaving in this context. Newcomers need to be aware of these norms, since they are different from those in some other cultures where being assertive in a new job context is not only acceptable but respected and admired (Roberts et al., 2008; Zaldman and Drory, 2001).

6.   Conclusion

This paper has identified some areas of workplace interaction which are potentially problematic for professionals from ethnic minorities faced with the unfamiliar norms of different organisational cultures. The challenge for those wishing to assist them is just how to raise these issues in ways that are constructive and not demeaning. For, as Boxer (2002, p. 151) notes, although

misperceptions are typically two-way, "the consequences of such a situation are scarcely two-way, because inevitably one group wields societal power at the expense of the other".

Ideally, skilled migrants should be able to present themselves in a new organisation in ways that accurately convey their professional standing and maintain their dignity. Providing them with information about New Zealand interactional norms is essential so that they do not inadvertently transgress and cause irritation, or even unintended offence. These professionals need to be informed about the costs of flouting workplace interactional norms. On the other hand, those who work alongside them also need to be informed of the different cultural norms of the migrants with whom they are working. In other words, this should be a two-way process. Our ultimate goal is to use our authentic workplace data to educate both sides of the intercultural exchange. The analysis in this paper provides a valuable starting point since it exposes for the first time, some of the subtle ways in which miscommunication may occur and misunderstandings may arise in mundane workplace interaction.

Transcription Conventions

[laughs]: :	Paralinguistic features and other comments in square brackets; colons indicate start/finish of paralinguistic feature
+	Pause of up to one second
(2)	Longer pause, measured in seconds
// \	Simultaneous speech
/ \\	
(hello)	Transcriber's best guess at an unclear utterance
( )	Unintelligible utterance
-	Incomplete or cut-off utterance
?	Rising or question intonation
…	Section of transcript omitted
#	Signals end of "sentence" where it is ambiguous on paper

All names used in the examples are pseudonyms.

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Notes

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[2] See Riddiford (2007), Riddiford and Joe (2005), Newton (2007) and Prebble (2007).

[3] In our workplace data, it is those who are in positions of power who typically ask the most direct questions (Holmes & Stubbe 2003, Holmes & Chiles i.p.).

Business Internship Program Development in Light of Professional Communication Research: Kevin's Company at Kanda University of International Studies

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Abstract

Students need to acquire the knowledge, skills, and attitudes associated with global competency that will enable them to compete in the global workforce upon graduation. In the literature, however, there are different interpretations of global competency, including those offered by various representatives of the public and private sectors. This study investigates the effectiveness of a domestic business internship program in Japan, Kevin's Company at the Kanda University of International Studies (KUIS), in preparing students to succeed as members of the global workforce. While the results of a questionnaire completed by students who had participated in Kevin's Company indicated that the students had been able to increase their global competency through the program, the questionnaire responses also indicated that the students did not consider their English language skills to have significantly increased. Professional communication research in the literature, however, offers insight into enhancing the communication skills of the students in the business internship program. In the discussion section, consideration is given to improving the communication aspect of the internship program in view of the nature of communication in the workplace and of a model proposed for the training of lawyers (Candlin, et al., 1994). This paper was adapted from Knight (2008) with permission.

1.   Introduction and background

Globalization is changing the work environment that our students will enter upon graduation, as Tillman (2005, 4-5) describes below.

> Globalization is the most powerful economic factor influencing the job market in all regions of the world….We are not only talking about large businesses or multinational corporations being impacted by what's been referred to as the 'new economy' and a changing global and political landscape. Students leaving colleges and universities with either AA, BA, MA, MS, MBA, or doctoral degrees all face a job market—whether in the nonprofit, public, or private sectors—that is decidedly different than a generation ago.

Given the rapid onset of globalization, the advancement of technology, and the necessity of a competent workforce for the well-being of a nation, the following two questions are relevant:

(1)   What do students need in order to become successful members of the global workforce upon graduation?

(2)   How should students be prepared?

In the literature, these two questions have been answered in various ways, but the answers usually refer to the "knowledge, attitudes and skills" that are associated with global competency (George & Shams, 2006, 249).

In 1991 in the U.S. Department of Labor, the Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS) produced a report entitled *What Work Requires of Schools: A SCANS Report for America 2000* that identified the *fundamental skills* and *workplace competencies* needed by students to succeed in the "world of work" and the "high performance work place."

Table 1

SCANS Skills and Competencies (SCANS 2000, xviii, xx, 12 & 16)

Fundamental Skills:
1. <u>Basic Skills</u>: Reading, writing, arithmetic/mathematics, listening, speaking
2. <u>Thinking Skills</u>: Creative thinking, decision making, problem solving, seeing things in the mind's eye, knowing how to learn, reasoning
3. <u>Personal Qualities</u>: Responsibility, self-esteem, sociability, self-management, integrity/honesty
Workplace Competencies:
1. <u>Resources</u>: Time, money, material and facilities, human resources
2. <u>Interpersonal</u>: Participates as member of a team, teaches others new skills, serves clients/customers, exercises leadership, negotiates, works with diversity
3. <u>Information</u>: Acquires and evaluates information, organizes and maintains information, interprets and communicates information, uses computers to process information
4. <u>Systems</u>: Understands systems, monitors and corrects performance, improves or designs systems
5. <u>Technology</u>: Selects technology, applies technology to task, maintains and troubleshoots equipment

In the field of *international education*, experts in the area of "global competency" offer various interpretations of the term. The three interpretations in Table 2 do not emphasize the specific "workplace competencies" of the SCANS report but instead refer to the importance of a student's (1) knowledge of global issues, (2) ability to learn and to make interconnections, and (3) knowledge of foreign languages and cultures.

Table 2

Perspectives of Global Competency (Willard, 2005, 1)

"'A global-ready graduate [is] a person with a grasp of global systems, global issues, the dynamics of how things are interrelated and interconnected in the world, and how society can best address global issues.' - Ron Moffatt, Director of the San Diego State University International Student Center 'The skills to listen, observe and evaluate, analyze, interpret, and relate.' - Darla K. Deardorff, Director of Duke University's International Education Administrators Association 'The ability to be fluent in at least one other language, such as Spanish or Mandarin; fluency with e-commerce and the Internet; a well-versed knowledge of geography; and, maybe most important, some knowledge of the political and cultural history of one or two countries or regions outside of Western Europe.' - Carol Conway, Director of the Southern Global Strategies Council"

In research conducted to identify the competencies and skills that employers desire, Reilly (2004, 72) found that 28 survey items were "very important" for a *recent graduate* to know or be able to do in order to "secure an entry-level, professional employment position in an international setting (at home or abroad)." These items were a reflection of the "fundamental skills" in the SCANS report and of Deardorff's aforementioned comments regarding global competency.

Table 3

Items Identified as "Very Important" for a Recent Graduate (Reilly, 2004, 112-124)

- Demonstrate the qualities of tolerance, sensitivity to others, and tact
- Recognize and respect individual and cultural differences
- Demonstrate appropriate international etiquette in situations with business colleagues and clients such as greeting, introducing, thanking, taking leave, negotiating, and confirming contracts, socializing, paying and receiving compliments, and gift giving
- Behave in a manner that demonstrates knowledge of and respect for other countries
- Adapt use of English to the formality of the situation and the fluency of the business partner in international business and social settings
- Demonstrate ability to manage one's own stress levels
- Demonstrate self-awareness
- Demonstrate ability to motivate oneself
- Demonstrate ability to handle problems
- Demonstrate dependability
- Demonstrate ability to be flexible and adaptable
- Demonstrate commitment to quality work
- Demonstrate ability to self-evaluate personal strengths and weaknesses (awareness of personal skills and abilities)
- Demonstrate amenability toward training
- Practice good listening skills (learn to speak less, listen more)
- Demonstrate knowledge of Standard English: correct grammar, organization, writing strategy, sentence structure, and punctuation required for writing or editing reports
- Demonstrate ability to express ideas orally with consideration for audiences that understand English language in varying degrees
- Demonstrate ability to communicate effectively with others in writing as indicated by the needs of the audience (writing)
- Demonstrate ability to communicate effectively with others in writing as indicated by the needs of the audience (writing)
- Demonstrate ability to listen to what other people are saying and ask questions as appropriate (active listening)

- Understand the necessity of tailoring messages to reflect cultural context and difference
- Demonstrate ability to listen to others and ask clarifying questions as appropriate
- Demonstrate knowledge of how to find information and identify essential information (information gathering)
- Demonstrate ability to problem-solve issues related to one's professional competence in different cultural contexts
- Demonstrate ability to understand how the organization works
- Demonstrate ability for team-building
- Demonstrate an understanding of the organization's international strategic vision (clearly defined, understood, communicated, and accepted throughout the organization)
- Demonstrate an understanding of the international context and cultural norms of potential members, customers, partners, and other stakeholders

It should be recognized, however, that *global companies* do have workforce needs unique to their industries and organizations. The Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of United Parcel Service (UPS), Michael Eskew, for example, in a speech entitled *Education in an Age of Globalization* presented to the States Institute on International Education stated that his company was looking for future employees who were able to meet the need created by an increase in world trade; specifically, employees who were "trade literate," "sensitive to foreign cultures," "conversant in different languages," "technology savvy," "capable of managing complexity," and "ethical," although Eskew added that people with the aforementioned skills would be leading most American companies (Eskew, 2005, 12).

Finally, in the interconnected *world of the future* described by Friedman in the best selling book, *The World is Flat*, middle class jobs will be filled by people with the skills to collaborate, synthesize, explain, leverage technology, adapt, solve environmental problems, personalize, and localize (Friedman, 2006).

Table 4

Jobs and Skills in the Future Interconnected World (Friedman, 2006)

•   "Collaborators and Orchestrators": Collaborating and orchestrating in and between global companies with diverse populations
•   "Synthesizers": Combining unrelated things in unique, unforeseen ways
•   "Explainers": Explaining complicated things simply
•   "Leveragers": Leveraging technology to empower others
•   "Adapters": Continually adapting, learning, and growing
•   "Green People": Solving environmental problems
•   "Personalizers": Adding a personal/human touch to a job
•   "Localizers": Customizing global capabilities for local needs

1.1   Kevin's Company

Recognizing that the needs of a student for language training and professional experience are not always met through the traditional internship programs in Japan where a student-intern's responsibility and exposure to the English language may be limited or nonexistent, Kevin's Company was created.

Kevin's Company is the name of a business internship program offered through the Career Education Center of the Kanda University of International Studies (KUIS) in Chiba, Japan to second and third year undergraduate KUIS students of Japanese nationality. The school-year long program is an elective, and students receive academic credit for participation.

In the internship program, the participants simulate working in a consulting company entitled *Kevin's Company*. Each participant is assigned to a consulting team. Classroom sessions are conducted as company meetings. The instructor is a native English speaker, acts as president of the company, teaches marketing management to the participants, and directly supervises the consulting teams. All meetings are conducted in English.

Each team is assigned to create a marketing plan for British Hills (BH), which is a reproduction of a British village from the Victorian era and located on top of a hill in a forested area of Fukushima prefecture in Japan (http://www.british-hills.co.jp/english/). BH is affiliated with KUIS and serves as a residential language-learning facility for students of all ages throughout Japan and for company and government employees. BH simultaneously functions as a resort for guests interested in British culture. BH hires native English speakers from primarily the former British Commonwealth of Nations to work as instructors and staff. BH also hires as employees Japanese with advanced English speaking ability.

The internship program is divided into three stages. During the first stage, the teams construct the first draft of a marketing plan and prepare to conduct research onsite at BH. They learn how to analyze a company (SWOT analysis), conduct marketing research (observation, interview, and

questionnaire), and create a marketing plan, based on designs suggested in MBA-level materials in English (e.g., Kotler, 2006; Burns, 2006).

During this first stage, the teams have a limited amount of information about British Hills. The emphasis during this stage is on the ability of the applicants to work and to learn in teams and to apply the concepts that they are learning to their team's marketing plan.

During the second stage of the internship program, the applicants acquire real world feedback on their plan from professionals at British Hills. During this stage, the participants stay at BH for six days during the summer break of KUIS. During their stay at BH, they engage in three types of activities: (1) meetings with the management and staff of each BH department, (2) marketing research, and (3) work in the different departments at BH. Through these activities, they are provided with opportunities to interview English-speaking employees of BH, learn about the work of each department in the organization, and experience doing several of the jobs themselves. The teams are also asked to improve their marketing plans based on the information they acquire at BH.

During this second stage, the teams often realize that their marketing plans are insufficient in one or more ways. It is at this point that team members have to overcome their "failure," revise their plan based on the feedback they have acquired, and achieve success. This is the type of setback experience that the participants in Kevin's Company must be able to overcome to succeed as members of the global workforce.

During the third stage of the internship program, the teams are asked to conduct marketing research that targets the students of KUIS and the Kanda Institute of Foreign Languages (KIFL), which is a two-year vocational institution affiliated with KUIS. Thereafter, the teams analyze the data they have obtained and finalize their marketing plans. Additionally, the teams prepare a PowerPoint presentation and receive training in presentation delivery. The audience of the teams' final presentation may consist of BH and university administrators, the participants' professors, members of the business community, and the participants' peers.

This third stage is intended to simulate the type of experience that the participants might have in persuading others in the workplace (i.e., a boss, colleagues, or the members of a board of directors) to support their proposals.

Each participant is assessed on his or her team's performance, individual performance, and peer evaluation.

2.   Objective

As Kevin's Company is a domestic business internship program in Japan, the study was designed to provide an indication of whether this type of domestic program is effective in preparing participants to compete in the global workforce upon graduation, given the recognized value of overseas experiences in the development of global competency.

3.   Participants

This study was conducted with the participants in the first year of Kevin's Company (i.e., April 2006 to January 2007). Six undergraduate students at KUIS enrolled in the business internship program. Five of the students (three females and two males) were undergraduate students in their third year of study, and one of the students (female) was in her second year of study.

The six participants were divided into two classes held at different times, due to their class schedules. One class consisted of two third-year females and one third-year male (3F, 3F, 3M), and another class consisted of one third-year male, one third-year female, and one second-year female (3M, 3F, 2F).

