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## Foreword

Step into the vibrant realm of Hradec Králové Journal of Anglophone Studies, where the beating heart of academic inquiry meets the boundless enthusiasm of researchers whose curiosity propels them into uncharted intellectual territories. As we open the door to this edition, we invite you to step into a realm where the brilliant minds behind the research take centre stage, where passion and perseverance collide, and where the unsung heroes providing unwavering support cast long shadows of inspiration. In the corridors of academia, we often witness the transformative power of collaboration and mentorship, where ideas are nurtured, challenges are faced head-on, and the flame of curiosity is kindled by the reassuring presence of those who believe in the pursuit of knowledge. In the forefront of this scholarly journey are the researchers—individuals whose insatiable curiosity acts as a compass, guiding them through the intricate landscapes of English Linguistics, Anglophone Literature, Cultural Studies, and English-teaching Methodology. These are the minds that conceive, question, and unravel the mysteries of language, literature, and culture. Each article within this journal is a testament to their dedication, a snapshot of the countless hours spent exploring the nuances of their chosen fields. As we introduce the articles within these pages, we invite you to not only appreciate the research findings but also to reflect on the human stories behind them. Consider the late-night discussions, the eureka moments, and the invaluable support systems that breathe life into these scholarly endeavours. Let their narratives resonate and intertwine with your own intellectual journey, creating a tapestry of ideas and inspirations that extends far beyond the confines of these pages.

In the first article, Kristýna Červinková Poesová delves into the realm of English phonetics and phonology, exploring the effectiveness of seminar tasks designed for first-year undergraduate students in a newly accredited intensive course. Through a meticulous analysis of Word production and Rhoticity tasks, the study unveils a positive reception among pre-service EFL teachers, shedding light on the enhancement of students' understanding of speech production and accent nuances.

Moving forward, the second article titled *Extracurricular English and teachers' language skills* by Ondřej Duda and Linda Valešová shifts its focus to the professional development of mainstream non-language teachers. Examining the role of teacher training colleges in enhancing language competences for all students, the study draws on a Council of Europe document emphasizing the importance of incorporating English throughout the school curriculum. With a practical analysis of a questionnaire, the research provides valuable insights into future non-language teachers' opinions on their CLIL experience and the contexts in which English is utilized outside the classrooms.

The following article by Božena Horváthová navigates the realm of foreign language education, specifically addressing how students can improve their listening comprehension skills. Through a comprehensive exploration of learning strategies, including reciprocal and non-reciprocal listening, the study underscores the impact of digital technology on language learning. The findings suggest significant improvements in students' listening strategies over time, emphasizing the need for continued practice to foster independent development.

In the fourth article by Vladimíra Ježdíková and Anna Veselá, the focus shifts to the lexical expressivity of works of fiction within the Czech National Corpus. By utilizing parallel English-Czech and Czech-English texts from the parallel corpus InterCorp, the study meticulously analyses and compares both inherent

and adherent lexical expressivity. The research, which includes the examination of translation equivalents, offers a comprehensive exploration of the nuanced ways in which language expresses meaning within the context of fiction.

The fifth article by Klára Lancová titled *Student Empowerment through Critical Language Teacher Practice* brings us into the realm of pedagogy and critical intercultural communication. Rooted in the belief that dialogue constitutes the fundament of human agency, the proposed teaching activity aims to enhance students' understanding of their agency in academic power relations. Applying critical applied linguistics and critical language awareness, the activity seeks to challenge assumptions through autoethnography, contributing to a more socially just and conscious education. This aligns with the broader goal of designing a new critical intercultural curriculum for linguistics in English-language teacher preparation.

As we explore further, the sixth article by Iryna Nedainova navigates the political discourse, specifically focusing on Boris Johnson and Liz Truss as Prime Ministers. The study analyses pragmatic markers in their discursive events, revealing the interaction between power, manipulation, and discourse. By examining the impact of pragmatic markers on the formation of a positive political image and the shaping of social agents' perceptions and actions, the research sheds light on the intricate relationship between language, power, and social dynamics.

The seventh article by Honza Vejvoda takes a linguistic turn, applying the minimalist framework to the Czech verbal projection hierarchy. Departing from the predominantly English data that underpins minimalism, this research explores cross-linguistic data in Czech. The findings contribute to our understanding of minimalist theory's applicability in different linguistic contexts, revealing insights into negative placement, aspect realization, and differences in tense and irrealis forms between Czech and English verbal projections.

Next paper by Chris Williams presents a study on lexical complexity measures in argumentative essays written by L1-Czech L2-English high school students. This research, involving final-year students from local high schools, examines the correlation between lexical features of density, sophistication, and variation with essay quality. Using a sophisticated Lexical Complexity Analyser, the study reveals a strong connection, particularly with verb-based measurements, contributing valuable insights into the relationship between lexical complexity and the quality of L2 argumentative essays.

Antony Hoyte-West's article transports us to the socio-cultural intersection of language, migration, and literature. Against the backdrop of the ongoing economic and humanitarian crisis in Venezuela, the article explores Caroline Mackenzie's novel, *"One Year of Ugly."* Through the lens of a young Venezuelan translator navigating life in Trinidad & Tobago, the article investigates the complex dynamics of language, multilingualism, and translation in the migrant context, offering a nuanced portrayal of their interconnectedness with broader sociocultural aspects of Trinidadian society.

Afterwards Blanka Kohoutová takes us into the enchanting world of J. K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* series. While commonly categorized as children's or young adult fiction, this study proposes a more systematic exploration of the connection between *Harry Potter*, dystopia, and totalitarian regimes. Drawing upon Sigmund Neumann's *"Permanent Revolution,"* the research carefully examines the portrayal of a dystopian-like world in Rowling's later volumes. The study suggests that Rowling employs tropes of the totalitarian state to create a vivid depiction of the dangers of misusing power, adding layers of complexity to her fantasy stories.

Afterwards, Václav Řeřicha's paper ventures into the transformative effects of contemporary social media on human perception. The study illuminates marked phenomena, such as boredom, impatience, and the popularity of memes, that have become common in the digital environment. It explores how digital technology alters human perception, creating new emotional needs and reshaping cognitive

experiences. In a world where news sources have shifted from traditional platforms to TikTok and YouTube, the study underscores the profound impact of digital technology on society at large.

In the following study, Věra Tauchmanová jr. turns the focus to the historical context of the Second World War, examining the role of the London-based Czechoslovak exile government's radio broadcast. This research unveils the significance of the BBC radio station as a crucial source of information during the war. The study delves into the characteristics of BBC's propaganda, drawing on A. J. Mackenzie's theory of the seven secrets of propaganda success. Through an analysis of reports on specific events, the research explores whether the BBC broadcasters adhered to these maxims, offering a nuanced understanding of the success of wartime propaganda.

Concluding this series, Alice Tihelková explores the aftermath of the Labour Party's significant defeat in the 2019 election. The study investigates Keir Starmer's rhetoric, employing Critical Discourse Analysis to understand his attempts to reclaim disaffected voters. With a focus on issues favoured by a socially conservative electorate, the paper examines the delicate balance Starmer must strike, potentially contradicting previous attitudes and navigating the expectations of the party's diverse supporter base.

Together, these articles form a vibrant mosaic that captures the diverse and evolving landscape of Anglophone studies. We invite you to embark on an intellectual journey through the rich tapestry of ideas presented in this edition of Hradec Králové Journal of Anglophone Studies. Each article contributes a unique perspective, fostering a deeper understanding of the intricate intersections within the realms of English Linguistics, Anglophone Literature, Cultural Studies, and English-teaching Methodology. As you delve into these diverse topics, the journal serves as a dynamic platform for the exploration and dissemination of knowledge. We hope you find inspiration, knowledge, and a renewed appreciation for the multifaceted nature of the Anglophone world.



## LINGUISTICS AND METHODOLOGY

## Word production and rhoticity tasks: an effective way of content consolidation in English phonetics and phonology course

*Abstract: The paper offers an assessment of two seminar tasks completed by first year undergraduate students within a newly accredited intensive course of English phonetics and phonology for pre-service EFL teachers in the summer semester 2022. Both the Word production and Rhoticity task were designed to enhance students' understanding of the selected phenomena: production of segments in connected speech and the degree of rhoticity in one's accent. Drawing on the data from an online questionnaire and content analysis of the submitted tasks, there is a strong indication of their overall efficiency and positive reception.*

### Introduction

English phonetics and phonology courses have become firmly embedded in the teacher training programmes in the Czech tertiary education over the past three decades. Naturally there exist minor differences in the content and structure of the courses, however the main concepts tend to be taught linearly, typically beginning with speech production, continuing with the description of segmentals, aspects of connected speech and finishing with suprasegmentals. The depth and breadth of the outlined areas may vary as well as the preferred approach. Regarding the form, lectures are often followed by seminars or practical sessions in which selected theoretical as well as pronunciation features are trained. The didactic and sociolinguistic perspectives are likely to be presented later in the study programme in separate courses (Červinková Poesová and Uličná).

In the academic year 2021/2022 a new accreditation was launched at the Faculty of Education in Prague preparing future EFL teachers, which brought a radical change in the organisation of its English phonetics and phonology course. Originally a two-semester course with an exam period in between was reduced to only one semester with no break. Although the amount of time remained unaltered, four classes instead of two per week greatly intensified the teaching and learning process and meant a considerable challenge for the students. While the previous two-semester course provided them with the necessary time to absorb new terminology and concepts and develop new skills, the one-semester version proved to be extremely demanding and required strong discipline and regular hard work.

In reaction to the novel circumstance, the English phonetics and phonology course has undergone several changes. Firstly, the lecturer adapted the course content to make it as clear and as compact as possible to enhance student understanding. Secondly, elements of gamified learning were incorporated in the course to encourage students' self-study and maximize their practice opportunities outside the classes (Dichev and Dicheva; Sardegna and McGregor). Another modification concerned the course requirements; the original seminar paper called *My phonetic portfolio* including multiple tasks was abandoned and simpler, more straightforward activities were proposed with the aim to consolidate the studied areas and simultaneously not to impose further burden on students' shoulders. The aim of this paper is to evaluate the efficacy of the seminar tasks piloted in the summer semester 2022 at the Department of English Language and Literature, Faculty of Education in Prague and subsequently decide whether it should stay part of the course.

## Characteristics of the seminar tasks

Both tasks, from which the students chose only one, were assigned in week eight of the English phonetics and phonology course run for 12 weeks from mid-February until mid-May 2022. The task instructions were given both orally during the seminars and in the written form in the Moodle. In order to successfully complete the tasks, the students had to employ a variety of lower level thinking skills according to Bloom's taxonomy – recalling and explaining basic concepts using the appropriate terminology and most importantly applying the acquired course knowledge onto a new situation generating meaningful connections (Scott).