Prior to entering the business internship program:

- All of the third-year students had held one or more part-jobs.

- All of the participants had traveled to one or more foreign countries.

- All of the participants had studied English in several of their other classes at KUIS.

4.   Methods

At the end of the internship program, five of the six students were asked to complete a questionnaire (containing 43 items) in class. One of the students (3rd year female) was absent from class at the time the questionnaire was administered.

The questionnaire first asked each participant to identify what he or she had experienced in the business internship program and then to list in order of importance the five most valuable parts of the program for the participant.

Many of the items in the questionnaire were simplified versions of the items in the aforementioned survey by Reilly (2004, 112-124).

5.   Results

The results of the questionnaire have been divided into the following two sections:

(1)   43 items experienced by participants (Table 5), and

(2)   five most valuable parts of the business internship program (Table 6).

5.1   43 Items Experienced by Participants

The participants claimed to have experienced from 51% of the items (3rd year female, 2nd year female) to 91% of the items (3rd year female). The two males (3rd year) claimed to have experienced 86% and 56% of the items respectively.

All of the participants indicated that they had experienced seven items:
teamwork, flexible attitude, acting outside of your comfort zone, analyzing issues from many different perspectives, practice good listening skills, contribute to team building, and understand the vision/purpose of the team.

All of the female participants indicated that they had experienced six items (in addition to the aforementioned seven items):

openness to new experiences, greater appreciation of teamwork, effectively manage your own stress, act dependably, try to express your ideas in spoken English in a way that the listener could understand, and gather information effectively.

All of the male participants indicated that they had experienced twelve items (in addition to the aforementioned seven items):

patience with others, increase in confidence to work in foreign countries, greater willingness to take risks, belief that you can affect change, greater respect for the views of others, greater awareness of the relationship between different organizations, knowledge of the basic parts of a marketing plan, greater understanding of how outside factors affect a business, greater awareness of personal skills and abilities, handle problems under challenging situations, become receptive to learning, and solve different kinds of problems effectively.

All items were experienced by at least two participants with the exception of the following: greater awareness of your own culture (3rd year male only) and improve your proficiency in English (2nd year female only).

Table 5

Items Experienced by Participants

Item		3F	3F	2F	3M	3M
1	Leadership	O			O	
2	Teamwork	O	O	O	O	O
3	Flexible attitude	O	O	O	O	O
4	Patience with others	O		O	O	O
5	Acting outside of your comfort zone	O	O	O	O	O
6	Analyzing issues from many different perspectives	O	O	O	O	O
7	Increase in confidence to work in foreign countries	O			O	O
8	Greater willingness to take risks			O	O	O
9	Belief that you can affect change	O	O		O	O
10	Greater respect for the differences that exist around the world	O	O			O
11	Greater respect for the views of others	O	O		O	O
12	Openness to new experiences	O	O	O		O
13	Nonjudgmental reaction to cultural differences		O		O	O
14	Greater awareness of your own culture				O	
15	Greater awareness of another culture(s)	O		O		O
16	Greater appreciation of teamwork	O	O	O		O
17	Greater awareness of the relationship between different organizations	O			O	O
18	Knowledge of the basic parts of a marketing plan	O	O		O	O
19	Greater understanding of the different parts of a business	O				O
20	Greater understanding of how outside factors affect a business	O		O	O	O

#	Item					
21	Greater awareness of personal skills and abilities	O	O		O	O
22	Adapt the way you use English to match the formality of a situation	O	O			O
23	Improve your proficiency in English			O		
24	Effectively manage your own stress	O	O	O		O
25	Motivate yourself	O		O	O	
26	Handle problems under challenging situations	O		O	O	O
27	Act dependably	O	O	O		O
28	Commit to quality work	O				O
29	Manage multiple priorities (Multitask)	O		O		O
30	Prepare yourself psychologically for an unexpected situation	O				O
31	Become receptive to learning	O			O	O
32	Practice good listening skills	O	O	O	O	O
33	Use standard English (good grammar, etc.)	O	O			O
34	Try to express your ideas in spoken English in way listener understands	O	O	O		O
35	Communicate effectively in writing	O		O		
36	Ask questions as appropriate	O			O	
37	Understand the need to tailor messages to reflect cultural context difference	O				O
38	Ask clarifying questions as appropriate	O				O
39	Gather information effectively	O	O	O		O
40	Solve different kinds of problems effectively	O			O	O
41	Contribute to team building	O	O	O	O	O
42	Understand the vision/purpose of the team	O	O	O	O	O
43	Understand the vision/purpose of non-team members	O	O			O
	Total	**39**	**22**	**22**	**24**	**37**
	Percentage of all items (Rounded up)	**91**	**51**	**51**	**56**	**86**

3F	3rd year female undergraduate student at KUIS
2F	2nd year female undergraduate student at KUIS
3M	3rd year male undergraduate student at KUIS

5.2   Five Most Valuable Parts of the Business Internship Program

The 25 responses from the five participants can be divided as follows:

- 6 responses: Teams
- 4 responses (each): Marketing, business/analysis of business issues, language skills
- 3 responses: Acting outside of one's comfort zone/handling problems
- 1 response (each): Leadership, motivation/presentation, patience with others, enjoying BH stay with other participants

Table 6

Ranking of 5 Most Valuable Parts of the Business Internship Program

3F: 3rd year female undergraduate student at KUIS
1)   Teamwork, strong friendship
2)   To handle problems in many situations
3)   To know marketing which I hadn't known at all
4)   To have motivation to succeed in a presentation
5)   To analyze issues in B.H. and build strategies for them

3F: 3rd year female undergraduate student at KUIS
1)   Teamwork
2)   Understand the vision/purpose of the team
3)   Knowledge of the basic parts of a marketing plan
4)   Analyzing issues from many different perspectives
5)   Acting outside of my comfort zone

2F: 2nd year female undergraduate student at KUIS
1)   Teamwork
2)   Acting outside of my comfort zone
3)   Improving my proficiency in English
4)   Practicing good listening skills
5)   Trying to express my ideas in spoken English in a way that the listener could understand

3M: 3rd year male undergraduate student at KUIS
1)   Leadership
2)   Patience with others
3)   Contributing to team building
4)   Knowledge of the basic parts of a marketing plan
5)   Practicing good listening skills

3M: 3rd year male undergraduate student at KUIS
1)   Acquired skill to cooperate with team members
2)   Became insightful in analyzing any aspect of the business
3)   Learned what actual business is like
4)   Acquired a knowledge of marketing
5)   Enjoyed my stay with the other participants at B.H.

6.   Discussion and Conclusions

Kevin's Company was originally designed to give participants the experiences listed below.

- Understanding and analysis of an actual business
- Teamwork and leadership opportunities
- Business English proficiency
- Understanding of and ability to create a marketing plan

- Presentation and persuasion skills
- The experience of successfully overcoming a challenge

The survey results indicated that the objectives of the internship program were achieved to varying degrees. For example, four of the five participants indicated that they had experienced a "greater understanding of how outside factors affect a business" and "knowledge of the basic parts of a marketing plan," but only two had experienced "greater understanding of the different parts of a business." Teamwork was experienced by all participants, but only two participants indicated that they had experienced leadership. Only one participant mentioned improving her English. Two experiences (presentation and successfully overcoming a challenge) that were built into the internship program were not listed as items in the questionnaire.

The survey results also reflected the literature to a certain extent. The "seven items" that all of the participants had experienced reflected the "interpersonal" and "information" workplace competencies of the SCANS (Table 1), the interpersonal and analytical skills mentioned by Deardorff (Table 2), some of the items that Reilly identified as important for a recent graduate (Table 3), and the skills of "collaborators and orchestrators," "explainers," and "adapters" described by Friedman (Table 4). On the other hand, the survey results did not specifically indicate that the participants had acquired workplace competencies in the areas of "resources," "systems," or "technology" (Table 1), an understanding of global systems or issues (Table 2), or the ability to leverage technology, solve environmental problems, or customize global capabilities for local needs (Table 4).

The differences in the items selected by *all of the male participants* and by *all of the female participants* should also be noted. In particular, the items listed by all of the *male* participants reflected a greater orientation to achieving success in a competitive, global business environment. Specifically, the selected items were related to taking risk, affecting change, solving problems in challenging situations, and personal/professional growth. The items selected by all of the *female* participants, however, reflected a greater orientation to being cooperative team members.

In regard to language, the classroom sessions were conducted in English, and the participants used business materials intended for use by native level speakers, but the participants were permitted to use Japanese when they met as a team so that the more knowledgeable members of the team could explain the business concepts to those teammates who needed assistance. In other words, *learn the business concepts in any way you can* was given priority over *learn the business concepts through English only*.

How then should Kevin's Company be improved to enhance the global competency of participants? First, in light of the literature and survey results, the participants should engage in a "global" business experience that requires them to take leadership roles, utilize technology, and interact with others in English. One way of achieving this task would be to have the participants engage in a consulting project to market British Hills overseas or to create a BH global franchise operation (e.g., similar to the international expansion of Disneyland). In addition, the participants

should be required to interact with foreign, English speaking "advisors" and "team members." These "foreigners" could be graduate students in an MBA program overseas or they could be working professionals, and the interactions could take place online, which would require Kevin's Company participants to become familiar with different technologies (video-conferencing, spreadsheets, etc.). Finally, each member of the team should be assigned a leadership role in one or more areas related to the project such as "international liaison" or "team leader."

In addition, Kevin's Company should be viewed as a "business organization" rather than a classroom, and research conducted on workplace communication should be utilized to enhance the communicative expertise of the members of Kevin's Company, especially as communication skills are essential to global competency.

For example, the participants should be taught to view the workplace in light of the literature of professional communication, which describes the workplace from a number of different perspectives. From a sociological perspective, "[workplaces] are held together by communicative practices" and are "social [institutions] where resources are produced and regulated, problems are solved, identities are played out and professional knowledge is constituted" (Sarangi & Roberts, 1999b, 1). From a social-psychological perspective, professional communication in the workplace is influenced by the concept of "identity" (Watson, 1996; Iedema & Scheeres, 2003) and the need to construct an "expert persona" (Longo, 1994).   Moreover, the "employees" of Kevin's Company should be made aware of concepts such as personal, professional, and institutional modes (Sarangi & Roberts, 1999), interdiscursivity (Candlin, et al., 1997), the perspective-display series (Maynard, 1992), step-wise entry to advice (Vehvialinen, 1992), referee design (Bell, 1990), and communicative expertise (Candlin, 2002).

As a practical model for enhancing the communication skills of the members of Kevin's Company in their "workplace setting," the research of Candlin, et al. (1994) is particularly helpful. Candlin, et al. (1994, 46-49) classify the lawyer-client conference as an "event" with "key aims," "key characteristics," "key issues of communication," "key areas of content," "distinctive features," and "key communicative strategies," which have been identified from the results of project research. Therefore, to enhance the communication skills of the participants in Kevin's Company, one strategy would be to first identify the specific sites of engagement (Scollon, 1998) and corresponding activities and events in the workplace of Kevin's Company. Thereafter, the participants should be taught key communication strategies to maximize their performances in each activity.

As one example, the participants in Kevin's Company have weekly meetings in the Career Education Center at KUIS. During these meetings, the participants engage in two types of activities: (1) marketing-related training and (2) the creation of a marketing plan. The "marketing-related training" sessions are led by an instructor, but the "creation of a marketing plan" sessions are student-led. For each activity, the major processes (e.g., elicitation of information) and the specific discoursal strategies (e.g., seeking clarification) should be identified and comprise the "key areas of content" of a

specific "workplace communication training" program. Candlin, et al. (1994, 49) also recommend that the training "focus critically on the nature of best practice" and "follow a cycle of: **Awareness:** what do we know? **Knowledge:** what do we need to learn? **Critique:** why are matters as they are? **Action:** what can be done?"

Additionally, Boswood (1999, 111) notes that "professional communication...demands definition if it is to serve as a basis for educational design...[and sets forth] nine propositions about professionalism, drawing on the notions of Discourses, communities and identities as they apply to the changing role of communicators in the international workplace [, arguing that training] programs should focus on developing flexible identity management skills for interdiscourse situations, founded on the acquisition of heuristics and skills of critical analysis." The nine propositions include:

1. "The professional applies a body of knowledge by exercising a range of skills in an ethical manner."

2. "The professional is able to communicate within and across Discourse boundaries."

3. "The professional is able to reflect critically on the workings of power through discourse."

4. "The professional has access to the technical, contextual and world knowledge necessary for communication within the communities concerned."

5. "The professional creatively uses the communicative resources of discourse communities to a standard that is recognized as exemplary."

6. "The professional applies knowledge and skills in accordance with codes of conduct which are recognized as ethical by communities."

7. "The professional is effective in reconciling and achieving multi-level purposes through communication."

8. "The professional is able to manage internal and external organizational communication by defining and implementing communication policy."

9. "The professional continuously seeks to develop through active reflection on performance."

The global competency of the participants in Kevin's Company should improve with "workplace training" focused on enhancing professional communicative expertise in a consulting project with a global dimension. Certainly, as Candlin (2008) has noted, an alignment of professional communication research and LSP practice in workplace settings is desirable.

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From a Language Learner to a Language User:
An Alternative Approach to ESP Teaching

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Abstract

Despite its widespread attention at Japanese universities, there are many problems involved in practicing ESP. In this paper, we propose an ICT-based ESP teaching model which is to be carried out as part of a content subject class. It is distinctive in two aspects. First, instead of developing its own teaching materials for ESP teaching, it uses materials used for the content subject class, written in L1, as well as resources on the Internet. Second, it operates on an e-Learning platform to make collaboration possible between the two parties – the language teacher and the content subject teacher. The objectives of the model are twofold: one is to help the students to learn the content subject, and the other is to give the students opportunities for dry runs so that they would be capable of continuing professional development. Two implementations at the courses at one large Japanese university were presented to verify the validity of the proposed instructional model.

1.   Introduction

In order to reform much criticized English language education, Japan's Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) launched a strategic action plan to "cultivate Japanese with English abilities" (2002). It is significant that different goals of language teaching are set, depending on the level of education English language learners receive. In the plan, university graduates should be able to "use" English for professional and/or academic purposes in order to function in the globalised economy and society of the 21st century, whereas the rest of "the entire public" should acquire basic and practical communication abilities in order to conduct daily conversations and exchange information in English. However, a few years after the publication of the plan, the English language proficiency of the Japanese people is still far from satisfactory; the MEXT itself admits that it remains unchanged so that average university graduates are not able to function in English at workplace (2006, p. 110).

The Ministry believes that the students' inability to use English is due to Japan's strong economy that tends to offer no incentives for them to work abroad, and hence makes them more oriented towards the domestic labor market. But the reason is not plausible enough. Rather, the author suspects that their inability comes from their having no intention to become English USERS instead of LEARNERS, since for them English is nothing more than a school subject, along with others such

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as chemistry or history (Cook, 2002). In fact, the students in Japan – excluding those who major in English or related subjects, of course – do not need English for their study towards the first degree. Apart from a few English classes per week during the first year or two at university, they do not read textbooks written in English or attend lectures given in English. Even though language learners are to acquire a language system for later use (Cook, 2002), if they do not have the opportunities to use it at all except in their English lessons, they should not be blamed for having little motivation towards studying English (Miyama, 2000) for their future use, which can be quite uncertain.

If students do not have opportunities for real meaningful communication while at school, then, what teachers can do is to design tasks which require quasi-real communication where students have to use the language for real-life purposes.

This paper introduces a three-year old initiative to transform students from language LEANERS to language USERS at one of the largest engineering school in Japan as an alternative approach to ESP teaching. It also discusses the practical issues on the implementation of such an initiative.

2.   English in Computer Science

English is indisputably the de-facto lingua franca in every field of science and technology. It is especially true with computer science since industrial giants in the field such as Microsoft or Apple are based in America. Because of this fact, technical documentation is first written in English and then translated to various languages. Of course the translation is done for every language in the world. It is often limited to major languages such as Japanese or German. However, not all documents are translated even to those languages, or even when translated, it takes time. Take the example of Java, one of the most commonly used programming languages developed by Sun Microsystems (based in the U.S., like the other big names). The company provides a Java tutorial for its novice users both online and in books. The third edition of the tutorial was published in January 2000 in book form. The Japanese translation, however, came out almost two years later in November 2001. This one example is enough to indicate that if you are unable to read technical documents in English, you will miss out on the newest available information which may be crucial for you to perform competently on the job.

3.   Issues of ESP Teaching

Apart from designing tasks to induce English use, there are other issues, both theoretical and practical, to be examined to run an ESP course. This section discusses the most important three issues. First, although collaboration of language teachers and content subject teachers is indispensable for developing and running such a course (Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998), it is far from realistic to have those two, who often belong to different departments of the university, to work together on a weekly basis for a semester of 15 weeks. Second, since ESP requires homogeneous students with common language needs or subject background (Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998), it is difficult to offer such courses to the first or second year students who do not have enough knowledge in the subject area. However, as the final year of the four year study at the undergraduate school is reserved for laboratory

study, appropriate scheduling of such a course is quite constrained. Third, teaching material such as textbooks written in English and published overseas which are suitable for ESP courses are more difficult to obtain than the ones written in Japanese for the Japanese audience. The ESP textbooks and reference books are technical books which are quite expensive for students to buy and as they are not usually available in the Japanese marketplace, it may take weeks to import a large volume.

4.   ESP Teaching at Kansai University

There was nothing new for an engineering faculty to have some ESP courses in the curriculum. What was innovative for Kansai University, one of the largest private universities located in Osaka, Japan, is that it explicitly declared that ESP education is one of the three key educational goals of the Faculty of Environmental and Urban Engineering. There, ESP teaching (hereafter KU-ESP) is incorporated with some of the compulsory or some other popular elective subjects from the very first semester for the first-year student to the sixth semester for the third-year student continuously. In other words, English is taught as part of the professional and technical education offered in the faculty. As courses in engineering themselves are already heavily packed, an ESP portion is assigned as the out-of-class study. The students study the content subject in class in their native language of Japanese, and review what they have learned in class in English as homework. The ESP homework, as it is called, is given a large proportion of grade so that students know its importance. For example, for the class on the Java programming language, 35 out of 100 points are given to the ESP study, which includes weekly assignments and a mid-term and a final examination.

The goal for the ESP teaching at Kansai University is to transform students from language learners to language users. This initiative aims to raise the students' awareness towards the importance of technical documents written in English in the field of engineering and makes them proficient in using resources, especially those on the Internet, which help them not only to learn English but to use the language for professional purposes. The latter aim is not limited to making students autonomous in their learning. Rather, it aims to foster attitude towards language use, especially the one after their graduation from university since once they leave school, they have fewer opportunities to receive support from teachers as there are no "teachers" at the workplace. Of course, one can go to evening school or the company may provide training opportunities. However, it is unlikely that they will satisfy diverse needs in language use of the participants of such courses. Instead, ESP teaching at Kansai University provides teacher-mediated language use opportunities, or fire-drills as language use should be critical in nature, in order to foster students' attitude towards language use as well as to develop a positive orientation towards continuing professional development, or CPD, to maintain, improve and broaden their knowledge and skills and develop the personal qualities required in their professional lives as engineers.

To overcome the obstacles of running an ESP course such as described above, we turned to e-learning for a solution. The e-learning system we use is not a conventional system which is intended either for distance or remote education, or self-learning. Rather, CEAS (Arakawa, Ueki & Fuyuki,

2004), the system we employ, was designed to integrate the students' in-class learning and the learning done outside of the classroom so that students can build an ideal learning habit which will help them to be more autonomous and responsible in their learning. CEAS makes collaboration possible between teachers, especially content subject professors and language teaching experts, by letting them work online. In this way, the language teachers do not have to go to the engineering classroom to give and collect assignments, for example.

Here is how KU-ESP is put in practice. First, the content subject professor gives a lecture in Japanese. On the next day, an ESP homework which reviews the lecture on the previous day, prepared by the language teaching experts, is available on CEAS. The students are given 36 to 48 hours to complete the homework. After the submission is closed, the language teaching experts download the students' output from CEAS and analyze it. Then they prepare the feedback on the homework and send it to the content subject professor so that he can use that material at the beginning of the next lecture to review the homework. As the ESP homework itself is the review of the last lecture, it is useful to discuss problems found in the homework in the next lecture, before moving on to the next topic.

5.   Applications

In this section, some details of the KU-ESP are described. Due to the limited length of the paper, only the applications for one second year class and one third year class are included here.

5.1   Application 1 (Second Year Java Class)

This is an introductory class for Java, a programming language, for the second year student. About 150 students are enrolled in this compulsory class every year. The students are assigned the ESP homework of translating the summary statements of the chapter they have studied in the class session. The statements for translation tasks are carefully chosen by the content subject professor based on the importance of the content, not on the grammatical or lexical importance of them.

The reason why they are given translation tasks is that as translation needs good comprehension of the source text, the students need to review the lecture and the textbook, both in Japanese, before they do the homework and it will lead to better understanding of the subject itself. This is especially true with translation from Japanese to English as there are significant structural differences between them. In order to translate any given statement, you have to compensate for the lack of grammatical elements needed by a sentence in English by knowing "who" (the agent) does "what" (the action) in "which order" well in a statement in Japanese.

Another aspect of ESP teaching we would like to focus on is to raise students' awareness toward vocabulary choice. There are two stages in it. First, they should be aware of the notion of technical terms; in a specific domain, any technical term is unique and one term has only one meaning. In the ESP homework of translating the Japanese statements into English, the students first have to recognize the technical term in the source text. Then, they are to find the appropriate English counterpart. These procedures sound demanding, though, in reality, textbooks used at university

usually use bold fonts for technical terms so that readers can notice them easily. In addition, the English translations of the technical terms are usually provided in parenthesis just next to the Japanese ones.

Here is what happened while the students worked on a piece of ESP homework. There was a task of translating a statement with the technical term of 「while 文」 into English. Since the character 「文」 can be interpreted into two different meanings of "sentence" and "statement" in Japanese, the output from the students were divided in this way. However, "while statement", the English translation of the technical term, is clearly written in the textbook right next to the Japanese one. In other words, those who chose "sentence" did not either notice it in the textbook, or did not find it necessary to stick with the English term provided in the textbook. In the feedback material which is used to review the homework at the beginning of the next lecture, the students were told to be more careful in reading the textbook as well as to understand how the technical terms in Japanese were presented along with their English counterparts.

Another, more advanced stage of vocabulary choice learning is how to find words which are used with technical terms. As the textbook is written in Japanese with occasional English technical terms, the students have to find an appropriate verb, for example, to go with the technical term found in the textbook. The Japanese statement of the task above was as follows: *while 文ではブロック内の処理の前に条件が判断されますが*(the rest omitted.) One of the problems the students had was to translate the verb 「判断する」. Again, this verb can be translated into two English words: evaluate and judge. However, unlike the technical term itself, no clues are given in the textbook for the words which co-occur with it. The students' answers were divided: 49% of them used the word evaluate and 39% judge.

In order to support their vocabulary choice for such words, the students were told to consult an online reference material written in English. To assure the quality, both in content and language, the content subject professor and the language teaching experts work together to find the appropriate material. The one used for the Java class was the Java Tutorial provided online by Sun Micorsystems. The students were given the URL for the web page about the topic in question. As the volume and length of the text on the web page seem daunting, especially for those with less proficiency in English, they were told to find alternative approach to the text: Use of the Search function of the browser. The students are to perform a search on the page for the keyword "evaluate" and see if the word is used on this particular page. The positive search result indicates that the word "evaluate" may be used in this context.

The actual search result revealed that the word "evaluate" was found four times in the text with153 tokens, whereas the other word "judge" was not. Hence, even students with not enough proficiency in English could conclude that they should not use the word "judge" in this context.

5.2   Application 2 (3rd Year UML Class)

This is another class in a programming language called the Unified Modelling Language (UML) and is offered for the third year students who have studied Java for one year. As this is the final opportunity for the KU-ESP teaching, it is regarded that the students are not only reviewing what they have learned in class, as they do in the Java classes, but also introducing them to the idea of CPD so that they can make use of the learning experience gained here when the language use needs arise in the future. Also, as the KU-ESP for the second year classes is mainly focused on written language, the tasks for the third year class introduces spoken language, namely listening, into their learning.

As one of the ESP teaching objectives of this course is to introduce the idea of CPD to the students, the criteria for selecting the teaching materials are in accordance with the objective. The students are introduced to audio programmes on the Internet, or Podcasts, on topics which help them broaden their perspective as a young engineer. One such programme used in the course was "Countdown to 2013…: Building the James Webb Space Telescope" provided by IBM (URL http://www.ibm.com/ibm/ideasfromibm/ us/nasa/032607/index.shtml). The audio file is accompanied with the transcript so that weaker students who may have difficulties with listening can study the text by reading the transcript. The content of the programme is to introduce how the UML is being used in the real world.

Now this is how the KU-ESP was carried out. The students were assigned part of the Podcast programme every week as homework. A word dictation quiz was given in class to check whether the students were able to recognize the sound of the words used in the programme. The words for the quiz, about six or seven questions each, were selected by the content subject teacher based on its importance and the audio files were prepared by the English teachers so that the content subject teacher could run the quiz without the presence of the language teacher.

6.   Feedback

Both KU-ESP teaching classes discussed here received positive feedback from the students. According to the questionnaire survey at the end of the semester for the second year students, about one third of the students (n=53) answered that the ESP homework made them review the lecture and one fifth (n=33) said that it helped their self-study. 26 students answered that it helped them understand the lecture. These results were confirmed with the result of another question. They were asked what kind of knowledge and/or skills they gained through the ESP homework. Surprisingly enough, one third of the students reported that they learned Java, despite the fact the task they did was the familiar translation exercise from Japanese to English. Another one third reported that they learned both Java and English. They were also asked whether they learned any concepts and/or knowledge of Java through the ESP homework. Only one in ten responded that they did not learn any, whereas about 70% of the students responded they gained some knowledge in Java by doing the ESP homework.

The Java course gave one final exam on Java and two English review exams and the results of these exams were compared to see if there was any correlation between the two. If there was a correlation between them, it would lead us to believe that though originally studied in Japanese, reviewing the content subject in English consolidates the understanding of the content subject, in this case, the Java programming language. Much to our surprise, a relatively strong correlation (r=.87) was observed.

Two questionnaire surveys, one at the beginning of the semester and one at the end, were conducted for the third year UML class as well. At first, more than 90% of the students reported that they were not aware of any Podcast programmes on engineering topics, let alone the ones in English. But at the post semester survey, about two thirds of them thought that Podcasting was an effective way of studying ESP.

7.   Conclusion

This paper introduced a new ICT-based ESP instructional model of transforming undergraduate English learners into English users. It discussed the difficulties in doing ESP teaching at the undergraduate level, where the students do not have enough knowledge in the content subject nor the needs in using English for their study at the university. The proposed model was designed to overcome such issues, and how it was carried out at two large engineering classes was presented.

The authors believe that this instructional model can be valid with other content areas such as economics or biology, as the textbooks used at the Japanese undergraduate courses share similar genre features, such as having technical words both in Japanese and English, and the summary statements in Japanese at the end of the section.

There are, however, problems with this model. The biggest obstacle is to have teaching assistants who can work as a liaison between the English and the content subject teachers. Although no prior knowledge in the content are is necessary, s/he should have good interpersonal skills in order to work as a coordinator. Also, high proficiency in English is required to analyze the text used in the subject area and good knowledge in foreign language teaching to develop ESP teaching tasks. It is the hope of the authors that more graduate schools should develop a course for ESP practitioners, and while studying at the graduate school, the students should have opportunity to work as a teaching assistant to gain experience.

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Transdisciplinary Approaches to ESP for Graduate Students in Architecture

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Abstract

The postgraduate course *English Terminology for Architecture and Building Construction* at the Polytechnic University of Madrid (Spain) presented challenging issues in its design, which involved the disciplines of linguistics and architecture as well as two different languages, English and Spanish. It was also an opportunity to put LSP principles into practice.

The central objective of the course was reading comprehension of English specialized texts in the students' domains, highlighting the use of terminology. We also aimed to support the production of English in written or oral form, and to free the students from the fear they felt practising spoken English.