### Word production task

The inspiration to create the *Word production task* came from Peter Roach's apt description of the word *sand*, in particular from the diagram in which the concurrent activity of vocal folds, velum, lips and tongue during its production are shown (Roach 15). The idea of a detailed description of a single word was found appealing as it revised a relatively large part of the segmental phonetics. What the lecturer appreciated most was the fact that the complexity of speech production could be illustrated in a simple, yet not simplistic way.

Looking at the task itself, students firstly selected a one- or two-syllable word according to their preference. Secondly, the word had to be transcribed phonemically and phonetically and individual sounds were classified and all allophones listed. Thirdly, a coherent text had to be written in which the production of the word was scrutinized with the special focus on transitions between individual sounds. In other words, the students described what was happening in the vocal tract, specifically what actions the vocal folds, velum, lips, lower jaw and tongue were performing, when the target word was articulated. In addition, grapheme-to-phoneme correspondences had to be stated as well as stress placement and differences across various accents if applicable.

### Rhoticity task

The *Rhoticity task* revised a much narrower scope of the course. Nevertheless, its potential benefit lies elsewhere – it illustrated how to carry out a small-scale research and analyse the obtained data. The main aim was to compare the degree of rhoticity in two speakers. Firstly, students needed to find a text for recording with the words suitable for the analysis (the specific categories were given in the instructions). Secondly, a native and a non-native speaker were asked to record themselves reading naturally the selected text. Thirdly, the recordings were analysed using the Excel sheet. Individual productions of the investigated items were coded. Finally, conclusions and comparisons were drawn as to what extent the speakers proved to be (non)rhotic. To add to this, the students were encouraged to mention any other interesting findings or observations. They could comment on the occurrence of linking or intrusive r if their sample contained such examples or they could focus on the phonetic properties of the r sound.

### Methodology

Mixed-method research design was employed combining an online questionnaire for each task and content analysis of the submitted tasks. The respondents were all first-year undergraduate students with

English as their major (n = 45), 15 males and 30 females. All of them successfully passed the English phonetics and phonology course. The research question was formulated as follows: How effective are the seminar tasks in terms of enhancing students' understanding of the selected phonetic and phonological concepts?

## Questionnaires

Both questionnaires comprised 12 questions and were circulated online. The first question differed; in the *Word production task* the respondents were instructed to write down the target word whereas in the *Rhoticity task* it was the people whose recordings were analysed. The rest of the questionnaire was identical. The second question inquired about the clarity of instructions. The next three questions were only for those who had to resubmit the task. The sixth question assessed the level of enjoyment while completing the task and the seventh one offered several statements describing the overall experience from which one or more options could be selected. The next question explored how effortful the task was. The last four questions were open-ended and invited the respondents to share the easiest and the most difficult aspect(s), to exemplify how the task improved their understanding of the course content and recommend whether it should remain part of the course.

The links to the questionnaire were sent to the students three times in the winter semester. The return rate was lower than expected. Out of 107 students enrolled in the course, only 45 respondents filled in the questionnaire (42 per cent). As far as the data analysis is concerned, the responses to the open-ended questions were coded and categorized, for the multiple-choice questions the results were expressed in percentages.

## Content analysis

The content analysis involved careful scrutiny of 45 papers. In the *Word production task* the texts were searched predominantly for transitions between individual sounds, for instance in the *girl* production it was expected to find the following: *when we move from /g/ to /3:/ the tongue moves forward and down until it reaches the centre of the oral cavity*. These transitions, both the principal ones related to the tongue and lip movement and the secondary ones focusing on the actions of the vocal folds and velum, were thought of as a correlate of students' understanding of how speech production works and their awareness of speech as a dynamic process. Apart from the transitions, which were either present, not present or partly present, frequently occurring mistakes were identified and grouped.

## Results

More students chose the *Word production task* (n = 36) rather than the *Rhoticity task* (n = 9). While the former covered a wider scope of the course content, the latter inclined to be more research-oriented.

## Word production task

### Questions 1 - 6

The respondents opted for 20 one-syllable and 16 two-syllable words. The latter ones had all the same stress pattern with the primary stress falling on the first syllable with the exception of *assume*. Five items



were chosen twice (*dog, queen, water, letter, battle*). Only two words contained a diphthong (*stroke* and *child*). Turning to the nature of the task instructions, they were considered crystal clear by 75 per cent and clear by 25 per cent of participants.

In 61 per cent cases the paper was accepted for the first time, however 13 respondents (36 per cent) had to resubmit it once and one student (three per cent) twice. Out of those who resubmitted the task, all of them thought it was necessary to hand in the paper again and they found the lecturer's feedback helpful in the process of correcting it.

Moving onto the level of enjoyment, more than half of the participants did not mind doing the task (53 per cent) followed by seven respondents (19 per cent) who really enjoyed it. Two students (six per cent) specified that they liked the task but at the same time they found it either quite challenging or a bit stressful. Contrary to the neutral, positive or mixed experience (78 per cent), five respondents (14 per cent) did not particularly enjoy doing the task and they took it as a course requirement and the remaining three students (eight per cent) provided their own responses – one found it difficult, the other one stressful and the last one offered an elaborate response: *I found it a bit stressful because of all the little things we had to describe. It was not that difficult, but I found myself checking multiple times if I included all the necessary information. I also wanted the task to be consistent in all its parts. Otherwise, the task was enjoyable.* (S23)

#### Questions 7 – 8

Examining the choice of statements that best summarized the experience of having done the *Word production task* (see table 1), 66 per cent selected three or four options, two options were chosen by four respondents (11 per cent) and the identical number selected only one sentence (11 per cent). Three participants ticked five options (eight per cent) and one respondent added her own response (three per cent). Regarding the overall effort the majority (81 per cent) evaluated the task as adequate to the course content, for four student it was easy or very easy (11 per cent) and for three on the contrary difficult or very difficult (eight per cent).

**Table 1 Question seven in which the respondents chose one or more statements that best summarized their experience of the *Word production task***

Statements about the <i>Word production task</i>	%
The task made me go through my notes and materials and start revising for the exam.	81
The task helped me consolidate the knowledge provided by the course.	78
The task helped me better connect the theory and practice	67
The task helped to clarify certain aspects.	44
Without this task certain features might have remained misunderstood.	25
I didn't have to study much for this task.	14

#### Questions 9 – 12

Looking at the most difficult aspects of the task, the following categories were identified frequently by the students: choice of the right word (ten times), transitions between sounds (seven times), phonetic description of sounds (six times), inclusion of all required aspects (five times) and problems related to writing (five times). Interestingly, what caused difficulty to some students was perceived as the easiest feature of the assigned task for others. Sound description was stated eight times and it was accompanied by the appraisal that all the information was comfortably accessible in the course handouts. Furthermore,

the participants found transcription, accent variation and choice of the target word easy (five times each category). For two students, going through their notes and the process of writing were the simplest.

The last two questions shed even more light on the effectiveness of the investigated task. Although eight participants could not recall how specifically the task contributed to their understanding, probably due to the long pause between the end of the course and the questionnaire distribution, the rest stated numerous things: movements of articulators in the oral cavity (six times), allophonic variation (five times), transitions (five times), sound production and classification (three times), revision (three times) and connecting theory and practice (once).

The last question yielded unequivocally positive response; 95 per cent of respondents wish the task to remain integral part of the course for various reasons that mostly coincide with the statements in Table 1. Phrases such as *adequate, helped me revise, connect, apply, better understand* occurred frequently in the comments. In addition, the comments included a couple of feasible suggestions, for instance to describe more words during the course or to adjust the *Rhoticity task* to make both tasks equally difficult.

### Rhoticity task

All respondents analysed a Czech and either an American or British speaker. Looking at the instructions, 78 per cent found them perfectly clear and 22 per cent clear. One person had to resubmit the task and she thought it could have been accepted. Nevertheless, she found the lecturer's comments useful. Over three fourths of all participants really enjoyed doing the task and the rest did not mind working on it. Turning to the statements summarizing the experience with the task, all respondents except for one chose that it helped them connect theory and practice. For seven participants the task was helpful in consolidating the knowledge about rhoticity, four students were made to go through their notes and for another four the task helped them master the concept of rhoticity. On average 3 options were selected by one participant.

The difficulties encountered while doing the task varied widely: finding the speakers or text, perceptual analysis or summarizing the thoughts. The task was considered adequate by 66 per cent, easy by 33 per cent and very easy by 11 per cent. All respondents thought the task should remain part of the course, only one would change it from compulsory to optional. The reasons were very encouraging, for instance *Definitely! I think it's important to "live" phopho and not only learn it.* (S3)

Lastly, the things that the students comprehended better thanks to the task will be listed. Apart from deeper understanding of how rhoticity works, there were other observations not linked to rhoticity, for example a lack of reduction in Czech English, speech rhythm, paying more attention to regional accents and realizations that *British speakers really don't pronounce their Rs* (S5) or *that the phenomena which we learned really appear in normal speech* (S6).

### Content analysis

In the *Word production task* papers the presence or absence of transitions between individual sounds did not seem to correlate with students' improved understanding of the course content. The transitions were identified in 33 per cent of papers, partial transitions in 39 per cent and 28 per cent lacked the transitions completely. For instance in the word *castle*, the sounds /k/ and /a:/ were described correctly but as separate entities missing the crucial point that to move from /k/ to /a:/ the tongue is already at the back of the mouth so its rear part only goes down to reach the open back quality. Interestingly, 6 out of 10 respondents whose papers had no transitions stated that the task helped them better understand

some of the key concepts: sound production, tongue movement or allophonic variation. A similar pattern was revealed in the other two groups. The data suggest that the factors greatly contributing to the task efficiency involved the necessity to revise and mainly having to put the ideas and observations into words. Most mistakes occurred in the *Word production task*, in particular wrong brackets in transcriptions, missing allophones in the target words and inaccurate descriptions of sounds. In the *Rhoticity task* the occasional mistakes concerned the classification of the words for the analysis.

## Conclusion and discussion

Both examined seminar tasks were perceived positively by the vast majority of respondents. Furthermore, they were considered adequate to the course content and were completed without distress. Most importantly, in the context of the course that progressed relatively quickly and at times tended to overload the students with new information, the tasks turned out to help them digest the selected phonetic and phonological concepts. The data from the open-ended questions suggest the efficacy of the tasks as most participants claimed they had gained deeper understanding of the studied features. This finding was confirmed by the content analysis which, in addition to this, also identified some missing information and/or minor mistakes.