The course included several kinds of assignment:

i)   students' selection of texts from their specific domain to practise reading comprehension

ii)   exercises comparing the definitions of terms and translation equivalents in different dictionaries

iii)   compilation of a specialized corpus, as textual resources for building a termbank

iv)   creation of a bilingualized termbank of 50 English terms, with English definitions and translation equivalents in Spanish

The students' knowledge of their professional subdomains helped to support their reading comprehension and their efforts to find translation equivalents in Spanish. Among the most important outcomes achieved was the students' loss of fear when having to interact in the English language, and their overall confidence in speaking was increased during the course.

Keywords: Transdisciplinary pedagogy, ESP, L2 professional students, specialized domains, bilingualization, terminology, terminography, terminological dictionaries

1.   Introduction

The interdisciplinary postgraduate course discussed in this paper forms part of the *Master of Techniques and Systems of Construction*. It integrates the various sciences that are involved in the architectural practice as well as applied linguistics. Graduates trained in different subdomains of architecture participated in the course. Section 2 describes the students' orientation to the course, extracted from the questionnaire we gave them the first day of class. We refer also to the importance of the subject in the European context where the study of English and other foreign languages is very much emphasised. We then discuss the approaches followed in LSP, and the different aspects of interdisciplinarity and transdisciplinarity. In section 3 we speak about the objectives planned for the

course and its contents. Section 4 is dedicated to the practical work carried out by the students, the two main assignments, the corpus and the bilingualized termbank. Section 5 describes the most important features of the TermFinder online dictionary, with its model termbank of architecture terms, to be produced in an interdisciplinary, international collaborative project.

2.   The Context

2.1   The UPM Course: *English Terminology for Architecture and Building Construction* and its Students

Spanish graduates need to be competent in English to operate on construction projects within European Union (EU), to be able to collaborate with professionals of other nationalities. Consequently, Europe has encouraged the learning of foreign languages especially English as it is the present *lingua franca*. In most countries of Europe there is a strong emphasis on bilingual professional education in line with EU training reforms (European Educational Convergence Guidelines). The competencies needed are to:

1)   read documents in technical English, and understand the conceptual information embedded in terminology within them

2)   write conference abstracts in English (often these need to be in both English and Spanish)

3)   speak English, so as to be able to interact with some confidence

The new course in English terminology is taught in the first semester of the academic year, from October to February. So far we have had two cohorts of students, one in the year 2007/08 and the other one, which has just finished, for this academic year of 2008/09.

Most of the students enrolled in these UPM courses had a degree in *Arquitectura Técnica*[1]. Others (two of them) were architects, and a few held a degree in other specialties, such as aeronautical or mechanical engineering. The professional profile of the students for the two sets was as follows:

a.   2007: 40 students mostly faculty lecturers, or officers in government organizations, some of whom worked for regional and local administration, and some were associated with terminology standards associations or with the professional association

b.   2008: 35 students mostly from private construction firms (60%); the rest (40%) have just finished their degree so they did not have any work experience

The two cohorts gave us a representative range of different institutions, public and private, and with varied professional experience. Some students belonged to national or international associations related to standardization; consequently they were aware of standardization issues with terminology which helped situate our viewpoint on terminology. In both sets, there was expertise across numerous

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[1] *Arquitectura Técnica,* which only exists in Spain, is a university degree program for building construction professionals. This is not an Architecture Degree or a Civil Engineering Degree; it has some of the competences of what it is called in Great Britain a 'Quantity Surveyor', but it is not exactly the same.

subdomains of architecture and building construction, bringing a broad coverage of the different sublanguages of this domain to the terminology course: e.g., applied acoustics, automation in construction, environment, project management, solar energy, timber construction, and waste management.

In order to set the parameters of the course, we handed the students a questionnaire at the start, in line with the ESP principle that it should be closely related to students' needs and should be learner-centred (Hyland, 2002; Huckin, 2003). The information retrieved from the questionnaire showed that most students aimed to increase their knowledge of the specific vocabulary of the domain and/or enhance their skills in reading comprehension. Some of them wanted to be able to translate English technical texts, and to a lesser degree there were those who wanted to improve their speaking. Many students in the age range from 35 to 57 years felt discomfort when using a second language – the emotional challenge we all know when using a second language, especially as adult learners. The students from the 2008/09 cohort were rather younger (between 23 and 38), and more relaxed when using English. But they had less knowledge of the domain, since 40% of them had no work experience.

2.2   LSP Approaches to Teaching ESP

Languages for Specific Purposes (LSP) – in most cases English for Specific Purposes (ESP) – began with the study of the linguistic properties and functional varieties of different registers. Halliday (1961) and Swales (1971) were among the pioneers to describe the 'special' features of technical texts. 'Special' was used in association with *special language* or *register* such as the language of law, medicine, architecture, etc. Analyses were carried out of the frequencies of word occurrences in the texts, and the presence (or absence) of particular syntactic or lexical items. For ESP purposes, the identification of the special technical lexis was particularly important since reading comprehension at an academic level requires 95% lexical coverage (Laufer, 1992).

Other researchers from communication science approached the special languages or registers of English in terms of *sublanguage* (Grishman & Kittredge, 1986). They saw *sublanguage* as a subsystem of language that behaves essentially like the whole language, though it is limited to a specific subject domain. It is a variety of language used in a given field of science or technology, which is much smaller than the whole language but more systematic in structure and meaning. It is characterized by limited subject matter, and semantic and discourse properties that are distinct from those of the standard language. The words of a sublanguage have specialized meanings e.g., *concrete* (as used for a construction material in engineering and in a general sense in everyday language). An example with regard to grammar would be the frequent use of the passive voice in technical texts. The vocabulary of a sublanguage is theoretically finite because of its specialized focus, in contrast to the unlimited size of vocabulary of any natural language (McEnery & Wilson, 1996). For these authors the corpus is an exceptionally good tool for identifying and describing a sublanguage, because it can demonstrate the contrast in terms of closure between any supposed sublanguages and unconstrained

language. So the computer corpus is the key to capturing the linguistic components of a sublanguage or one of its microlanguages (i.e., *contextual variants of the sublanguage*).

The relation between general language and specialized language is regarded by some as the merging of a subset of the general language terms with a set of specific elements of its own (Ahmad et al., 1995). Sager et al. (1980), Varantola (1986), and Beaugrande (1987) also consider LSP vocabulary to be pragmatic subsets of the general language. However some linguists and terminologists, e.g., Pearson (1998), argue that terms have restricted, protected and standardized meaning and are only used in one domain. By contrast, the more contextual approach to terminology embraces all vocabulary used in ESP text (Trimble & Trimble, 1982; Godman & Payne, 1982; Yang, 1986; Robinson, 1991; Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998). This may then include several categories of words and collocations:

- subject specific vocabulary (technical terms of traditional terminology): words only used in one domain
- non-subject-specific specialized vocabulary:
  o semitechnical / subtechnical / general technical (words with technical references which are used in more than one area) (Trimble & Trimble 1982).

There is also academic vocabulary: words used across many academic fields like *feature* or *accuracy* (Yang, 1986, 98). These words are strictly general words, but are more frequent in scientific texts than in everyday English, and most ESP practitioners agree on the need for teaching this kind of vocabulary (Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998). Thus it is the lexico-syntactic and semantic profiles of specialized genres (and not simply specialized vocabulary) that distinguish specialized from general discourse. This is where the examination of corpus data from different sources comes in, showing variation in the language as it is used and the level of terminological precision required. The students need to identify both the semi-technical and the technical vocabulary in context (Yang, 1986) in order to separate technical meanings from everyday meanings, e.g., the difference between *stress* in construction, in physics and in general language.

To achieve professional competence students also need to know the disciplinary and professional conventions of the discourse of the domain and the way the genre is manipulated for rhetorical purposes by its users. The challenge in LSP is to cover the language as used in specific occupations and specific types of workplace (e.g., the engineering office or the construction site), i.e., not just the sublanguage but the microlanguages used by the students in their various specialist subdomains (Sager et al., 1980). The LSP approach is nothing if not student-centred, and from responses to the preliminary survey we were able to analyse the students' backgrounds as input to the contents and methodology of the course, as well as tasks and assignments. This application of LSP principles to graduate training in architecture allowed us to observe just how much of their existing domain knowledge professional students can bring to language learning. As Huckin (2003) suggests,

the learner-centred LSP approach empowers the learner, and so the teacher can take on the role of a coach or mentor rather than that of instructor.

2.3   Interdisciplinary and Transdisciplinary Aspects of the UPM Course

The terms 'interdisciplinary', 'multidisciplinary', 'crossdisciplinary' and 'transdisciplinary' are all used to define the relationship between specialization in one discipline and common work across disciplines (Glasgow, 2008). In practice they often overlap, but there are useful distinctions to be made with them, as discussed below.

Interdisciplinarity, as used in educational circles, has researchers from two or more disciplines combining their approaches and developing them so as to customize them for a specific problem. An interdisciplinary curriculum typically involves researchers and teachers interconnecting several academic disciplines, professions or technologies, and integrating them with their specific perspectives, in the pursuit of a common subject, task or problem. In fact the borders between disciplines are not fixed and stable, but discontinuous and variable with the exchange of ideas in the different fields. The need to actively promote the intersection and interrelation of different disciplines has been recognized since the 1990s. Knowledge is no longer seen in closed compartments, and interdisciplinarity has produced fertile methodological and conceptual cooperation across two or more fields, for better understanding of reality (Alcaráz, 2007). Architecture has always been interdisciplinary (see Vitruvius Polio, M.c. 30-20 B.C. [1999]), embracing multiple overlapping fields such as the chemistry of materials, aesthetics, design, physics, applied science, etc.

Definitions of transdisciplinarity depend somewhat on the school, subject, or item it is applied to. Mittelstrass (1993) relates transdisciplinarity to integrative forms of research, in which researchers from several fields work together – which makes it much like the definition of interdisciplinarity we have just examined. A more distinctive definition of transdisciplinarity can be found in its application to scientific methods that reach beyond the boundaries of conventional academic disciplines. As the prefix 'trans' indicates, transdisciplinarity works across different disciplines, and beyond each individual discipline. Terminology is one such method or approach which can engage with the sublanguage of any technical area, and is readily applied to the numerous subdomains of architecture mentioned in the previous paragraph. As Wüster and Cabré (1998) say, terminology is transdisciplinary in the way it penetrates all disciplines.

Our course is thus transdisciplinary in its use of terminology and terminography (i.e., *verbal description of terms*) to teach students from multiple subdomains, and interdisciplinary in the collaboration of academics in applied linguistics with the architectural staff of UPM. The latter provide essential expertise in monitoring the students' work in terminography where the students' own professional knowledge is limited. The course is also interdisciplinary in its use of two languages, English and Spanish, and explorations of the differences in word meanings between the two proved especially fruitful in eliciting more accurate understanding of technical concepts.

3.   Syllabus Content of the UPM Course and its Challenges for the Students

The most general objective of the course was to improve the students' English language competence and terminological skills in the field of architecture and building construction. In accordance with the information gathered from the questionnaires, we thought that the most important skill for them to develop was reading comprehension of specialized English texts in their respective subdomains, and to a lesser extent the production of language in the written or oral form. Our aim was to support and enhance the students' understanding of technical terminology in English architectural documents, and to acquaint them with the kinds of discourse in which technical terms are used. It was also very important to demonstrate the variability of terms according to their contexts of use (e.g., architecture v. building construction; written v. spoken contexts).

Different methods and assignments were applied to the two different cohorts of students, because of their different profiles. In the second year the classes were taught in English as most students agreed on that in the questionnaire, though the students could use English or Spanish for communication. This made a great difference in the setting of goals and the method of teaching. Teaching in English had the advantage of using the L2 they are learning, and using the language means learning it in a natural way. However, due to the different levels of understanding, sometimes we had to translate into Spanish what we had just said in English, making the pace of teaching rather uneven. By contrast students from the first year had deeper domain knowledge but less knowledge of the English language than those in the second year. All those in the first year were experts in their specific domains; even though most of them had such knowledge in Spanish, and only a few also in English. The ability to infer meaning in scientific and technical contexts relies strongly on the reader's domain knowledge (Jones, 2005). Certainly the (older) students from the first set, despite having a lower level of English language than the second set, were nearly as successful as their younger counterparts in the understanding of technical terms because they possessed more domain knowledge (Douglas, 2000).

As most of our students did not have a linguistic educational background, the basic principles of Terminology needed to be explained to enable them to do practical work on terminology. Consequently, the basic concepts of terminology, lexicology and its applied branches were presented as a pathway to specialised lexicography. Linguistic approaches to terminology, including the use of text corpora as sources of information on terms and the collocations they enter into were also presented. The students could extend their ability to discuss professional concepts in English through the exercise of writing English definitions of terms. With regard to meanings, students worked via translation equivalents most of the time from terms in English (L2) to Spanish, their L1. A few times we challenged the L1-L2 translation equivalents that came up, with very interesting outcomes as not all of them understood that matching between two languages needs to be between concepts rather than between terms. The equivalence of terms cannot be established until it is reasonably certain that a

source-language concept is essentially the same as a target-language concept (Dubuc & Lauriston, 1997).

It was expected that when the terms discussed belong only to the domain of architecture and building construction, translation equivalents would pose no problems especially when they are 100 per cent equivalent in both languages i.e., *formwork, stucco, girder*, etc. However polysemous words raise more difficulties, since English polysemy does not always match Spanish polysemy, and our students struggled to find a translation equivalent for those terms. Terms that are polysemic in English but not in Spanish did not pose difficulties for the students; especially those whose domain knowledge was superior could find an adequate translation easily. Students' domain knowledge in those cases was invaluable in finding appropriate equivalents, for example terms such as: *beam* (in architecture, nautical, sports, or electronic), *crane* (in architecture or zoology), *cure* (construction or general), *partition* (construction or general), *pipe* (construction, archeology, or music) and *truss* (architecture, medicine, nautical, or botany). By contrast, a term which is polysemic in Spanish (for example, *planta* is *floor plan* in architecture as well as *plant* in botany or the underside of a foot) poses a lot of problems, especially for those who have a lower level of English, and here the domain knowledge does not help them much.

Problems also arise when the concepts in different languages match only partially, depending on semantic relations such as generic-specific, abstract-concrete, cause-effect, etc. When there is a partial equivalence, it is necessary to determine the extent to which the source-language term can be represented by the target-language term. An example of partial correspondence is the term *carpintería* in Spanish (Fernández, 2005) which designates all types of carpentry: metal carpentry, plastic carpentry or wood carpentry. However, *carpentry* in English only refers to carpentry made only of wood. The concept's scope is larger in Spanish than in English. Finding translation equivalents in a specialized domain should involve linguists as well as discipline specialists. Experts in a subject field are the best judges and know best the nomenclature of their profession. By the same token, linguists are well acquainted with both languages.

4.   Practical Assignments

4.1   Corpus Compilation

After discussing the theoretical issues of terminology and applying them to their own specialized domains, the students were ready to work with terminology in a practical way. The following sections describe their two main assignments, which were to compile a *specialized corpus* of their chosen subdomain, and to create a *bilingualized termbank* of selected terms retrieved from the corpus.

The corpus-based approach to teaching and learning LSP (Meyer & Mackintosh, 1996; McEnery & Wilson, 1996; Bowker & Pearson, 2002) has become one of the major pedagogical pillars in the past decades. Instruction based on corpus data supplies learners with both language knowledge and context-sensitive knowledge of language use (Orna Montesinos, 2008). The UPM students had to compile their own, well-balanced corpus of their particular domain within the architecture and

building construction field. They retrieved digitized documents such as online text books, journals and manuals, which are the top three types of publications read by graduate students, in that order.

The different methods of sampling specialized corpora were discussed with the students. Specialized corpora, as opposed to general corpora, are essentially non-random and should target a variety of relevant areas. They reflect the diversity of their subject matter (Biber et al., 1998), so as to include a balance of the microlanguages within the sublanguage. Any corpus that seeks to represent a sublanguage needs to be concerned with the diversity of texts that it includes. The 'proportional sampling' mentioned by Biber et al. (1998) involves representing the different categories of texts (by subject), as well as different text-types, and every medium that is used by communicators in that sublanguage. In order to situate the research temporally, the time frame to be sampled has to be determined. We took texts written over a 6-year span from 2001 to 2007, as we wanted corpora that could represent the current sublanguage read by students as fully as possible.

With regard to corpus size, a small corpus can be sufficient. The underlying parameters of text-based linguistic variation could be replicated in a very small corpus, if that corpus represents the full range of variation, including:

c. semi-technical words borrowed from other disciplines which may have specialised meaning in architecture and construction, e.g., *envelope* and *concrete*.

d. technical terms used only in architecture and building construction, e.g., *girder* and *scaffold*.

The boundaries between these two types of words, semi-technical and technical, are fuzzy, because of the interdisciplinarity of this domain. Yet in compiling dictionaries of architecture and building construction, both need to be captured with meanings specific to this domain. To ensure this, each student corpus needs to contain authentic language data, from which reliable linguistic judgements can be made about the meaning and behaviour of words and phrases.

Once students had constructed their own specialized corpora, they worked with the ANTCONC[2] concordance program to extract information about the behaviour of terms in natural contexts. The selection of terms for each student's termbank was based on their high frequency among the content words of the corpus, but they also included those terms they thought necessary from their professional knowledge of the subject. Terms which were important for understanding the key concepts were also included. All students found corpus compilation and corpus use very interesting tasks; they were surprised to find how easily they could access specialized language usage this way. Students were also made aware of the dynamic nature of terminology through corpus building (Fernández, Flórez de la Colina & Peters, 2009).

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[2] By Prof. Anthony Lawrence. University of Waseda, Japan: http://www.antlab.sci.waseda.ac.jp/software.html. Accessed 11 September 2007.

4.2   Bilingualized Termbank

The students selected 50 terms from the corpora they had compiled for inclusion in their term bank. They wrote definitions in English, following the bilingualized lexicographic research of Laufer and Melamed (1994). Then, they took an example of usage from the corpus, added notes when necessary,[3] and provided a translation equivalent in Spanish, either the standard Spanish term or a paraphrase. The students' great challenge to find translation equivalents emphasized the need for much richer resources in a multidisciplinary domain like this, to provide fuller identification of the contexts of use for individual terms in different languages.

We had to check the terms each student had included in their termbanks, to make sure they were not too familiar and that they were introduced in the corresponding subdomain. As expected, the students with lower level of domain knowledge made some errors in that task. Students had been encouraged to choose terms that were unknown to them or ones that present particular complexity, e.g., multiword units. A second challenge was to give definitions of terms in English. This was the most difficult part of the termbank assignment, especially for the students of the year 2007/08 who had a lower level of English. There were lots of examples of wrong definitions with incorrect use of language, most of them written from Spanish and translated into English with the resulting errors that go with this type of practice, produced by people with low levels of L2.

The final exercise was for all students in the group to pool their termbanks, so as to create a large specialized dictionary of architecture and building construction with the aim of publishing them on the school's web page once it has been revised. In its present form the material is not entirely satisfactory and rather uneven in quality. Yet we have not so far been able to provide them with a model termbank to aim for, due to the shortage of suitable references (Fernández, Flórez de la Colina & Peters, 2009). Better models of terminography are clearly needed in the context of interdisciplinary training and bilingual education.

5.   TermFinder Online Dictionary as a Model for Multidimensional Terminography

The UPM students' assignment work engaged them with the core elements of terminography: making a principled selection of headwords and writing definitions for them. This is the substance of many online glossaries, and yet the online medium supports a variety of other digital features (e.g., audiofiles, graphics static and dynamic, and ontological networks) which can be built into online dictionaries like the TermFinder platform being developed by Australian researchers in collaboration with UPM. TermFinder supports multimodal termbanks in academic disciplines such as biology, statistics and accounting, and one for architecture and building construction is under development where the page for each term will include:

- definition of the term in accessible English
- grammar of the term (its word class)

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[3] These notes were mostly to clarify the translation into Spanish, but sometimes the selection of the term.

- example of the term as used in the context of examples extracted from a relevant corpus

- graphic showing the physical properties of term/concept (e.g., window), as well as its typical shape and location

- ontological diagram showing hierarchical relations among sets of related terms (e.g., for types of window, esp. hyponymy and meronymy)

- audiofile of term pronounced in isolation and in the context of a short sentence

- translation equivalent of English term in Spanish

Termbanks with all these features provide far more support for students' understanding of terminology than the conventional verbal glossaries. Controlled tests of the TermFinder statistics and biology termbanks have shown statistically significant improvements in students' ability to define technical terms and to use them in analytical tasks (Peters et al., 2009).

6.   Conclusions

The UPM course in *English Terminology for Architecture and Building Construction* demonstrates the strength of LSP-driven approach to language learning in a transdisciplinary, bilingual context. Interdisciplinary teaching at UPM brings both linguistic and specialist expertise to bear on language teaching, which fosters enriched understanding of technical terminology, its variability, and its relationship to the source texts in which it is embedded and the discourse contexts in which it is used. The focus on terminology works well with professional students, because of their ready-made domain knowledge which gives them a head start in working with the English sublanguage. Meanwhile the bilingual approach prompts students to tease out the finer points of English terminology, while making the most of their L1 competence in Spanish. The LSP approach also encourages greater awareness of conceptual structures and taxonomies of terms, not just the acquisition of terms in isolation. The students' awareness of sets of terms enhances their competence in reading English architectural documents, and develops their resources for writing technical summaries and conference abstracts. The course has also led to greater confidence among some students in speaking English. By all these measures, the LSP approach has been effective in the context of professional communication and English pedagogy.

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Using English for Workplace Communication:
A Study of Novice Professionals

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Abstract

A long held view that the English proficiency level of university graduates in Hong Kong is decreasing has drawn much attention from educators, employers, parents and the Hong Kong government. The issue is often cited by the local media as a major concern when it attempts to criticize the government's education policy. Employers of different sectors have also called for improving the graduates' general English standard. While complaints abound, there has been little evidence to support such criticisms. How grave is the situation? How do experienced professionals view the English competencies of novice professionals working in their companies or organizations? Do these new graduates have sufficient English for conducting necessary communication in professional workplaces? Meanwhile, it is also useful to know, in professional contexts in Hong Kong, how is English used at work and how much English is actually needed after 1997?

To seek answers to such questions, a study was recently conducted. The study triangulated the data collected through surveys of the engineering sector in Hong Kong. Over 100 employers as well as about 40 novice engineers responded to the surveys. Individual follow-up interviews were also conducted with a sub-sample of the questionnaire respondents, including both employers and novice engineers. The data were analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively. Views of employers of engineering companies and novice engineers were compared. It has been found that the two groups share the view that English is important in the workplace but disagree in other aspects, such as whether the English proficiency level of novice engineers are sufficient for workplace communication and what aspects of their English competency need to be addressed most urgently.

1.   Introduction

The English language has a long history in Hong Kong. It was first introduced in the territory in the early 1840s when Hong Kong was ceded to Great Britain following the signing of the Treaty of Nanking in 1842. Since then English had been the official language of Hong Kong until the enactment of the Official Language Ordinance in 1974, when Chinese also became the other official language of the region (Qian, 2008). In 1997, the sovereignty of Hong Kong was returned to China. However, the policy of the post-1997 Government of the Hong Kong Special administrative Region (HKSAR) maintains that Chinese and English are both the official languages of the government and important government documents are required to be produced in both languages (Official Languages Division, n.d.). Although there has been some gradual contraction in the use of English in certain sectors in recent years, such as the education sector, where the introduction of Chinese as a medium of instruction (CMI) to a large number of secondary schools has greatly changed the linguistic landscape of secondary education in Hong Kong, recent research indicates that English is still the most dominant

language for business and professional sectors, especially when intercultural written communication is concerned. It does not seem likely that the demand for English will decrease soon (Evans & Green, 2003; Qian, 2008).

While the continuous dominance of English in the professional workplace after the handover of Hong Kong's sovereignty may seem to be puzzling to some, it is arguable that the relatively strong demand for English reflects the need of the local business and professional communities as well as the determination of the Hong Kong government to maintain the important status of Hong Kong as an international centre in Asia, similar to "that of New York in North America and London in Europe" (Bolton, 2000, p.283). Therefore, a decline in English use in workplaces will certainly weaken Hong Kong's status as the major international centre of business and finance in the region (Evans & Green, 2003).

In spite of the significant role of English in Hong Kong, concern has never been alleviated about the sub-standard proficiency level of English with which a great number of secondary and tertiary students reportedly graduate (Chan, 2002; Oriental Daily, 2002). A long held view that the English proficiency level of university graduates in Hong Kong is decreasing has drawn much sympathy from educators, employers, parents and the government in Hong Kong. In recent years, there has been a strong expression of a similar concern from the local business community, which prompted investigations into language needs and proficiency levels of employees in various sectors. The issue is often cited by the media as a major concern of the local business and professional community when it attempts to criticize the government's education policy. Employers of different sectors have also called for improving the graduates' English standard in general. While complaints abound, the evidence supporting such criticisms has however been rather anecdotal.

On another front, to address this concern, the government-sponsored Workplace English Campaign (WEC) was launched in early 2000 in order to "heighten public awareness of the importance of workplace English and to raise the standard of English among the Hong Kong workforce" (WEC, n.d.). At the WEC website, four levels of English language proficiency have been benchmarked, covering six types of occupation, ranging from executives and administrators to frontline workers needing minimum English at work (see Figure 1). However, the benchmarks were designed to cover only the general workforce in Hong Kong. Professionals, including engineers, are basically left out, which makes studies such as the present one more necessary.

Based on the design and description of the WEC benchmarks, one would assume that the English language proficiency of engineers should be ensured by the relevant professional body which regulates the qualifications of engineers in Hong Kong, namely, the Hong Kong Institute of Engineers (HKIE). To verify this assumption, we visited the website of the HKIE. The following describes the required qualifications for a Member of the HKIE:

- Having reached 25 years of age;

- Having obtained an accredited or recognized degree or the equivalent in an acceptable engineering discipline;
- Having received appropriate training,
- Having accumulated sufficient responsible experience, and
- Having successfully completed HKIE's Professional Assessment or the equivalent.
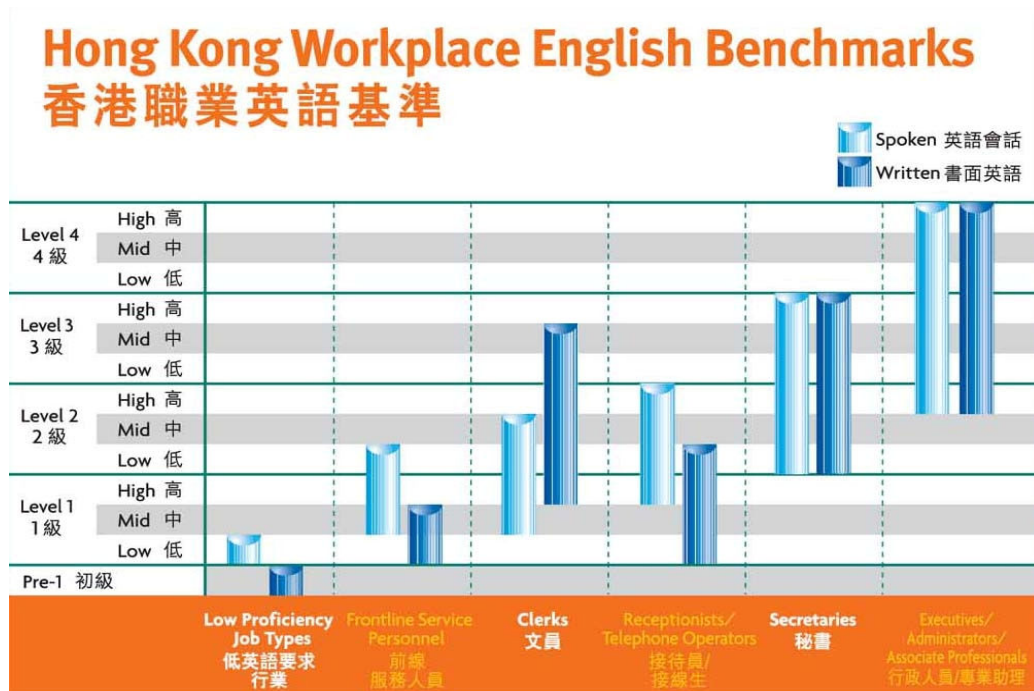

Figure 1. **Workplace English Benchmarks for Spoken and Written Communication (WEC, n.d.)**

To our dismay, the description does not include communicative competence or English language proficiency as a condition, or even expectation, of being a qualified engineer in Hong Kong. This requirement is also missing from the accreditation criteria for evaluating engineering programmes at the degree and higher diploma levels, seemingly based on a naïve assumption that the programme-providing universities will certainly ensure the English language proficiency of their engineering graduates. This worrisome situation suggests that, unless the universities which offer engineering programmes in Hong Kong all make it a point that fresh engineers must graduate with *high* competencies in English language communication, there would be no gatekeeper in Hong Kong for ensuring the high proficiency of English ability of new engineers. The situation does not seem to bode well for the communicative needs of engineers because there lacks evidence ensuring that students graduating from engineering programme of the local universities actually possess a high level of communicative competence in English. Furthermore, recent scores of the Hong Kong engineering graduates on International English Language System (IELTS), which is the uniform test adopted by the HKSAR Government's Common English Proficiency Assessment Scheme (CEPAS) for all

university graduating students, are quite disturbing because engineering students have been consistently placed at the bottom of the league table, as shown below (Table 1).