One of the overall course goals was to pass on the knowledge that speech is a dynamic and complex process with a substantial degree of coarticulation rather than a static sequence of individual sounds. The latter slightly misleading perspective seems to be widespread among students and the seminar tasks showed the potential to challenge this assumption.

Finally, the comparison between the tasks pointed out their different nature. The *Rhoticity task* was considered somewhat easier, which corresponds to the small number of revealed mistakes. What appears to have left a permanent mark on the students who had done this more research-oriented activity was the firsthand experience analysing a speech sample and noticing the studied phenomena in real speech.

Looking at the future development of the seminar tasks carried out within the English phonetics and phonology course, three areas stay open to possible modifications. Firstly, it is the implementation of the acoustic point of view in the current version of the *Word production task*, for instance by describing the spectrogram of the target word or mapping of acoustic cues with the articulatory correlates (Cabrera-Abreu and Vizcaíno-Ortega). Secondly, a list of suitable words for the *Word production task* could be created. Finally, more tasks could be on offer to give students greater freedom to profile in the area they find relevant and that interests them most.

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## Extracurricular English and teachers' language skills

*Abstract: The paper deals with professional development of mainstream non-language teachers focusing on their English language skills they might use in their teaching profession. It examines the role of teacher training colleges offering English courses for all students to enhance their language competences. The paper reflects a document issued by the Council of Europe emphasizing the need to involve English through the school curriculum at all levels of education. The paper maps situations where teachers and students use English outside classrooms. The aim of the research is to find future non-language teachers' opinions on their CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) experience during their secondary school studies. The practical part analyses a questionnaire completed by students from the Faculty of Education, Palacký University, Olomouc, regarding the English language skills of their former mainstream non-language teachers and the contexts they used English in. The respondents also commented on using extracurricular English in their school performance and activities.*

### Introduction

It has been five years since the Council of Europe issued a document named *The Language Dimension in all Subjects*, that serves as a handbook for educators in curriculum development and teacher training. Its aim is to '*highlight the importance of language not just as a separate subject in school but in all subjects across the curriculum*' (Council of Europe 2015). This article considers the impact of the aforementioned document on using English in the school environment not as a specific subject but as a tool enhancing students' knowledge in other subjects and allowing schools and teachers to be more active internationally. The document emphasises the fact that better language competences of teachers not only support equity and accessibility in education but increase the quality of the educational process as well. One of the chapters devoted to teacher training and professional development points out that in many language teacher training systems in Europe, this concern has already been addressed in various ways. It '*implies that pre-service training courses focussing on the language dimension, should be offered to all teachers, not only to future language specialists and that such courses are made mandatory in the long run*' (Council of Europe 2015, 116).

### English as a global language in education

Although *The Language Dimension in all Subjects* document does not specify any language, one can assume the English language plays the most significant role as a communicative tool across the world. '*English is now widely recognised as an – if not the – international language both in and out of the field of TESOL*' (Matsuda 2012, 1). Undoubtedly, English plays an important role in all spheres of human professional life, including education. Moreover, English '*is the language used most frequently for an international mail and at international conferences*' (Smith 2015, 165). Though there are numerous people whose first language is English, its potential lies in the vast number of people using it as a second language. '*A global language is bound sooner or later to be used in a large part by speakers who know it as a second language only and use it for a variety of purposes, in a range of settings*' (Bruthiaux 2002, 152). The spread of English in business and politics, its dominance over the internet and as a source of

information has made English a needed norm in most of the developed countries and significantly increases opportunities in individual's professional life. Although education in some countries still pays attention to English only within TEFL (Teaching English as a foreign language), the influence of the modern world together with its emphasis on the cooperation across the countries, cultural and linguistic heterogeneity is mirrored in new methods and trends in education.

A. Mauranen et al. (2010) accents that English is widely adopted as the lingua franca in international research projects, even without native English-speaking participants, due to the increasing number of partners and global expansion of these projects. This trend is likely to continue emphasizing the influence of professional and disciplinary communities. Opportunities are presented for the English for Academic Purposes (EAP) research community to explore the diverse uses of English. On the practical side, which is the focus of our English extra-curricular programme, the development of English as a lingua franca complicates language education, as successful communication requires new skills that differ from traditional language learning, highlighting the need for ELF research in developing innovative applications.

### **Teacher's development in present-day teaching**

Teacher's professional (and personal) development does not end with gaining a teaching certificate (diploma) at the end of their study at a teacher training institution. Generally, it is expected that 21<sup>st</sup> century teachers are provided with sufficient knowledge and skills throughout their tertiary education. Eventually, this makes future teachers prepared for all the demands and challenges in their practice. Therefore, detailed analyses of the competences a modern teacher should acquire are needed (Jovanova-Mitkovska 2010, Villegas-Reimers 2003, Nessipbayeva 2012). The teacher's competences reach much further than to merely acquiring subject proficiency. Some of the competences (mentioned later) are closely related to English language skills that are necessary for achieving these competences.

Professional development of teachers is important as cooperating with colleagues from abroad, for example, demands knowledge of a language used for communication, which is English in most cases. The purpose of the teacher training institutions is not only to deliver subject matter knowledge but also to educate the 21<sup>st</sup> century citizens who are aware of global and cross-culture issues (Bautista and Ortega-Ruiz 2015, 241). The experienced teachers keep themselves informed of the latest research and theories in teaching (Villegas-Reimers 2003, 73). Studying the latest trends and methods in teaching is extremely important and knowledge of English provides teachers with a much wider range of sources that bring information from a worldwide perspective and are often ahead of national literature. Among numerous 21<sup>st</sup> century teacher's competences, the following one depicts the need in '*demonstrating a knowledge of their subject by relating it to other disciplines and relating global awareness of the subject*' (Nessipbayeva 2012, 152).

The relation of the English language to other disciplines is reflected in a method called CLIL that uses English skills not as a tool to enrich teacher's development or extend cooperation among professionals. Rather, CLIL presents an inevitable device of teacher's work to enhance students' proficiency in both English language and any other subject taught by using this method.

### **CLIL and its place at schools**

The term Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) was launched in Europe in the 1990s by a group of experts from different backgrounds, including educational administrators, researchers, and

practitioners (Cenoz, Genesee, Gorter, 2013). CLIL stands for 'Content and Language Integrated Learning' and can be described as the use of the target language (L2) in the teaching of non-language subjects that are usually taught in learners' mother tongue (L1). It refers to 'any dual-focused educational context in which an additional language, thus not usually the first language of the learners involved, is used as a medium in the teaching and learning of non-language content' (Marsh, 2002). Even though the method of using a foreign language for teaching a content of various character had its roots long ago, especially in multilingual territories, the word CLIL came to the existence only recently, in 1994 (Pokrivčáková 2015, 8). 'CLIL has been a topical issue in European education for quite a few years now' (Dalton-Puffer 2008, 1). CLIL is not only incorporated in some schools at a local level, but it is also an important part of the European Union (EU) policy. 'Although CLIL can be implemented in different foreign languages, the fact is that English is the language overwhelmingly used as a means of instruction in most European countries' (Lasagabaster and Sierra 2010, 367).

### **CLIL at Czech schools**

As CLIL has spread across the European countries, it has been reflected in several Czech schools as part of the Czech educational system. The way how this method can be applied in Czech schools is given by a document called *Content, and language integrated learning in CR* (MŠMT 2009) elaborated by Pedagogical research centre. It is the only official document available on the web page of the Czech Ministry of Education containing the basic rules and use principles of CLIL at Czech schools (Kazelleová and Vojtková eds. 2011, 6).

### **CLIL and teacher's training**

CLIL brings more opportunities for schools and students but makes more demands on subject teachers in terms of their English language skills. 'Teachers who use CLIL need to be linguistically aware, possessing insight into how language functions, in addition to being able to use the language as a tool in the classroom' (Papaja 2013, 149). The same author carried out research among Polish CLIL teachers and only 4 out of 31 were fully qualified with additional university degree in English. Not strict criteria for teacher's qualification in the CLIL type provision is present as teachers are specialists in one or more non-language subjects or have two areas of specialisation, one in a language subject and the other in a non-language subject (Eurydice 2006, 41).

### **Non-language teachers and their English proficiency**

The knowledge of the English language of non-language teachers is needed for many reasons. There are more use cases for teachers when they utilize English than searching for teaching material and the up-to-date pedagogical information from English written sources (as the Czech ones are limited to Czech authors). Teachers might make a use of their English knowledge when they are involved in an international cooperation with various colleagues and authorities from abroad and when they attend international conferences for their professional development to learn about new methods and trends in teaching. Many available school projects reach beyond our national boundaries and the lack of a communicative tool limits a chance to apply for these projects successfully. It can be said that the use of English for teaching non-language subjects is feasible for all teachers with sufficient English proficiency. There is no

doubt that language skills of non-language teachers can increase the chances of a school to succeed in the competition with other schools in the Czech Republic or abroad (for example projects) and provide students with a better education covering a wider range of methods and possibilities.

To make our future non-language teachers capable of responding to all challenges, they need to be prepared before their teaching practice and continue with mastering English. Although English as a subject is taught for vast majority of lower-secondary students (98% in 2017 according to Czech statistical office), from our experience, English proficiency of many students coming to the faculty of Education does not reach the required degree of knowledge stated by Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (Council of Europe 2001). Thus, teacher-training institutions need to take responsibility to offer future non-language teachers' sufficient education.

### **English for Educators and future non-language teachers' opinions**

English for Educators is a title of a two-term course of English language for non-language teachers studying at the Faculty of Education, Palacký University in Olomouc, Czech Republic, where it is also taught. The course is aimed at students of the first year of their study with aims to comprehend chosen educational topics in English, to be able to understand the texts focused on education, to know the necessary vocabulary and be able to express their opinions on an issue. Moreover, students are trained to prepare and present a presentation about a topic from pedagogy or teaching methodology in the first term and in the second term, they are asked to teach an exemplary CLIL lesson. All the activities have been designed to enhance students' English skills to be more targeted to their needs in practice. Nevertheless, when carrying out the research among these students in the academic year 2019/2020, the results showed that 57,1% of the students participating in the research would prefer not only English for specific purposes, but also general English with 23,8% of them preferring only general English (Valešová and Duda 2020). It means that more than 80% of students miss general English classes in their tertiary education to improve their English skills from the previous school years. It only proves the fact that English classes at lower-secondary level and upper-secondary level schools are not sufficient, as English for the specific purposes (for educators in this case) is based on adequate level of general English. The same research also aimed to find out whether students think they will use English in their future profession (should they decide to become teachers). More than 52% of the respondents answered positively which means that more than half of the students know English could be part of their teaching practice even though they will not be English teachers.