Table 1

Recent CEPAS-IELTS Scores of Engineering Graduates (2003/04 - 2007/08)

Academic Year	IELTS Score of Graduates of Engineering and Technology	Rank among all 7 Broad Academic Disciplines[†]	Mean IELTS Score of All Disciplines
2003/04	6.40	5	6.51
2004/05	6.47	6	6.64
2005/06	6.48	7	6.67
2006/07	6.48	6	6.67
2007/08	6.38	7	6.62

† The seven broad academic disciplines are Arts and Humanities, Business and Management, Education, Engineering and Technology, Medicine, Dentistry and Health, Physical Sciences, and Social Sciences.

How grave is the situation? How do experienced engineers and other types of senior professionals, such as Human Resource Managers, working in the engineering sector view the English competencies of newly qualified engineers in their companies? Do these new graduates indeed have sufficient English proficiency for conducting necessary communication in professional workplaces? These were some of the questions that prompted the present study.

2.   Design of the Study

To seek answers to these questions, the study was designed to contain two dimensions, a quantitative dimension based on questionnaire survey results and a qualitative dimension comprising results of face-to-face interviews. The study investigated the general communicative needs in the engineering sector in Hong Kong from the perspectives of both employers and employees, as well as the status quo of the English language needs for the newly recruited engineers in the workplace and their English language proficiency, as perceived by themselves and their supervisors. The following research questions were used to guide the data collection and analysis:

1.   What types of written English communication are required of novice engineers in their daily work?

2.   How do senior managers perceive the English proficiency of novice engineers?

3.   How do novice engineers perceive their own levels of English proficiency?

2.1   Research Participants and Procedures of Data Collection

The study triangulated the data collected through surveys of the engineering sector in Hong Kong. A questionnaire was delivered to employers and senior managers of over 600 engineering companies registered in Hong Kong. A different version of the questionnaire tailor-made for

engineering graduates was sent to about 40 recent graduates of engineering from a major local university, who had all been employed in positions of assistant engineers or equivalent at the time they were surveyed. Over 100 employers and senior managers as well as about 30 novice engineers responded to the surveys. Individual follow-up interviews were also conducted with a sub-sample of the questionnaire respondents, including both senior managers and novice engineers. The data were analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively. Views of senior managers and novice engineers were compared.

3.   Results

Research Question 1: What types of English communication are required of newly-graduated engineers in their daily professional work in Hong Kong?

This question was tackled from the perspectives of both company employers and new graduate employees who had entered the workforce for about only a year. Tables 2 and 3 present relevant information on two categories in terms of communication purpose, namely, formal business communication and casual or social interactions. The figures in the two tables indicate that close to 65% of the employers believed that their junior employees devoted more than half of their working time to formal business communication in English, whereas only about 39% participating novice engineers reported normally spending over 50% of their working time on formal business communication in English. There is an obvious discrepancy between the two groups of respondents here, which might suggest that employers' expectation for their new employees' English language needs is higher than the amount of English the new employees actually use in their work. For the other category, social interactions, about 85% participating employers and employees believe junior engineers spend less than half of their working time on English for social or casual communication. So the two groups' views of this aspect of the question are fairly consistent.

Table 4 reports on employers' views of the role of English in different situations in the workplace. We can see from the table that close to 89% of the respondents confirmed that English was essential, and therefore, most needed, in formal writing. This demand for formal written English stands out preeminently in comparison with other types of communication needs.

Table 2

Employers' Perceptions: Amount of Working Time for English Communication by Novice Engineers

	Working time spent on English communication			
	0 – 25%	26 – 50%	51 – 75%	75 – 100%
Respondents (%) making the estimate of time spent on business communication	12.8%†	23.1%	36.8%	27.4%
Respondents (%) making the estimate of time spent on social or casual interactions	55.2%	29.3%	13.8%	1.7%

† Proportion (%) of participating employers choosing this category

Table 3

Novice Engineers' Perceptions: Amount of Working Time for English Communication by Novice Engineers

	Working time spent on English communication			
	0 – 25%	26 – 50%	51 – 75%	75 – 100%
Respondents (%) making the estimate of time spent on business communication	23.1%†	38.5%	15.4%	23.1%
Respondents (%) making the estimate of time spent on social or casual interactions	46.2%	38.5%	15.4%	--

† Proportion (%) of participating novice engineers choosing this category

Table 4

Employers' Perceptions of the Role of English for Workplace Communication in Different Situations

Situation	Essential	Useful	Unimportant
Face to face conversation	43.5%†	46.1%	10.4%
Telephoning	44.3%	50.4%	5.2%
Informal writing	40.0%	55.7%	4.3%
Formal writing	88.8%	11.2%	--

† Proportion (%) of participating employers choosing this category

Table 5

Novice Engineers' Perceptions of the Role of English for Workplace Communication in Different Situations

Situation	Essential	Useful	Unimportant
Face to face conversation	15.4%[†]	76.9%	7.7%
Telephoning	7.7%	76.9%	15.4%
Informal writing	23.1%	61.5%	15.4%
Formal writing	61.5%	38.5%	--

† Proportion of participating novice engineers choosing this category

Table 5 indicates the participating novice engineers' perceptions of the role English language plays in their workplace communication. In general, the respondents showed a positive attitude towards the role of English in their work. In terms of importance, about 62% of the respondents believed that formal English writing was essential for their work as junior engineers, and nearly 39% acknowledged that English was useful for their work. No-one thought it unimportant. Therefore the significant role which written English plays in engineering companies in Hong Kong has been strongly manifested through this round of survey. The second important role which English plays, as perceived by the participating junior engineers, is in informal written communication in their workplaces, most typically email communication. About 85% of the respondents perceived this role as either being essential or useful. However, a slightly over 15% of the graduates surveyed thought English was not so useful in their informal written communication. Meanwhile, over 92% of the respondents pointed out that English was essential (15%) or useful (77%) for face-to-face communication during work and about 85% of the participants agreed that English was essential (8%) or useful (77%) for conducting telephone conversations in the workplace.

Table 6 provides details on how those novice engineers perceived their needs for English in their work. These needs are reported under eight types of situation, as listed in the table, which shows that junior engineers mostly need English in report writing (as indicated by 55% of the respondents) and other kinds of formal writing (40%), as well as in informal writing (33%), company meetings (33%) and face-to-face meetings with clients (22%). If we combine the first three ranks as great needs, then all kinds of formal writing and informal writing are recognized as greatly needed. For oral communication, employees need English most when they hold formal meetings with clients (88%) or have face-to-face communication with them (78%), as well as in company meetings (67%).

Table 6

Novice Engineers' Ranking of Their Needs for English in Different Situations

Situation	Greatest	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th†
a) Face to face communication among company staff	--	--	14.3‡	42.9	28.6	14.3	--
b) Face to face communication with clients	22.2	33.3	22.2	22.2	--	--	--
c) Company meetings	33.3	16.7	16.7	--	33.3	--	--
d) Formal meetings with clients	50	25	12.5	12.5	0	--	--
e) Telephoning	--	16.7	33.3	16.7	33.3	--	--
f) Informal writing (e.g. simple email messages)	33.3	16.7	33.3	--	--	8.3	8.3
g) Report writing	54.5	9.1	9.1	18.2	--	9.1	--
h) Formal writing: other kinds	40	40	20	--	--	--	--

† As no respondent chose the 8th rank, the column for the 8th rank is omitted.

‡ Proportion (%) of participating novice engineers choosing this category

As there was a clear consensus among participating employers and newly recruited engineers that formal English writing was among the most important communication skill for engineers, we probed through interviews with some volunteer participants about what types of formal writing are mostly needed in engineering companies. We were informed that formal writing mainly referred to various types of report writing, especially technical reports. In addition to technical reports, writing of the following types of report was also essential:

- Progress reports (on engineering projects)
- Trip reports (mainly required after visiting construction projects)
- Specifications reports
- Accident reports

Meanwhile, "Other kinds of formal English writing" mainly include developing procedural manuals, operational instructions, business letters and presentation notes.

In the next section, Research Questions 2 and 3 will be addressed together as the answers are interrelated. Let us recall the two research questions first:

Research Question 2: How do senior managers perceive the English proficiency of novice engineers?

Research Question 3: How do novice engineers perceive their own levels of English proficiency?

Based on the results of the survey of the participating companies, about 32% of the employers pointed out that they were not pleased at all with the English language proficiency levels of their

newly recruited junior engineers. About 58% were only somewhat satisfied, and just about 10% were satisfied with their new employees' English.

The survey data from the new employees in engineering companies however indicated that close to 39% of them thought their English language proficiency was more than sufficient for the job, about 46% believed they had just enough English to cope with their work, and only slightly over 15% of the participating graduates acknowledged that their English language skills were insufficient for the job. This is in sharp contrast to the perceptions of employers, as reported above.

Figure 2 below was developed based on comparing corresponding categories used in the employers' and engineering graduates' surveys respectively. In this chart, the employers' column "satisfied" is compared with the graduates' category "English more than sufficient for the job," the employers' column "somewhat satisfied" is compared with the graduates' category "English just enough for the job," and the employers' column "not satisfied at all" is compared with the graduates' category "insufficient English."

To determine whether there is a statistical difference between the two groups' perceptions of this issue, an independent-sample Mann-Whitney U test was conducted on the survey data which provides the basis for Figure 2 below through a 3-point Likert scale. The test found that there was a significant difference at the Alpha level of .05 between the perceptions of the employers and junior employees (U = 503, p = .02), concerning the issue of satisfaction with new engineering employees' performance on the English language for companies' business communication.

In our interviews with some participating employers or their representatives, a number of them complained about their junior employees' low English language proficiency. One employer made the following complaint during his interview with us:

> …even in the best few you can find a lot of grammatical mistakes. This is unavoidable… I expected that [recruits] are weak at writing…You ask them to write better, more 'beautifully', but they just can't make it. (EI03)

Sometimes, being unable to find new recruits with sufficient English proficiency, companies have to make do with what English levels their current new recruits may have. The following interview excerpt reflects a common practice among engineering companies to deal with the problem of employees' having insufficient English.

> …the reason for a lower requirement is…because his seniors proofread his writing, not because his writing can be sent out [without editing]. (EI05)

Tables 7 and 8 report on the views of the participating employers and novice employees of where the problem lies with new recruits' English language competence. Table 7 indicates that formal report writing, face-to-face communication with clients and formal meetings with clients were found to be the most difficult tasks for their new employees fresh from university. About 54% of the participating employers pointed out that their new recruits' most serious weakness was report writing. The second serious problem was their new employees' inability to express themselves in English effectively when

meeting with clients, either at formal meetings or during face-to-face individual talks. If we collapse the first three ranks in Table 7, other kinds of formal writing becomes the next most serious problem, after report writing, as about 69% participating employers agreed that this was among the three most serious problems of their new recruits.
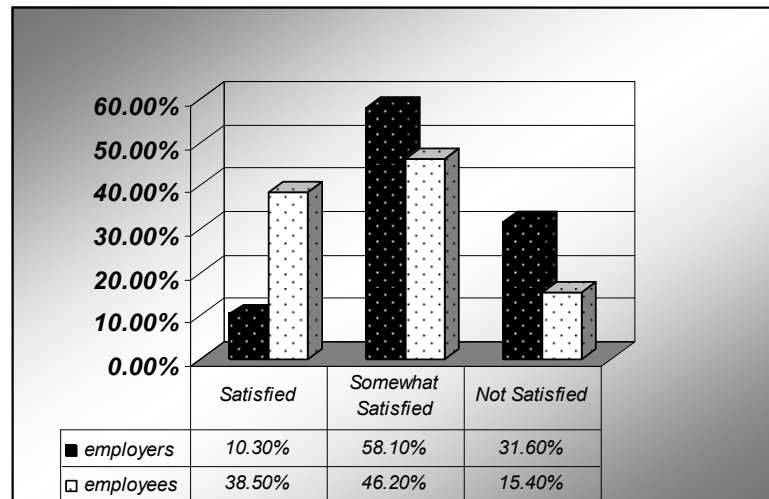

	Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Not Satisfied
■ employers	10.30%	58.10%	31.60%
□ employees	38.50%	46.20%	15.40%

Figure 2. **Levels of satisfaction with English language proficiency of new employees in Hong Kong engineering companies**

Table 7

Employers' Views: Problems with Novice Engineers' English Proficiency

Situation	Ranking of seriousness of the problem found							
	Most serious	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th
a) Face to face communication among company staff	10.9[†]	16.4	14.5	12.7	7.3	9.1	14.5	14.5
b) Face to face communication with clients	38.3	14.8	21	13.6	6.2	2.5	2.5	1.2
c) Company meetings	11.1	18.5	7.4	11.1	13	16.7	16.7	5.6
d) Formal meetings with clients	29.3	25.6	18.3	13.4	12.2	0	1.2	--
e) Telephoning	19.4	11.3	22.6	12.9	16.1	8.1	6.5	3.2
f) Informal writing (e.g. simple email messages)	15.4	26.2	13.8	4.6	7.7	13.8	10.8	7.7
g) Report writing	53.9	13.5	11.2	13.5	1.1	5.6	1.1	--
h) Formal writing: other kinds	21.1	31.6	15.8	5.3	8.8	5.3	3.5	8.8

† Proportion (%) of participating employers choosing this category

Table 8

Novice Engineers' Perceptions of Their Own Problems with English Proficiency

Situation	Ranking of seriousness of the problem found			
	Most serious	2nd	3rd	4th†
a) Face to face communication among company staff	--	33.3	33.3	33.3
b) Face to face communication with clients	28.6	28.6	28.6	14.3
c) Company meetings	--	100	--	--
d) Formal meetings with clients	50	50	--	--
e) Telephoning	57.1	14.3	28.6	--
f) Informal writing (e.g. simple email messages)	66.7	--	33.3	--
g) Report writing	33.3	33.3	--	33.3
h) Formal writing: other kinds‡	--	--	--	--

† As no respondent has chosen any of the 5th through 8th ranks, these four columns are omitted.