### **Research design and its characteristics**

The aim of the research is to find future non-language teachers' opinions on their CLIL experience during their secondary school studies. For the purposes of this research, a quantitative research design with a questionnaire survey as a research tool were used (Creswell, 2012; Chráska, 2007).

The questionnaire was constructed, piloted (research sample: colleagues) and eventually distributed using *survio.com* and distributed online among selected students using their email addresses. The selected participants of the survey were students who attended the aforementioned course English for Educators in the academic year of 2020/2021 at the Faculty of Education, Palacký University in Olomouc, the Czech Republic. In total, there were 23 questions in the questionnaire formulated in Czech and in total 211 students of approximately 600 asked eventually participated and answered the questions. The



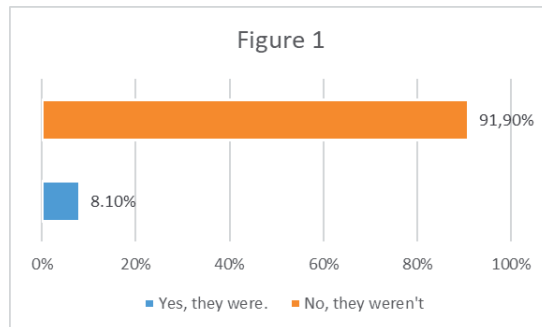
response rate is then around 30%, which is better than expected by the authors. All the respondents studied English at lower-secondary level and upper-secondary level schools and almost 92% of them have passed the school leaving exam (maturita) exam from English, which suggests the students have an adequate level of English to start with. Nevertheless, as the results from the previous research indicate, students' English skills are quite diverse and often beyond the academic demands corresponding to the B1 level of English of 'maturita' exam. This research is part of a long-term research<sup>(1)</sup>.

One of the limitations of the survey is objectivity as the respondents can hide behind anonymity and be someone else, therefore can lie or give false data. Or as they might know each other, they might influence each other's opinion. In terms of validity of the survey, the researchers are aware of the limitation of the research non-transferability as it may bring different results (for example conducted at different university). The survey's reliability is one of the prerequisites of the survey's validity, therefore it was ensured the respondents understood the questions by constructing the questions in their native language – Czech. What is more, for the purposes of the basic descriptive statistics in terms of data analysis, we used servio.com software.

### English used out of English classes at secondary schools

The research targets the questions dealing with the use of English beyond English classes, but still inside the school environment and for studying needs. The questions deal with the use of English in terms of the CLIL method, use of English for preparing teaching materials in other subjects than English, international activities, and non-language teachers' proficiency in English from the students' point of view. For the purposes of this paper, six example questions and their results have been selected and commented on in detail, as shown below.

*Example 1 (Q10): Were any of your subjects at secondary school ever taught in English? Such a method is called CLIL which means that some subjects (e.g. history, geography, math...) are taught in English.*

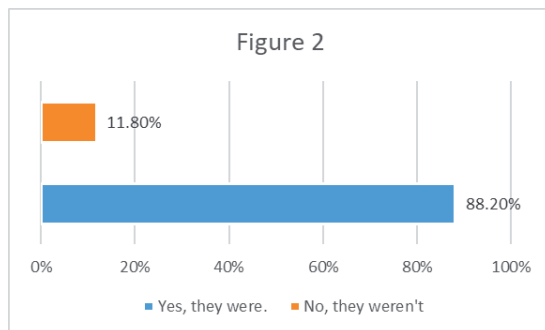


As the results of Q10 in figure 1 suggest, the CLIL method is still not used to such an extent as the education policy of the European Union promotes. Only around 8% of the respondents have some experience with CLIL method. Though this way of teaching might enrich students' classes and enhance their English language skills, its implementation in schools is quite marginal.

In the follow-up question in the questionnaire (Q11), we asked those students who had answered the question positively to specify the subjects taught in English. The answers included: geography, physics, math, social science, psychology, art, biology, literature, music, IT, chemistry, and physical education.

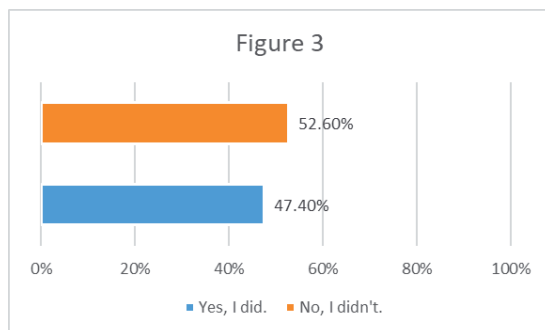
When selecting only those students who answered this question positively, all but one respondent attended grammar school or bilingual grammar school. We can assume that if CLIL is applied at a secondary school, it is so almost exclusively at these types of schools where not only teachers but also students have achieved a required level of English.

*Example 2 (Q12): Were English skills of the teachers who taught these subjects sufficient from your point of view?*



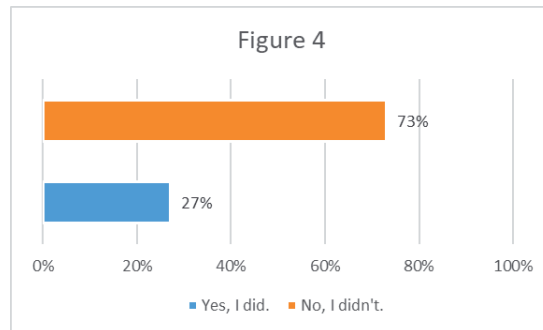
It can be expected that the teachers who agree to teach non-language subjects in English are well trained and often professionals in English language teaching. Therefore, it is not surprising that more than 88% of the respondents find their teachers' English proficiency sufficient for these classes (figure 2). The research doesn't include a possibility of tandem teaching in which two teachers are present in the class, a subject teacher and an English language teacher since we assume that this situation is quite rare in our school system.

*Example 3 (Q13): Did you need the English language within your secondary school studies in different situations than in English classes?*



While most of the respondents did not have any experience with the CLIL method, more than 47% of them used English out of their regular English classes at secondary schools (figure 3). In the follow-up question (Q14) in the questionnaire, the respondents gave the following details with the examples connected to the international cooperation of a particular school, such as exchange trips with students from various countries, participation of native speakers at school events, Erasmus exchanges, Edison projects, English theatre, lectures of international guests, meetings with lecturers from abroad, educational video creating, internship abroad or lectures about possibilities of internship abroad and cross board cooperation with Poland or Austria. All the above-mentioned examples are an important part of an international development of schools.

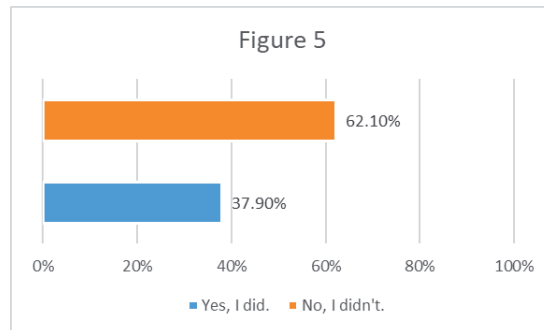
*Example 4 (Q15): Did you notice if your non-language teachers ever used English in school or teaching?*



The results in figure 4 show that only 27% percent of non-language teachers used English within their professional duties according to the memories of observations by their students. This lower number might suggest that most non-language teachers are not prepared enough for the tasks requiring English language skills.

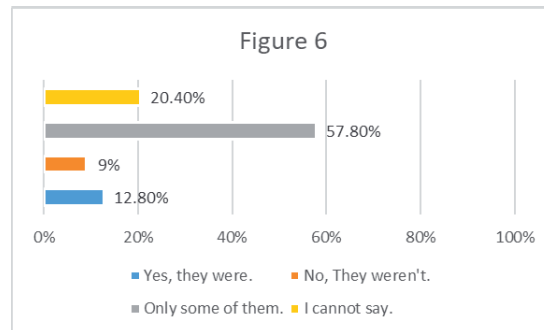
When asking about specific examples of the use of English by non-language teachers, the respondents provided many different situations in the follow-up question (Q16). For instance, being involved in an exchange trip, communication abroad when accompanying students on international trips, communication with colleagues and students from abroad, communication with a native speaker as a guest in their lessons, arranging international internships, international conferences and lectures, working with PC, preparing and translating teaching materials in English, email communication, participating in international projects (Erasmus), comparing translated literature in Czech with its English original, understanding the terminology of a specific subject or sharing the office with international colleagues and communicating with them. Some respondents even added that some non-language teachers complained about a lack of English skills, which did not allow them to use international sources and participate in the international trips with students.

Example 5 (Q17): Did you ever use English teaching materials in other subjects than English?



The use of English teaching or studying materials was mentioned in some previous respondents' answers. Although those who answered positively are still in the minority (almost 38%), it is not an insignificant number (figure 5). Students mentioned a variety of subjects where English was needed to provide them with educational content including not only internet sources, but also original texts, literature and terminology.

Example 6 (Q19). Do you think that your non-language teachers had sufficient English skills needed for their professional tasks?



In contrast to the question 2, this one covers more general English skills that might be used not only within the classroom. According to the results in figure 6, only 12,8% respondents stated that their non-language teachers were well-equipped regarding their English proficiency. Most of the respondents (57,8%) found only some teachers had sufficient English skills. The results show that although there are non-language teachers who can use these skills to extend their possibilities to be effective and successful in their teaching practice, most of them are still not prepared for such a challenge.

## Conclusion

The desired competences of the English language are embedded in Europe in documents which promote English as a tool for making education more global and connected across European countries and enabling international cooperation due to sharing information and values. It can also be very useful when making individual schools competitive on the education market and involving them in international activities. Currently, schools need to work hard to be attractive for students, their parents and potential cooperating subjects. It requires qualified teachers who can provide more skills than purely the required knowledge of the subjects they teach.

As the results of the research in this paper show, it can be summarized that English language and its use by non-language teachers in some of Czech schools is still quite limited. The use of English for teaching other subjects appears to be related only to grammar or bilingual grammar schools. On the other hand, there are many other situations in the school environment, especially those connected to international cooperation and materials used for teaching, where English is needed and required. The results also showed that most non-language teachers did not have sufficient knowledge of English to be effective and useful and it decreased their working opportunities.

Although studies dealing specifically with extracurricular English focusing on vocational terminology are relatively infrequent, some comparison is offered, for example by John Airey (2010) describing the ability of Swedish students to apply CLIL with their disciplinary English. He concludes that "it seems that students probably do adapt quite well to being taught in English, however, this adaptation may take longer and/or be less accomplished for some students. This is clearly something that content teachers should bear in mind. Next, one can wonder about the amount of practice students receive in speaking disciplinary English within their undergraduate degree" (p. 45)

The Faculty of Education's programme for teaching English as a subsidiary subject for students with other majors, but applying professional terminology, is part of a trend described among others by A. Mauranen et al. – English for Specific Purposes (2010).

Providing specific English language skills is a task for teacher training colleges, universities, their faculties and institutions that should provide their students with sufficient English language courses in both general English and English for specific purposes tailored to the teaching profession. This way they can contribute to the process of making Czech education more successful not only locally, but internationally.

## Notes

(1) Unlike the previous group of students (Valešová and Duda 2020), the current respondents are at the beginning of their studies and the focus of the research is on their experience with the use of English out of English classes in a school environment and English skills of their non-language teachers. It can be expected that most students had finished their studies at the secondary schools before starting to attend their first term at the university, so they keep the needed facts in their memory.

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**Božena Horváthová**

## **Exploring Listening Strategies of English Language Students in Digital and Online Settings: Reciprocal vs. Non-Reciprocal Listening**

*Abstract: This study focuses on how students can improve their listening comprehension skills in foreign language education by using learning strategies, particularly in the areas of reciprocal and non-reciprocal listening. The theoretical framework includes key terms related to learning strategies for language learning and teaching. The study also explores the impact of digital technology and online sources on language learning. It presents the research methodology, objectives, sample, data collection and processing methods. The findings indicate that students improved their listening strategies over time, becoming more effective in comprehension in digital and online settings. Strategies such as asking for repetition and clarification, focusing on the main idea, and using nonverbal cues were frequently utilized. However, some students still struggled with translation and relied heavily on familiar words. The study concludes with suggestions for further practice to enhance students' independent development of their listening skills.*

### **Introduction**

Social and economic conditions are changing rapidly. These changes are also reflected in the education system and the learning and teaching process. The traditional aim of education, the transfer of knowledge, is no longer sufficient. Schools and other educational institutions can no longer anticipate and subsequently provide pupils and students with the skills and knowledge they will need throughout their lives. Teachers are no longer the only source of knowledge and textbooks are no longer the only source of information. The solution to this situation should be to develop the most important competence – learning to learn. Teaching at all levels of education should focus on the process of learning rather than on mastering a quantum of information. This goal emphasises the importance of autonomous learning, self-regulation and the need to be aware of one's learning style and learning strategies.

The rapid growth and amount of factual information available from a variety of sources require the development of learning strategies. This need is particularly evident in the context of foreign language learning. It is a lifelong process, which involves a constant effort to maintain and further improve the level of language proficiency. After schooling, the process of forgetting automatically begins, and the essence is to teach pupils and students how to learn. In this process, learning strategies that enable learners to take responsibility for their linguistic and personal development are important. Foreign language learning strategies are beneficial for learners as they provide more reliable and less frustrating pathways to succeed in the process of acquiring a foreign language.

### **Learning Strategies and Their Classification**

While there are several definitions of learning strategies, they all share a common feature: learning strategies are used intentionally by learners, and require conscious control to achieve a language goal. In other words, learners deliberately employ these strategies to move toward their language learning

objectives (Bialystok, 1981; Oxford, 1990, 1996). Many factors influence how foreign language learners use specific strategies. In general, they apply strategies depending on their cultural background, personality, gender, the purpose of learning a foreign language, cognitive style, specific task, etc. The best-known and generally accepted definition of the term learning strategy comes from Oxford (1990, 8) according to whom “learning strategies are often-conscious steps of behaviours used by language learners to enhance the acquisition, storage, retention, recall, and use of new information.”

Learning a foreign language involves a wide range of strategies that are often interrelated. These strategies support various language tasks and exercises, and it is common for at least one strategy to be used for each task. Due to the diversity of these strategies, there are different typologies based on various criteria, highlighting the importance of using a combination of strategies to effectively learn a foreign language. Oxford (1994) identified various categories of foreign language learning strategies, which are classified. These include (1) systems associated with successful foreign language learners (Rubin, 1975); (2) systems that are based on psychological functions (O’Malley and Chamot, 1990); (3) systems that are based on linguistic or communicative strategies (Bialystok, 1981; Tarone, 1983); (4) systems associated with individual language skills; (5) systems that are based on different learning styles and types of learners or those based on learning goals; and (6) systems based on age, language level, specific language or culture (Cohen and Weaver 2005).

### **Listening Comprehension Strategies in Foreign Language Education**

Today, learners have abundant resources and diverse texts to enhance their foreign language listening skills. The availability of didactic and authentic materials no longer restricts teachers from exposing students to varied genres. However, the current focus is on teaching effective listening rather than mere text replay. Teaching the skill of listening comprehension means “making students aware of the fact that listening is not a passive activity, but a complex and active process during which they must discriminate sounds, understand vocabulary and grammatical structures, interpret accent and intonation, and place all this information in an overall socio-cultural context” (Vandergriff, 1999, 168). The coordination of all these processes requires the use of appropriate learning strategies.

According to Rost (2002), listening involves four stages: receiving the message from the speaker, constructing and representing the meaning of the message, negotiating the meaning with the speaker and responding, and creating meaning through engagement, imagination, and empathy. Listening comprehension is an interactive process involving two distinct processes. These processes involve the use of both prior knowledge (known as “top-down” processes) and linguistic knowledge (known as “bottom-up” processes) to understand spoken information.

Richards (2008) explains that depending on the goal of a language task, individuals may approach listening comprehension in two different ways: non-reciprocal and reciprocal communication. Non-reciprocal language use focuses on comprehending the message of the text and is commonly used to provide information, such as during lectures or in radio and television broadcasts, where the listener cannot interrupt the speaker to seek clarification. On the other hand, reciprocal language use is geared towards social interaction and satisfying social needs during conversation and informal communication. This type of language use involves active interaction with the speaker.

The concept of identifying successful strategies in listening is similar to research on learning strategies, where information about the learning strategies of successful students is utilized to instruct those who are less successful. Vandergriff (1997) and Rost (2002) found these successful strategies through research



on recipients of spoken text who improved their listening skills. The researchers agreed on the following types of strategies that contribute to successful listening: e.g., predicting information in the text, inferring incomplete information based on activating pre-existing knowledge, monitoring one's listening process, clarifying unclear information, responding to what the recipient has understood from the text, and checking one's level of comprehension of the spoken text.

Mianmahaleh and Rahimy (2015) aimed to identify and compare the listening strategies of Iranian male and female English language learners. The results revealed that Iranian EFL learners employed more metacognitive strategies than cognitive and socio-affective strategies.

Kazemi and Kiamarsi (2017) indicated that advanced learners tend to use metacognitive strategies more than socio-affective and cognitive strategies. It can be concluded that advanced learners try to monitor and evaluate their comprehension. However, intermediate language learners employed cognitive, and then social/affective strategies more frequently.

Saraswaty (2018) emphasized the importance of listening skills in daily life and language learning. According to Saraswaty listening serves various purposes, including entertainment, academic pursuits, and obtaining the necessary information. By providing suitable strategies and fostering a positive attitude, teachers can help students develop effective listening skills and improve their overall English listening abilities.

Deregözü (2021) investigated listening comprehension strategies used by foreign language learners in distance education at three Turkish state universities during the 2020-2021 academic year. The findings suggest students use listening comprehension strategies moderately, with listening and nonverbal strategies being most common, and word-oriented strategies being the least used.

Nasim (2022) aimed to categorize the metacognitive listening comprehension strategies (MLCS) of Arab EFL learners at Prince Sattam bin Abdulaziz University. Results showed that all participants were moderate to high users of the MLCS, with problem-solving being the most preferred and mental translation the least favourite. Directed attention, planning and evaluation, and personal knowledge strategies followed.

## **Digital Technology in Listening Comprehension**

Linh & Ngo (2021) mention several challenges in developing listening comprehension currently such as speed of the speech, accent of the speaker, anxiety, or attitude of learners. In connection to coping with these challenges, there is significant emphasis on utilizing modern technology, digital resources, and online platforms to enhance particularly extensive listening skills and provide students with additional learning opportunities beyond traditional classroom settings. To better meet the evolving communication needs of students, it is important to investigate the implementation of new media and technology for comprehending relevant texts.

Technology enhances language learners' listening skills via online resources like websites, podcasts, news broadcasts, and TV shows (Alm 2013), offering authentic language exposure and acclimating learners to target language sounds. Online language exchanges connect learners to native speakers for conversational practice through video chat, fostering natural listening and speaking improvement. Language apps and tools include independent listening exercises (Peachey 2023), empowering students to refine their listening skills autonomously. These apps also use speech recognition technology to provide feedback on pronunciation and intonation, which can be especially helpful for learners trying to improve their speaking skills (Figurelli & Franzi 2023). Overall, technology provides a variety of tools and resources for language learners to improve their listening skills and achieve their language learning goals.

Horváthová (2022) delves into various aspects of the subject, providing insights into how information technology can enhance foreign language instruction.

## **Research Methodology**

The research is designed to analyse the usage of learning strategies in the skill of listening comprehension to provide an understanding of how students of English language and literature use these strategies. Learning strategies are investigated by a data-collecting tool of diary entries which is aimed at detecting cognitive processes and helps to gain insight into the issue of learning strategies.

The diary entries should also help students improve their listening skills in a foreign language by observing themselves while they listen. This approach can support students to become better at reflecting on their learning and becoming more independent learners. This is the first step in Chamot et al.'s (2005a) model of practising learning strategies, which aims to activate students in the process of learning a foreign language. By focusing on the listening process, students can become more aware of how they learn and improve their ability to control their development of listening skills.

## **Research Aims and Research Questions**

This study aims to investigate the listening strategies used by students in digital and online settings, with a focus on non-reciprocal and reciprocal listening situations. Specifically, the study aims to answer two research questions:

1. What are the strategies that students apply in non-reciprocal listening in digital and online settings?
2. What are the strategies that students apply in reciprocal listening, and how do they overcome listening misunderstandings and maintain conversational fluency in digital and online settings?

By addressing these research questions, the study aims to identify useful listening strategies that can help students improve their listening comprehension in real-life situations in online and digital foreign language learning settings.

## **Method of Data Collection and Processing**

A qualitative instrument – a diary was used for data collection. The unstructured diaries allowed respondents to record events and activities in their own words. This type of diary has the advantage of being easier to construct, allowing a wider range of views and attitudes to be captured. The method of data processing for this type of diary keeping requires 'open coding', which allows for the creation of more categories and codes. The research results are then richer and allow for a deeper understanding of the text being analysed. At the same time, they provide the researcher with more valuable and useful information that can serve as sources of interesting stimuli for further research. The diaries represent an introspective technique in researching foreign language learning. The term introspection for this study is understood from Nunan`s point of view (2008, 115-116) and covers both techniques in which data collection is coterminous with the mental events being investigated and research contexts in which the data are collected retrospectively, sometimes later after the events have taken place.