‡ There was no response to this item.

The picture is slightly different with the participating engineering graduates. As Table 8 shows, first, only about 33% graduates who responded thought report writing was their most serious problem. Instead, 67% were most concerned with their inability to write informal English, such as simple email messages. Half of the graduate respondents were also very concerned with their weak English proficiency, which caused problems in their telephone conversations for business purposes and their meetings with clients. However, if we collapse the first two ranks out of the four ranks the respondents have used in answer to this item, that is, if we look at the first two ranks in Table 8, their greatest concern appears to be insufficient English for company and client meetings. Telephoning in English was the third problem that bothered them. In other words, the survey suggested that the engineering graduates believed that they had more problems with their ability to speak English for business purposes than with their ability to write formal English. However, as the sample size for the graduates' survey was small and therefore not sufficiently representative, caution needs to be exercised on these interpretations.

Nevertheless, the data collected from our interviews with eight participating graduates indicate (a) that new recruits' generally do not use as much English at work as their bosses would have liked and (b) that one primary reason for this infrequent use of English may have to be attributable to their low English language proficiency, which has always been a concern to employers. Some engineering graduates confessed to having difficulty in writing in English and had to resort to writing in Chinese. Our employer interviewees share this concern:

But accident reports cause them problems…I found that they sometimes needed to use Chinese. I don't know if it's because they can't write in English or for any other reason that he had to write in Chinese, but…we have to report in English…We've never used Chinese to write to the government …Those accident reports [interviewee pointing to some reports on the desk], very obviously, are written in Chinese and you already know what's happening here. That is, they can't make it, they can't write [English] and they need to write in Chinese! Even their Chinese is very informal and that's what makes it horrible. (EI06)

Even now of our correspondence, more than 80% is in English. They started to have some Chinese [correspondence]. I'd rather accept their Chinese writing but on the other hand [their] Chinese may not be okay either…in writing, sometimes we should use English or sometimes both Chinese and English…You see this [pointing to a company document on the desk]…already in Chinese and English; we accept it, but the thing is, when there is much English involved, there will be problems. (EI07)

4.   Discussion

First of all, there appears to be no clear gatekeeper for ensuring the English language proficiency of new graduates from engineering degree programmes in Hong Kong. Neither the English Language Campaign nor the Hong Kong Institute of Engineers (HKIE) seem to bear an unequivocal responsibility of ensuring that all novice engineers will possess a satisfactory level of communicative competence in English, which is so important in their professional work.

To obtain a regular individual membership in the HKIE, engineering graduates are required to pass the Professional Assessment a few years after they are awarded the engineering degree. During this period, taking an HKIE Training Scheme to prepare for the Professional Assessment is generally considered a more direct route (Fok, 2007). However, while the HKIE's Training Scheme for fresh engineering graduates contains a Common Core Objective of "good command of oral and written communication in English" (Fok, 2007, p. 33), it is not clear how this objective is effectively met through the three-year training scheme and, in fact, a large number of trainees, trainers and assessors perceive "poor communication, presentation and language skills" as a major cause of failure in the Professional Assessment (Fok, 2007, p. 167).

Fok's (2007) finding suggests that there is little effective training in language communication in the Training Scheme and the local universities producing graduates in engineering thus play a crucial role in serving as the course provider for communication skills and in ensuring that novice engineers will graduate from university with a strong communicative competence in English. However, what have the local universities done and how much have they achieved towards fulfilling this role? This should be an important topic for the next stage of research, in order to find out:

a)   Are all university students majoring in engineering required to complete a certain amount of training in English language skills before they can graduate?

b)   If so, what English language courses are they required to complete at university in order to enhance their English language proficiency?

      c)   What are the contents and design of those courses?

      d)   How effective is the delivery of those English language courses?

      e)   What are the main assessment methods of those courses?

      f)   Are the course assessments in alignment with the intended learning objectives of the course?

      g)   Are there other gate-keeping mechanisms in each of the local universities, in addition to course-embedded assessments and CEPAS-IELTS (see discussion below), in order to ensuring graduates' English language proficiency?

The government-sponsored Common English Proficiency Assessment Scheme (SEPAS) has, since 2002, used the International English Language Testing System (CEPAS-IELTS) for assessing graduating university students in Hong Kong. While a large number of local graduating students have participated in this scheme, the assessment has been ineffective for engineering students, or for any group of students with a genuine need for a satisfactory level of English proficiency, for two reasons. First, the participation in the scheme has been on a voluntary basis, which means for students who never pay any attention to communication competence in English language, there is no existing mechanism to ensure that they must sit for the CEPAS-IELTS, which implies the only existing probable assessment measure in the Hong Kong-wide tertiary system can be easily skipped by any students if they so wish, unless employers make sitting the test a condition for recruitment. Second, the CEPAS-IELTS score report carries only the total band score and sub band scores attained, which are explained by the accompanying can-do statements. There is no uniform official cutoff score for passing the test, which means unless the end-users of the test results fully understand the meanings of the band scores and, in addition, also already have their own standards for aligning their own needs with the test outcomes, it will be difficult for them to make good use of the score report. However, for the providers of the CEPAS-IELTS, there are good reasons for not providing a minimum official passing score because the needs and standards of different professions and industries may vary greatly. Nevertheless, while this variation ostensibly exist, it is also desirable that there should be a commonly accepted minimum standard for English proficiency for all university graduates in Hong Kong to ensure that graduates will have some threshold English proficiency for conducting basic, but necessary, communication at work.

5.   Conclusion

      In conclusion, the present investigation points out that for both internal and external written communication, especially for formal writing, English is still the predominant language for Hong Kong engineers. There is a clear consensus among employers and junior employees of engineering companies that the ability to produce formal English, in particular technical reports, is important for junior engineers on the job. However, it is worth noticing that many employers of engineering companies seem to be more concerned than their newly recruited novice engineers about the need and urgency to improve the new recruits' English writing skills. The data from our interviews with

volunteer employers confirm that there are grounds for this concern. On the other hand, the majority of novice engineers believe the areas of their English proficiency that need immediate improvement are not formal report writing. Instead, they believe there is a more urgent need to improve their oral English ability so they can communicate more effectively with their clients, and to improve their ability to write informal English, such as drafting simple email messages. This discrepancy calls for attention of all stakeholders concerned.

Since the present research has identified a discrepancy between a number of viewpoints of employers and senior managers on one side and novice engineers on the other, there is clearly an urgent need to close the gap. Therefore, educators, workplace supervisors and employers are facing a daunting task to raise the awareness of engineering students and novice engineers concerning the importance of their English competence for workplace communication in both written and oral forms, and to also let novice engineers understand that there is currently a lack of satisfaction from employers with the English proficiency of novice engineers, which is already eroding the confidence of employers and senior managers of engineering companies in fresh engineering graduates.

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An Empirical Study on Literacy: Diversity in Minority Context

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Abstract

Literacy, equity and inclusion are fundamentally linked. Understanding literacy as process of making meaning has implications for the way we construct knowledge and produce excellence as part of the schooling and education experience. Classrooms are becoming increasingly diverse. This means the way we promote literacy must account for such difference and diversity in the schooling population. An understanding of equity and diversity and the connections to literacy requires educators understand and implement diverse and critical teaching and evaluating strategies in school. The paper is part of a larger study that examined literacy and diversity in relation to the educational challenges in Ontario schools. In the larger study a survey questionnaires was administered to 4951 educators in kindergarten to grade 6 in 304 French and English schools in Ontario represented urban and rural Ontario school boards. In an effort to gain in-depth answers to some pertinent research questions a case study of twenty educators was pursued. From the analysis of the interviews it has been possible to flesh out how educators perceive equity education and its implications for literacy education. It is argued that literacy education must engage equity through an educational approach that addresses issues of knowledge, power, culture, identity and representation in schooling.

1.   Introduction

This paper is part of a larger study which examines literacy and diversity in relation to the educational challenges in a minority context of Ontario, Canada (Berger, Forgette-Giroux, & Dei, 2007a). Today's classrooms are very diverse and present both significant possibilities and challenges to educators. As educators, we are expected to understand and validate the differing ways in which various ethnocultural and Aboriginal students respond to our classroom environments, curricula, and teaching strategies. It is important for us to acknowledge that our personal backgrounds - cultural, racial, gender, sexual, class, linguistic, and ethnic identities -play a critical role in the ways we respond to the changing ethnocultural landscape of Ontario classrooms.

The study of literacy can be conceptualized as a search for academic and social excellence. Literacy is about the development of social skills, the mind and intellect in order to function in a given society. A knowledge of rights and the matching responsibilities of community membership is key to ensuring individual and collective success. A long standing concern of educators is how to improve literacy and numeracy scores of students. As noted elsewhere many factors undoubtedly influence literacy. Like all learning, learning to read is, to a great extent, a social process. The process begins years before children enter school, when they are read to at home. Attitudes about reading are nurtured through this one-to-one reading relationship. This initial phase in the development of the reader is grounded in the social interaction between the child and the adult model. Teachers have a

special responsibility to be aware of and understand the cultural diversity of the community they serve. Strategies for the teaching of reading should include a variety of enjoyable, interactive, and genuine reading experiences based in a multicultural literature reflective of the learning community. Such theorization of learning draws on the linkage between literacy, equity and diversity.

Educational research illustrates that students who do not speak at least one of the official national languages at home tend to struggle more with meeting the provincial literacy standards expected at school (Villegas and Lucas, 2002). Even if a student speaks English or French as his or her first language, the ways in which that student is taught literacy at home often conflicts culturally with the learning environment, curricular content, and teaching and learning practises at school (Gee, 2001). For example, research illustrates that teachers who are culturally responsive to the ethnocultural needs of their students are better able to play a key role in increasing the educational success of such students (Gay, 1993, 2000).

Various actors and players in the educational system play significant roles to ensure school success. Schools must offer a learning environment that supports students' personal experiences while taking into consideration their cultural backgrounds. This environment will also afford students the opportunity to implicate themselves in significant activities that have a link to a world outside of the classroom (National Research Council and the Institute of Medicine, 2004). Students must be given the chance to participate in school activities and after-school programmes that will allow them to develop a variety of skills and competencies. These activities could also incite students to engage themselves socially, which, according to certain authors, encourages students to surpass their own expectations (National Research Council and the Institute of Medicine, 2004). As a result, schools are no longer considered establishments removed from reality, but a possible learning environment useful for projects (Acker, Inzirillo, & Lefebvre, 2000).

School personnel can create a comfortable learning environment for students by personalizing study programmes and by expressing an interest in their students' personal lives by building a social milieu that considers students' needs and interests (National Research Council and the Institute of Medicine, 2004). They can improve students' motivation in school by creating partnerships with their communities (family, community centre, education partners, etc.) and by studying and utilizing its appropriate resources (National Research Council and the Institute of Medicine, 2004; OCDE, 2000).

Other elements to take into consideration by teachers include the following: Teachers must offer choices to their students (Archambault & Chouinard, 1996) and be able to adapt their teaching methods to their students' interests and needs (OCDE, 2000). Teachers must also encourage students to actively participate and invest time in learning (Reeve, 1996). Finally, teachers must conduct fair and objective evaluation assessments (Acker, Inzirillo, & Lefebvre, 2000). No doubt students also have a responsibility to ensure their own success. However, educational activities proposed to students must be of significance to them (Nadeau, 1997). If students perceive a task as being important, as having value, as making sense, then there is a good chance that they will enable

themselves to perform it (Acker, Inzirillo, & Lefebvre, 2000). In order to become motivated, students must believe in themselves and realize that they possess the ability to succeed. Students must also feel as though they have some control over the activities at hand (Acker, Inzirillo, & Lefebvre, 2000; National Research Council and the Institute of Medicine, 2004).

2.   Research Methodology

This paper presents the case study findings of the teaching and assessing practises of teachers in the context of literacy and diversity in Ontario settings. The study in question was part of a broader study that utilized a combination of in-depth interviews, questionnaires and case study approaches for data gathering on literacy education as understood and pursued by Ontarian educators. In the larger study, a survey questionnaire was administered to 4951 educators from kindergarten to grade 6 in 304 French and English schools in Ontario, representing both urban and rural Ontario school boards. In an effort to gain in-depth answers to some pertinent research questions, a case study of twenty educators was pursued. The respondents' training in literacy and numeracy occurred mostly during initial teacher education courses or in short training sessions by their boards. However, more than a quarter of the teachers were trained for more than 5 days by their boards and a similar percentage went through a summer institute. A small number of teachers have taken it upon themselves to do professional development by completing the reading specialist, the library course or Additional Qualification Courses (ADQ) in mathematics. In an effort to gain in-depth answers to some pertinent research questions, a protocol [research guide] was used for interviewing selected participants in the case study.