The diary entries were kept by the students during two semesters. The main intention was to have students respond in the diary entries to events related to listening in English not only within the classroom but also outside the classroom. The students were instructed to include details about the date of the

entry, the purpose and source of the listening material, the topic, and the setting (online, in-person). Finally, the students were supposed to comment on the strategies employed for both reciprocal and non-reciprocal listening. For each completed listening activity, they were required to reflect on their actions during the listening event and describe how they tried to understand what they heard and the problems they experienced. The keeping of listening diaries was linked to the listening events students normally performed. The aim was that the diaries should reflect the real-world conditions under which the data was collected. The formulation of codes and categories was obtained through content analysis of the diary entries and provided deeper insights into the use of different kinds of strategies.

A background questionnaire was also administered and queried students about information such as age and academic major, as well as about their language backgrounds. Regarding language, students were asked to identify the length of time they had formally studied the foreign language and at which educational levels. They had to report on whether they had spent some time in English-speaking countries and if so, in what contexts, and for how long.

## **Research Participants**

The study was conducted among students enrolled in the Bachelor's degree programme for Teaching English Language and Literature between September 2021 and June 2022. The participants were aged between 19 and 24 years old. Based on the European Framework of Reference, 24 students reported an English language proficiency level of B1, 28 students had a level of B2, and four students had a level of C1. Sixteen students had previously spent between one week and six months in countries where English is used as a first language, such as the UK, USA, and Ireland. The duration of the student's English language study ranged from 6 to 16 years. The primary mode of exposure to the English language for most students was through the Internet and social networking sites (51%), lectures and seminars (34%) and direct contact with native or non-native English speakers (15%).

## **Research results**

Out of the 546 diary entries collected from 56 students, diaries from 10 students were excluded from further analysis following an initial review because they did not meet the required criteria. Finally, 470 diary entries from 46 students were subjected to qualitative content analysis. A system of categories and codes was created to analyse the diaries. Based on the nature of the individual listening comprehension events recorded within digital and online settings, the following types of diary entries can be distinguished: events related to non-reciprocal listening 411 entries (88%) and 59 entries (12%) associated with reciprocal listening.

## **Strategies Applied in Non-Reciprocal Listening**

The results of the content analysis of the diaries represent the entries related to non-reciprocal listening 411 (88%). Entries related to non-reciprocal listening predominate. The reason is that students had many more opportunities to listen to the English language in the context of films, songs, online streaming platforms such as Netflix, documentaries, audiobooks, online internet resources (Youtube, podcasts), and radio/TV broadcasting, etc., which are typical examples of non-reciprocal listening. Four categories and fourteen codes were created for the strategies used in non-reciprocal listening.

**Table 1 Strategies in non-reciprocal listening**

Category	Code	Example of a strategy
Planning and evaluation	Listening strategy planning	I have a plan for how to listen
	Text association	I recall previous experiences of listening to similar texts
	Reflective thinking	I reflect on past listening experiences and identify what I can improve
	Self-evaluation	I estimate my level of understanding during and after listening
	Goal-oriented listening	I set an objective for listening
Focused/mindful listening	Intensifying focus effort	I try harder to focus when I have trouble understanding the text
	Regaining concentration	I try to regain concentration when my attention has failed
	Abandoning listening attempt	I give up and stop listening when I do not understand (negative strategy)
L1 Interference strategies	Translating essential words	I translate keywords as I listen
Analytical thinking	Context-based guessing	I use the words I understand to guess the meaning of the unfamiliar words
	Topic-related inference	I compare what I understand with what I already know about the topic
	Experience-driven comprehension	I use my experience and knowledge to help me understand what the speaker is saying
	Meaning refinement	I modify my understanding if I realise that it is incorrect
	Top-down processing	I use the overall message of the text to guess the meaning of the unfamiliar words

The codes categorized under *Planning and Evaluation* refer to students' ability to plan their listening process, respond to problems, and consider alternatives. Significant information was identified within the codes "I have a plan for how to listen, before the actual listening" and "I recall previous experiences of listening to similar texts." It suggests that students began using strategies aimed at activating their prior experience and knowledge to a greater extent during the semester. Using strategies such as reflecting on past listening experiences, estimating their level of understanding during and after listening or setting an objective for listening, students reflect on their past listening experiences to identify areas for improvement, estimate their level of understanding during and after listening, and set a purpose or objective for listening. This helps them become more aware of their listening skills, focus their attention during listening activities, and develop more effective listening strategies.

The codes related to *Focused/mindful listening* such as "regaining concentration if I lose concentration" and "focusing harder on the text if I have difficulty understanding" indicate that students attempted to concentrate more on the topic of the listening text during the semester. This tendency is also supported by the code "if I have trouble understanding the text, I stop listening," which was mostly rejected by students. These results suggest students' tendency towards maintaining attention and concentration while listening, even when facing difficulties.

The *L1 Interference strategies* category demonstrates an unproductive approach to foreign language listening, commonly found among beginners. The diary entries within this category mention just one code: “I translate keywords while listening”, however, it was only mentioned in a few entries.

The *Analytical thinking* category represents the strategies that students use to make guesses when they do not understand and to monitor their inferences. The results related to the strategies “I guess the meaning of the word and think about everything I have heard before to see if my guess is correct” indicate that students tried to activate their prior knowledge before listening. This is a positive development since a lack of schematic knowledge represents the most common barrier to successful listening. The results for the other codes within this category show a similar trend. Students used different strategies to compensate for gaps in their knowledge while listening in a foreign language. These strategies included “using words I understand to guess the meaning of words I don’t understand,” “comparing words I understand with what I know about the topic,” “using my experience and knowledge to understand,” “using the overall message of the text to guess the meaning of words I don’t understand,” “adjusting my understanding if I realize it’s incorrect”. These findings suggest that students rely on their contextual and linguistic knowledge to deduce meaning when they encounter unfamiliar grammar and vocabulary.

### Strategies Applied in Reciprocal Listening

Out of all the entries analysed, only 12% (59 entries) contained records of reciprocal listening. The opportunities for students to engage in reciprocal listening were limited, and they mainly involved activities like attending seminars, conversing with native and non-native speakers on platforms like Skype, video conferencing systems like Zoom, Meet, and MS Teams, social media groups, chance meetings with foreigners, and participating in job interviews for summer jobs in English-speaking countries. To analyse the strategies employed in reciprocal listening, seven categories and twenty-three codes were developed.

**Table 2 Strategies in reciprocal listening**

Category	Code	Example of a strategy
<b>Overcoming listening misunderstandings through negotiation</b>	Requesting repetition	I ask the speaker to repeat if I don’t understand
	Requesting clarification	I ask for clarification if I’m unsure what the speaker says
	Requesting simpler language	I ask the speaker to use simpler words if I’m having trouble understanding
	Requesting a slower pace	I ask the speaker to slow down if I can’t keep up with what the speaker says
	Expressing a lack of understanding	I explain to the speaker what I’m not able to understand
<b>Maintaining conversational fluency</b>	Continuation feedback	I show that I am following the conversation to show understanding
	Paraphrasing for clarity	I repeat what the speaker said in my own words if I am unsure what they mean
	Requesting an example	I ask for an example if I don’t understand what the speaker said

	Listening for sound patterns	I pay attention to how the speakers pronounce words
<b>Scanning strategies</b>	Subject-verb focus	I concentrate on the subject and verb of the sentence
	WH-question focus	I pay attention to the WH question
	Inferring the speaker's meaning	I listen to the first part of the sentence and guess the speaker's intention
	Identification of the main idea	I try to understand the main idea
<b>Capturing the core of the speaker's utterance</b>	Selective listening	I don't worry about understanding every detail
	Context-based prediction	I predict what the speaker might say next based on the context
	Inferential comprehension	I guess the speaker's intention from what has been said so far
	Communication continuation	I answer the speaker even if I don't fully understand
<b>Body language interpretation</b>	Using gestures for clarification	I use gestures when I don't understand
	Nonverbal cues observation	I pay attention to eye contact, the speaker's facial expression, and gestures
<b>Less active listening recipients</b>	Recognizing common expressions	I focus on familiar expressions
<b>Vocabulary-focused strategies</b>	Emphasis tracking	I pay attention to the words in which the speaker slows down or emphasises
	Familiar word spotting	I guess the speaker's intention to pick up familiar words
	Complete message retention	I try to catch every word that the speaker says

Strategies under the category of *Overcoming listening misunderstandings through negotiation* should increase students' opportunities to learn a foreign language through peer interaction. According to the results of the diary entries, respondents tend to point out difficulties in comprehension and indicate the need for help to prevent misunderstandings. In the diary entries, students reported frequent use of the strategies "I ask for repetition if I cannot understand what the speaker said", "I ask for clarification if I am unsure what the speaker said", "I ask the speaker to use simpler words if I have difficulty understanding", "I ask the speaker to speak more slowly if I cannot understand what the speaker said" as well as "I explain to the speaker what I was unable to understand", which means that the students were deliberately trying to keep the conversation going in the foreign language by responding immediately to the other participants in the conversation by frequently using social and affective strategies in an attempt to develop the conversation.

Strategies within the *Maintaining conversational fluency* category allow students to keep the interaction moving to successfully achieve each other's communicative goals. In particular, the statements within the codes "I show that I am following the conversation to show understanding" and "I ask for an example if I don't understand what the speaker said" show that respondents continually send signals to show understanding in an attempt to avoid gaps in the conversation. At the same time, they try to respond to the other interlocutor's utterances even if they do not fully understand his/her intention. The code "I pay attention to the speaker's pronunciation" was recorded in the diary entries. The fact that the

students also focused on the pronunciation and rhythm of the speaker's speech indicates that they are aware of important features of spoken English that may cause problems in comprehension and communication.

The results under the category of *Scanning strategies* imply the use of strategies related to the "bottom-up" processes of listening comprehension, which involve using linguistic knowledge to understand the spoken text. By concentrating on the subject and verb of the sentence, students can better understand the grammatical structure of the sentence, which can aid comprehension. Similarly, paying attention to the WH question being asked can help students understand the information being conveyed. By listening to the first part of the sentence and guessing the speaker's intention, students can use their knowledge of context to fill in gaps in their understanding of the text. Finally, by trying to understand the main idea, students can focus on the most important information being conveyed and better understand the overall message of the text.

In contrast to the previous category, the strategies under the category of *Capturing the core of the speaker's utterance* are based on the fact that it is difficult for foreign language learners to capture every detail of the speaker's utterance. The strategies suggest that the students are trying to focus on the main idea of the message and comprehend the overall meaning of what is being said, rather than trying to understand every detail. By predicting what the speaker might say next based on the context and guessing the speaker's intention from what has been said so far, they try to fill in the gaps in their understanding and make connections between different parts of the message. By answering the speaker even if they do not fully understand, they try to maintain a conversational flow and show that they are engaged in the conversation. These strategies are helpful in situations where the listener is not familiar with all the vocabulary or grammar structures being used by the speaker but still wants to participate in the conversation and maintain the communication.

The results related to the category of *Body language interpretation* during listening indicate that students use nonverbal information such as eye contact with the interlocutor, facial expressions, and gestures in an attempt to improve their comprehension while listening to a speech in English.

Students who prefer strategies under the category of *Strategies for less active listening recipients* depend on words that are already familiar to them in an attempt to understand the spoken text in English. The interpretation of this finding is that students do not always think in English and do not take risks by guessing the meaning of words from context as often as they should. The more they rely only on familiar vocabulary, the less likely they are to improve their ability to comprehend spoken text during authentic interaction with a native speaker.

Within the category of *Vocabulary-focused strategies*, the use of detected strategies shows that students try to make sense of the speech by focusing on different aspects of the conversation, such as keywords, intonation, and grammar. These strategies may help students to comprehend spoken English more effectively, even if they do not understand every word. However, trying to catch every word may not be necessarily a good approach.

## Discussion

The research findings are summarized by answering the research questions. To address the first research question "*What are the strategies that students apply in non-reciprocal listening in digital and online settings?*", the analysis of student diary entries revealed significant changes in their listening strategies over the semester. In the *Planning and evaluation* category, students demonstrated an improved ability

to plan and activate prior knowledge to compensate for the absence of a teacher. Similar findings were mentioned in Mianmahaleh and Rahimy's (2015) as well as Kazemi and Kiamarsi's (2017) research studies. The *Direct attention* category showed a positive tendency in their attitude toward maintaining concentration while listening despite difficulties. The *Mental translation* category showed less significant use of negative strategies, which is encouraging. Finally, the *Problem-solving* category showed a constructive trend toward activating prior knowledge to make inferences when listening. Overall, the findings suggest that students developed more effective listening strategies over time that could improve their comprehension in real-life situations.

To answer the second research question "*What are the strategies that students apply in reciprocal listening, and how do they overcome listening misunderstandings and maintain conversational fluency in digital and online settings?*", the results showed that students in online listening settings frequently ask for repetition and clarification, use social strategies, and try to capture the speaker's main idea. They also rely on nonverbal information such as eye contact, facial expressions, and gestures to enhance their comprehension. However, some students still struggle with translating the foreign language into their native language and depend on familiar words, hindering their ability to comprehend spoken text. The findings of this study contrast with the research outcomes of Nasim (2022).

In summary, the results of the research suggest that there are various strategies that students employ in digital and online settings to enhance their listening comprehension. The different strategies were categorized into different groups, including overcoming listening misunderstandings through negotiation, maintaining conversational fluency, scanning strategies, capturing the core of the speaker's utterance, nonverbal strategies during listening, one strategy for less active listening recipients, and vocabulary-focused strategies. The utilization of vocabulary strategies contradicts the findings of Deregözü (2021). The present study found that students frequently used strategies such as asking for repetition, clarification, and simplification, as well as seeking help from the speaker, to overcome listening difficulties. They also paid attention to the speaker's pronunciation. Additionally, they utilized nonverbal cues such as eye contact, facial expressions, and gestures to enhance comprehension, a finding also supported by Deregözü's research (2021). The study also found that students tended to focus on capturing the main idea of the speaker's utterance rather than trying to understand every word, which is a more effective strategy for language learning.

Vandergriff (1997) and Rost (2002) emphasized successful listening strategies such as prediction, monitoring, and clarification. The current study's findings similarly identify these strategies, including students utilizing prior knowledge, making educated guesses, and monitoring cues. Additionally, the study uncovered the importance of focused listening, scanning for structural elements, and capturing the core meaning of the content.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, our analysis suggests several recommendations for pedagogical practice. Firstly, the active use of a foreign language in natural situations is crucial for developing competence in a foreign language. Secondly, learners are more likely to make progress if they feel in control of their learning outcomes. Therefore, we recommend promoting and implementing extensive listening as a method of language learning. Extensive listening involves listening to foreign language material for entertainment, such as songs, radio and television programs, and online streaming, in a relaxed setting without the teacher's control or monitoring. Learners can use metacognitive strategies such as planning, monitoring,



and evaluation to select appropriate listening material and actively engage with it, which can enhance their listening skills and autonomy in the learning process. By promoting extensive listening, we believe that learners can develop their listening proficiency while enjoying the process of learning a foreign language.

The study aimed to engage students in the foreign language listening process by incorporating reflective journal entries as a data collection tool. It was found that this approach fostered a deeper level of student engagement than the traditional listening comprehension tasks used in most foreign language teaching contexts. Unlike these tasks, which tend to be focused and objective-driven, reflective journals provide an opportunity for students to personalize their learning experience. In addition to serving as a data collection tool, we found that reflective journals were highly motivational techniques for sensitizing students to the benefits of particularly extensive listening. However, reflective journals must be used in a meaningful context that extends students' foreign language activities beyond the traditional classroom to be effective. When used in this way, students do not view reflective journals as a boring necessity, but rather as a motivating and useful activity. The main innovation of the study was the dual nature of reflective journals as both a research tool and a sensitization technique. By using these journals to encourage reciprocal and non-reciprocal listening, we were able to bridge the gap between research and pedagogy and demonstrate the potential for foreign language learning strategies to be used as both diagnostic and teaching techniques.

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## Lexical Expressivity in Czech and English Fiction in Czech National Corpus – A Comparative Analysis

*Abstract: The research paper deals with lexical expressivity of two works of fiction which are a part of the Czech National Corpus. Utilizing the parallel English-Czech and Czech-English texts from the parallel corpus InterCorp, the investigation focuses on the analysis and comparison of both inherent and adherent lexical expressivity. The excerpted expressive tokens are further classified and compared from quantitative and qualitative point-of-view, including their translation equivalents.*

### Introduction

The art of translation, during which a message obtained from a discourse written in one language is rendered in another language, strives to transfer all the information included in a text as precisely as possible, preserving not only the denotations and connotations, but also peculiarities of an author's vocabulary, figures of speech or word order. This process, a way of a metamorphosis, especially with regard to literary works of art, should communicate both basic, matter-of-fact (věcný) meanings and other, secondary meanings of words, which can be derived from varied socio-cultural and historical contexts of communities of speakers of a language.

The present research article focuses on the possibilities of translation of expressive meanings of words into a target language. It utilizes parallel Czech-English and English-Czech corpora of fiction, which are a part of the Czech National Corpus. The subject of my exploration are two types of lexical expressivity – inherent and adherent. Contextual expressivity, firmly connected with a concrete context of literary work, is out of the scope of this analysis.

### Expressivity – the State of Arts

My investigation stems from the classification of the meaning of lexeme which was brought forth by Vachek (1974: 26-35) and further developed by Peprník (2006: 11-13). Vachek (ibid.) divides the meaning of lexeme into semantic nucleus, that is, denotation, and semantic environment, which, in his conception, consists mainly of two types of meaning – semantic associations and stylistic classification of lexeme. Except denotation, Peprník (ibid.) recognizes the following components of meaning, which altogether assist in the creation of the overall meaning of a word, – connotation, collocability, word structure and integration of a word into the lexical subsystem. In Peprník's classification, connotation is divided into three sub-types of meaning – associations, stylistic value and expressivity, also called an affective element.

Moreover, the term affective meaning is used by Leech (1974: 18), who, however, does not see it as a part of connotation but rather a distinctive type of meaning reflecting the personal emotions of the speaker and his attitude.

Another English linguist, Cruse (1986: 271-7), introduces the term expressive meaning when he researches synonyms. He distinguishes this type of meaning from propositional (truth-conditioned) meaning. He described two types of lexical units with expressive meaning – words which denote emotions only and words which carry both propositional and expressive meaning. The former comprise exclamative expletives, taboo words, or diminutives.

Furthermore, subtle classification of expressivity differentiates between inherent, adherent and contextual expressivity (Zima 1961: 10-11; Hradilová 2015: 15-24). While inherent expressivity is an inseparable part of meaning of words, usually connected with special morphological forms, such as diminutive suffix *-ie*, and is contextually independent, adherent expressivity is based on the transfer of meaning on account of a similarity or connections, when a word is used in a new context, (e.g. in Czech *pracka* (paw) of a man (derogatory)) in which it is usually perceived as rather excessive and a means of lexical foregrounding (*lexikální aktualizace*) (Zima *ibid.* 43-46, Hradilová *ibid.* 20).

Similarly to the adherent type, the third, contextual expressivity, is also created by means of the use of a word in an uncommon context. Nevertheless, unlike adherent expressivity, it is more stylistic than lexical type of expressivity. The common feature of inherent and adherent expressivity is that they are a sort of lexical expressivity and include mostly items with stable, lexicalized emotive meaning. (Zima 1961: 11; Hradilová 2015: 21).

Moreover, the three above mentioned types of expressivity are quoted by Peprník (2006: 105-107), who stresses the metaphoric character of adherent expressivity and a frequent transfer of an animal activity to a human (*to bark* (dog) – *the sergeant barked*). Though Cruse (1986: 273) does not concern himself with emotiveness classification, he mentions inherent expressive meaning in his study as a possible variety of emotive sense of a lexical unit.

Expressivity, or, in other words, emotiveness, can also be conveyed by intonation (Dirven 2004: 139). Bauer (2021: 11; 18) even notices nonverbal physiological reactions as emotive devices, though not linguistic, and literary use of language. Shields and Clarke (2011) in their collection of articles on translation of emotions emphasize mainly the socio-cultural context and specialize in various stages of the process of translation.

Expressivity is sometimes explained in connection with language functions. Certain words can express emotions and specific feelings depending on the context of the sentence. The emotions are demonstrated through some elements. We then speak about the emotive function of language. This can be shown verbally through certain parts of speech, which is for example exclamation, vulgar language, mimetic expressions. (Macao and Walton, 2014, 2009)

When Stevenson discusses ethics and language, he states that “two kinds of meaning have different functions by giving rise to two kinds of reactions: cognitive meaning contributes to the attitude of the agent towards the action, while emotive meaning evokes a feeling or an emotion. Some terms have a negative emotional meaning because the community of speakers negatively assesses their referent. In other cases, the difference between two terms (such as “elderly spinster” and “old maid” (see Stevenson, 1937: p. 23)) is only emotive.” (Macao and Walton, 2014, 2009)

## Methods and Material under Investigation

My research deals with ways of expressing emotive meaning in English and Czech fiction. It concentrates particularly on lexical inherent and adherent expressivity and their translation equivalents. The examination has proceeded from concrete examples to the induction of general theoretical conclusion, thus the general method could be called inductive.