In the winter of 2007, in-depth interviews were conducted with twenty elementary teachers across Ontario. These teachers were contacted after completing a survey on classroom practises and philosophy. Surveys were sent to boards across Ontario, after which researchers selected twenty candidates for further study. Of the teachers selected, nine were Francophone and eleven were Anglophone. In an effort to gain in-depth answers to some pertinent research questions, a protocol [research guide] was used in each interview that asked questions about equity education (Berger, Dei, & Forgette-Giroux, 2007b). The qualitative data gathering approach which allowed teacher respondents to speak in-depth about equity, diversity and literacy education was framed to maximize the voice to local subjects. The interviews were carried out by graduate researchers. Open-ended questions were asked in a semi-structured interview style. Participants were asked to speak from their experience, were given time to reflect on their responses and to present other issues of interest or concern. Participants were asked about their understandings of literacy, multiple literacies and the context for discussing issues of equity, difference and diversity, and the notion of inclusion in literacy education. The focus of the data analysis was also to identify specific educational initiatives (instruction, pedagogy curriculum and policy) targeting and implicating literacy education. The data was qualitatively analysed for general trends in innovative pedagogic and instructional inclusive practises on literacy.

3.   Qualitative Study Findings

3.1   Reflections on Diversity

A dominant strategy to diversity education is to emphasise the benefits of multicultural education. Educators and policy makers need to get past the traditional conception of multiculturalism. This means situating questions of difference and power centrally, within investigations of schooling and the structures of educational delivery. One teacher articulated the issue:

> I think we're still stuck in that "Black History Month is February" and all these celebrations which is that multiculturalism, which to me sounds like we celebrate these different cultures during this time; rather than being inclusive, meaning not a melting pot or not special celebrations, but more inclusive that this is our identities (100E7).

There is a need to bring a new meaning to 'excellence in literacy,' a meaning located in equity which challenges the current climate of standards-based education (with standardized tests, standardized curricula, etc.) predetermined according to dominant norms and abstract universal 'benchmarks' that defy diversity. As Kerr (2005) notes, this creates an arbitrary bar by which to shift and sort students, and reproduces socio-economic inequity through entrenching systemic barriers to advancement for marginalized groups.

Teachers also raised the issue of the misplacement of equity in relation to their attempts at working with literacy and diversity. Although a lack of equity resources was definitely issue for many teachers (particularly for those outside urban areas), teachers across the board felt they were doing their equity work alone - working within their literacy programmes to bring inclusion in from the margins of curriculum, school and departmental procedures. In highly diverse schools, many teachers reported little faculty or administrative discussion of equity issues. One teacher commented:

> It's not really something that's talked about a lot considering that we do have a pretty decent multicultural element to our school; it's not something that we don't have multicultural days or something that's celebrated as a school-wide thing -- it's something that you would have to do in your classroom yourself. So it's not necessarily recognized (100E11).

Many argued that inclusivity must be a fundamental part of the whole school, all year round, rather than just within individual classrooms on certain dates. Students and teachers need to buy into equity as an operating principle of teaching and learning. One teacher explained:

> So challenges I guess would be lack of priority of inclusivity as a tenet of the whole school rather than just within individual classrooms, because if you really and truly want to have that kind of a philosophy, it kind of has to be school-wide both for the students to buy in, but also for each individual teacher to affirm what each other teacher is doing - if one teacher is completely stern with the students and doesn't engage with them on a personal level and get to know them individually and doesn't show the value for that in their classroom, I don't know how genuine it will seem to students if it's going on only in one classroom and not other classes that they go into. And I think support from administration for school-wide initiatives and events is really important, rather than just a sporting big thing for a sporting event

> or a big thing for a Valentine's dance... these kinds of things should be celebrated and brought to the school at that level as well (100E3).

This same teacher also pointed out that not all teachers feel they have the time to do so. It is important, however, to begin to work with the idea that teaching literacy to a diverse student body involves coming to where they are, assessing entry points for literacy education based on their socio-cultural locations. Among the many supports and hindrances that teachers identified as influencing work with literacy and diversity, Ministry expectations were mentioned in both camps, as both a help and an impediment - sometimes by the same teacher as the following comment demonstrates:

> … professionally [the Ministry of Education guidelines are] integral, but an educator, like the philosophy that I have towards literacy, they're kind of peripheral. So if they support the ideas and the strategies that I'm trying to put forth, then they do help. I wouldn't say [the Ministry of Education guidelines] hinder because they can always be used to get certain messages across and they can always be used in kind of whatever project you take on; but I wouldn't say that they directly help in addressing diversity for example or difference in the classroom - it's just a matter of how you kind of take them and manipulate them into different projects and incorporate them, I guess, facilitate the teacher to make them work for them in that area (100E3).

One teacher described the struggle with Eurocentric understandings of what 'French' is supposed to mean as far the cultural implications of studying a language in the French Immersion programme:

> French Immersion needs to be totally rethought, and not just because we're teaching French. I think we're focusing on just teaching French. And then the cultural aspect of it also. But now it's changing, because now there is more influx of Francophones coming from Africa and coming from the Islands and coming from Arab states. And incorporating that also in there. But still again it's a one dimensional; they're still using the one dimensional approach, because the idea is to teach French. And yes the cultural aspect comes into it, but I don't think that they understand what... When we talk about different identities and different variables, I don't think there was any understanding of that. (100F1)

3.2   Reflections on Inclusion

Inclusion is an issue in all educational contexts and is fundamental to every part of the schooling process. Inclusion is about acknowledging the significance of multiple knowledges, histories and identities and their place in education. The question of knowledge, history, and identity, when connected to issues of literacy is also about a rootedness in a place and culture. Claiming inclusion in education calls for an embodiment of knowledge and culture in politicized ways. Knowledge must be rooted in awareness of history and not held hostage to the past. This is well within the discursive terrain of what Dei (2007) has termed 'the politics of epistemological equity'. Literacy is about ensuring epistemological equity among learners. Epistemological equity is a recognition of multiple ways of knowing informed differences of personal/collective location, subjectivity, experience, histories and agency. In such conceptualization of 'epistemological equity', the question of identity, agency and resistance assumes a new meaning beyond claiming a politics of reclamation of knowledge. (Dei 2007).

As shown in Berger, Dei and Forgette-Giroux (2007b), literacy, equity and inclusion are fundamentally linked. Understanding literacy as process of making meaning has implications for the way we construct knowledge as part of the schooling and education experience. One teacher argued in terms of working with learners to ensure success:

> They're bringing so many different background knowledge and experiences, and in order for them to be successful you have to tap into that experience to be meaningful, and it's all about meaning for them; and they're going to get so much more and have such a higher level of thinking if you're able to tap into that (100E7).

This is an acknowledgement of the knowledge and experience that learners have and bring to the school. When such knowledge is recognized it accords a sense of ownership of the learning process to the students. They feel included and can articulate their own stake in the school system. Such feeling is vital in enhancing academic and social success. Students bring multiple and varied background knowledges and experiences to their learning. One teacher pointedly described inclusion this way:

> …making an environment in the classroom which feels comfortable for all students, which includes the interests and as much as possible the backgrounds of all students, and give them multiple opportunities to share those and to tap into those and to draw upon those to build on their learning, and have those be their strengths and pillars for their learning, rather than just be peripheral things that you kind of touch upon every now and then like maybe a certain festival once a year; but something that you kind of allow them to express and celebrate and incorporate into various parts of their work like writing projects (100E3).

The sense of owning one's own knowledge contributes to the school environment becoming inclusive of all learning. As far as linking literacy and diversity, inclusion demands that teachers access student and community experiences in order to both confer validity on those experiences and also to create the necessary meaning for literacy learning to take place. Exclusive education marginalizes and negates experiences, histories, identities and knowledges. Thus, while education has often sought to proceed without official regard for race, gender, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation, ability/disability or class, true inclusion means actually regarding these facts of existence for students and teachers. Consequently, true inclusion is dealing with difference and diversity. In the following excerpt the teacher speaks of her classroom success:

> Inclusiveness is making sure that every one is, regardless of race and gender and any identity, religious background, that they're all equally validated as a human being; and hopefully represented, and taken into consideration their backgrounds. So what their views and beliefs are. Not everyone might have an understanding of your background, so it's educating people too. And then once you've started talking about it, then people ask more questions even at the age of eight and seven... they ask more questions and they feel more open to ask questions and they learn from each other. And it's apparent when you start talking about ancestors and traditions and that sort of thing; because once you start teaching that everyone comes from a different background and it is different, then they love learning from each other at that point; but at first no one wants to talk about it because they're afraid to (100E11).

The idea of multiple knowledges is a recognition of the varied ways of knowing and how important it is for all learners to be well-versed in the cultural knowing that characterize their communities. Literacy then is the acquisition of varied ways of knowing and using such knowledges to respond to challenges.

3.3   Reflections on Multiple Literacies

Situating equity in literacy education calls for the acknowledgment of the important role that multiple literacies play in schooling and education. Text is more than simply the written word. It includes images, interactions, video and various digital media. One teacher explained literacy and 'texts' as follows:

> … reading of text in a way that helps one to understand it and make meaning of it; it can be like reading actual words or it can be reading and interpreting visual information, basically any kind of text, whether it be written or visual, that has meaning to be made, and if the reader is able to make meaning of it (100E3).

Literacy can be understood as an operating system for the navigation of our lives as both individuals and as part of a larger society. Multiple literacies was also understood in different ways by different teachers, some invoking the work of Howard Gardner (2000) and multiple intelligences, and others working with ideas about what learners bring to their own literacy learning. This latter understanding is most instructive for this study. In this sense, students understand the texts they encounter with prior knowledge of conventions developed through previous learning. One teacher explained her approach:

> … my understanding of literacy is the coming together of the reading of the text but it has to do with the individual's personal experience, I think that I definitely, in my teaching, take that into consideration; and when I'm planning teaching of texts to students, I take that into consideration as maybe the first thing - what are the different ways to read this text, and how are my students going to access it; not that I know always in advance, but what are some of the possible ways, and I really take that into consideration. So I think that multiple literacies is pretty important to me (100E4).

This has implications for text and resource selection on the part of the Ministry, boards, schools, departments and teachers. That which students bring to their learning must be recognized in the content thereof. Multiple literacies can be engaged through texts and other curricular and instructional materials. The educator's role is to ensure competency in such texts through a critical pedagogy that works

4.   Discussion of Findings

There are aspects to literacy and diversity in education that can be highlighted from the perspectives of the teachers. First is the issue of literacy working with multiple knowledges grounded in the varied experiences of learners and educators. The current emphasis on teacher testing, mandated professional development, and student testing as a means of improving the educational system has neglected equity issues. This is all part of the current trend towards 'quality' education, accountability, transparency, standardization, and competence in education, have not been respectful of teachers and students' prior knowledge or experience. The success of educational reforms rests

with the varied stakeholders feeling a sense of being valued for their prior knowledge, contributions and input so that they can develop a sense of ownership with on-going changes. An environment cultivating respect for teachers and students' prior knowledge, experiences, skills and histories of educational training, and then using such knowledge base as a starting point for enhancing excellence.

There is a place for identity in schooling and education. Race, class, gender, disability, sexual identities and social oppression and schooling are all linked to the question of literacy. Literacy is also very much about power relationships and institutionalization of power (Quigley 1997; Nieto, 1992). An analysis of literacy as power and knowledge also benefits from a more radical conception of literacy as social class attribute. A view of literacy as socio-economic status is farther than a traditional Weberian view of 'class' as socio-economic stratification. Learners engage the school with their identities. They are embodied learners and education must find a way to work positively (i.e., solution-oriented) with these identities. The classroom teacher must cultivate the ability to read and write at a level that enables a learner to meet her or his daily living needs and to engage society. This is fundamental for eventual success. As noted earlier, the role of the teacher in the learner's acquisition of literacy skills cannot be understated. For the classroom teacher, the beginning of formal literacy instruction must aim to equip all learners with the tools for reading and writing and to reflect critically on social knowledge. Our students cannot simply be expected to read with sufficient efficiency in order to perform academic tasks successfully. They must also grasp the complex knowledge that guide social relationships and be prepared to apply knowledge critically to promote social change. A central thesis of critical literacy as the pursuit of the learner's empowerment (through the education that is culturally relevant to learners' experiences) cannot be attained if students are not empowered to be critically reflective (Aronowitz & Giroux, 1991). To this end, academic achievement is only one aspect of literacy success. Such success must also be about social success. This is huge responsibility for schools, teachers, administrators, students, parents, communities and governments.

In classrooms, strategies can include the development of lesson plans [elementary, secondary and tertiary schools] and the provision of other teaching materials aids, as well as a parents' guide targeted at helping children succeed in school. Students will be able to listen to and respond to stories, have conversations with peers and adults, be able to integrate material outside the classroom (homes, community, etc.), to situate/contextualize heritage/history, and to model/socialize knowledge as behaviour - with real life concepts, resources, and situations. Such efforts would also require researchers to work with educators on in-school/after school weekend/summer programs that offer leadership training to youth with a view towards role-model/mentorship. For the higher school grades, the goal is to encourage independent reading, critical language literacy - viewpoint, interpretation, clarifying values, and representation of figures (stereotypes, gender, power, reflective on thoughts and feelings evoked) (Dei, 2007b). Lesson plans could include fables and a description of their meanings and relevancy to moral and character education. The use of stories and fables is intended to build a

strong foundation for a long-term strategy and curriculum development. Such story-telling would empower students to tell their own stories and develop their own voice.

5.   Conclusion

Literacy is about excellence, knowledge, skills and competencies. Critical literacy is more than a theoretical abstraction. A social theory accounting for multiple literacies in the contexts of social diversity cannot be detached nor merely considered an abstraction from the experiences of students from diverse racial, class, gender and other minority backgrounds in our school systems. This is where the link between equity, literacy and education becomes a focus for attention.

The macro-social elements of education occupy a space which extends beyond the walls of the individual teacher classroom. In general, diversity in education and literacy specifically must thus come not only from Ontario's teachers, but from all levels of the educational system - both in a longitudinal and lateral sense. Not only must the buck not stop at the classroom door (equity is a responsibility of the highest government levels), we must not stop at looking for ways to make a new product with the same old materials. We must think differently about education.

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