The sets of excerpted data had to be to be examined in detail, classified and then contrasted to find their differences and similar features, therefore comparative analysis was chosen as the main method. The investigation has exploited both qualitative and quantitative approaches, focusing mainly on the function of expressive items in the source and target languages.

The material under investigation was excerpted from the Czech National Corpus (Rosen, Vavříň and Zásina 2022), namely its parallel corpus InterCorp, which is accessible online free after registration through the KonTex interface. InterCorp is a part of the Czech National Corpus project, which has been developed by the Institute of the Czech National Corpus, Faculty of Arts, Charles University in Prague. InterCorp has been built gradually as a synchronic parallel corpus of both general and specific discourse types. Its goal is to include all the foreign languages studied at the Faculty of Arts of Charles University (ibid.).

For the purposes of the present study, the most current versions of InterCorp 15 – Czech, and InterCorp 15 – English, released in 2022, were used. Two short stories have been chosen for the investigation, one Czech and one English, with their parallel English and Czech translation equivalents. The choice has been influenced by the availability of concrete titles of parallel English-Czech and Czech-English fiction in the parallel corpora and also by the complexity of the task, since the excerpting of emotive items is an extremely time-demanding procedure, during which in fact every word has to be evaluated repeatedly as for its possible expressivity. Nevertheless, the main factor which decided about the selection of a particular work for analysis was the occurrence emotive words.

Hence, a Czech short story by Josef Škvorecký (1991) *Omyl v Šlágřské (Mistake in Hitzungsee)*, a part of the collection of detective short stories called *Hříchy pro pátera Knoxe (Sins for Father Knox)*, was taken as Czech-English parallel corpus to be compared with an English short story and its parallel Czech translation. At this point the preliminary research had proved that the decisive factor for the selection of original English text had to be certain level of text emotiveness, which was rather sparse and difficult to detect in most English texts. Therefore, other English literary works, more typologically and contextually similar to Škvorecký's detective short story, had to be put aside, and Angela Carter's short story *Puss-in-Boots (Kocour v botách)* (1981) was left as the most suitable candidate for excerpting of expressive lexical units.

Though Škvorecký's short story takes place in northern Europe in the 20<sup>th</sup> century and Carter's story a few centuries ago in Italy, both short stories include direct speech, quite frequent dialogues and their language is lively, ingenious and often informal.

## Results and Discussion

The existence of parallel synchronic corpora substantially facilitated the selection and especially comparison of translation equivalents, yet, its tagging does not enable users to look up words with expressive meaning by means of an universal advanced query. Instead, a series of advanced queries were used to look up the parts of speech which mostly include expressive meaning. These queries had to be completed by manual selection of expressive lexical units.

The evaluation of expressivity of individual Czech words relied on the precise and thorough labelling/ marking? of expressive meaning of words in *Slovník současné češtiny* (online), *Slovník spisovného jazyka českého* (online) and *Akademický slovník současné češtiny* (online), which are accessible online, the last dictionary still in its incomplete form. The abundance of examples of lexical emotiveness in Czech studies by Zima (1961) and Hradilová (2015) was useful.

As far as the expressivity of English vocabulary is concerned, it is not marked in the large monolingual dictionaries such as *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*, *Merriam Webster* or *Longman Dictionary* (all of them online). Bilingual large dictionaries *Anglicko-český slovník* (Hais and Hodek 1984) or *Lingea English-Czech dictionary* (online) do not mark systematically expressive aspect of English lexemes, either, although notes about some lexical entries being taboo or rude occur occasionally. Therefore the criterion

for expressivity of English words was based on their morphological structure (e.g. diminutive suffixes), parts of speech (interjections) and their informality, which is often connected with emotive colouring.

The Czech short story written by Škvorecký consists of 7,974 words, from which 307 expressive lexical units (3.9%) have been selected. The English story by Carter comprises 7324 words out of which 228 expressive words (2.9%) were selected. These results then indicate that the occurrence of lexical expressivity is importantly higher in the Czech fiction.

English words occurring in Czech original fiction were regarded, in accordance with Zima (1961: 92), as means of contextual expressivity, that is why they were excluded from the examined corpora. So, the ways of address *babe*, *boy*, which occur in the Czech detective short story quite frequently, were not taken into account as devices that add local colour to the narration but not emotiveness. On the other hand, English words that are a part of sentence and bring a new expressive meaning different from their Czech counterparts were included among the researched items, namely *gentleman* and *playboy*.

Another issue to be solved before the actual processing of results started was the fuzzy border between single- and multi word lexemes. The main criterion was the meaning of lexical unit. Consequently, exclamations *Dear God*, *God knows* or idioms such as *natáhnout brka* were counted as one multi word lexical unit but *oh my goodness* was divided into two lexemes – the interjections *oh* and *my goodness*.

The dichotomy of inherent versus adherent expressiveness was the first step in the sorting of results. Inherent expressiveness, which is based on specific form of words, for example diminutives, or in which the emotive colouring of lexeme is an inseparable part of its basic meaning, clearly prevails in both examined corpora. Czech-English corpus (Škvorecký's short story) comprises 215 inherent and 92 adherent expressive tokens, that is 2.7 and 1.2 per cent, while English-Czech corpus, Carters short story, includes 198 inherent and 30 adherent ones, which makes up 2.5 and 0.5 per cent. This indicates that both authors preferred notions whose capacity to influence and communicate feelings is closely attached to their essential original meaning to those that acquire this attribute through transfer or even change of meaning.

**Table 1 – Frequency of occurrence of inherent and adherent expressivity compared to the number of words in corpora**

Corpus	Expressive words							
	Number of words in corpus		Inherent expressivity		Adherent Expressivity		Expressivity total	
	No°	%	No°	%	No°	%	No°	%
Czech <i>Omyl v Šlágřské</i>	7 974	100	215	2,70	92	1,15	307	3,85
English <i>Puss in Boots</i>	7 324	100	198	2,48	30	0,38	228	2,86

During the second step of data processing, the criteria according to which the two basic types of expressive terms could be classified more precisely were set and all the items were grouped into several categories according to their common attributes. Because of their distinctive character, each of the two expressivity types necessitated different criteria for their division into groups.

Tokens with adherent expressivity were classified according to the type of change or transfer of meaning during which they obtained their emotive sense. The following six groups were set. The first groups includes the terms denoting any objects or activities, including noises, connected with nature

which were used to describe humans, the second group consists of names pertaining to unanimate objects or abstract concepts that were used for humans. The third group utilizes terminology linked with medicine, human body parts and its functions used for the depiction of other issues out of this area. The fourth one is composed of names of famous literary characters or religious concepts that were applied to label a typical quality that an artistic or religious personality/concept represents (*Othello*). Interesting innovations of transfer of meaning can be found in the last but one group and the general transfer of meaning, without any specific features, in the last group.

**Table 2 Adherent expressivity in Czech corpus**

Class	Adherent expressivity in Czech corpus	
	No°	%
General transfer/change of meaning	53	57,61
Concepts from nature to humans	17	18,48
Objects/abstract notions to humans	9	9,78
Expressive innovations	4	4,35
Medicine, human body, its functions and parts to another area	7	7,61
Famous works of arts characters, religious concepts to typical attribute	2	2,17
TOTAL	92	100,00

As can be seen from the table above, the most frequent class of adherent expressivity with specific features in the Czech-English corpus is the class in which terms originally describing the area of nature were used to name human sphere, e.g. *kokos* (Czech word for *coconut*) used instead of *head*, *přiletět* (Czech for *fly in*) used for *come running*, or *gorilla* (about man). Their frequency of occurrence is 17 tokens (that is 18.5 %), although the most frequent class is the one without specific features, just with transfer or meaning (53 tokens/ 57.6%). The second most frequent class of adherent expressivity with specific features is labelled inanimate/abstract concepts used for humans (9 tokens/ 9.8%). Very interesting are the innovations that include adjectives *zputičkovaný* and *zpolitovaný* and verbs *hambatit se* and *křídovatět*, evidencing Škvorecký's mastery of the Czech language and his fondness for its subtleties. There are also two tokens belonging to the class of places or characters from famous works of art and religious concepts, represented by *Rusalka* (a fairy named Rusalka), substituting a betrayed woman character, translated as *Ophelia*; and religion-related *v limbu* (*in limbus* in English), used instead of *zemřít* (*to die*), translated into English by slang expression *croaked*.

Contrariwise, the classification of semantic shift of meaning according to the type of change of meaning on the scale of positive – negative value of emotiveness, suggested by Geeraerts (1991: 28), recognizing mainly pejoration and amelioration, was not implemented because of too large complexity resulting from this additional criterion for adherent expressiveness.

**Table 3 Adherent expressivity in English corpus**

Class	Adherent expressivity in English corpus	
	No°	%
General transfer/change of meaning	8	26,67
Concepts from nature to humans	9	30,00

Objects/abstract notions to humans	6	20,00
Expressive innovations	0	0,00
Medicine, human body, its functions and parts to another area	0	0,00
Famous works of arts characters, religious concepts to typical attribute	7	23,33
TOTAL	30	100,00

There has not been found any occurrence of the transfer of meaning based on medical and human body terminology and no adherent expressive innovations in the English-Czech corpus. The highest frequency of occurrence has tokens from the class with the shift of meaning from natural sphere to human sphere (9 tokens/30%), followed by general change of meaning (8 tokens) and artistic and religious terms (7 tokens/ 23.3%). The last class uses the name *Figaro* (translated into Czech as *Figaro*), a prototype of an intriguing servant; old, rich, cunning and often deceived *Pantaloón* from *comedia del arte* (translated as *Pantáta*, *Pantatík* into Czech), and *sanctuary* (translated as *svatyně*), used instead of *bedroom*.

As for the translation equivalents of the Czech and English originals, the analysis has not proved the tendency to strive for a faithful rendering from the source to the target language, which should include not only basic, denotative factual meaning, but also emotive, expressive word connotations. Only a minority of adherent expressive lexemes have been translated by expressive equivalent. The reason for this could be the different structures of English and Czech sentences and the fact that translation equivalent with similar adherent expressivity for a particular lexeme does not have to be available in the target language or it is not stylistically suitable.

Translation of transferred expressive meaning often exploits emotively neutral language – *kecat* – *to mean* (*co kecáte* – *what do you mean*), *vypařit se* – *leave*, which has to be stated about both directions of translations – both to English and to Czech – *bear* – *někdo*. The translation may even differ to that extent that the excerpted original items do not have their translation equivalent, which could be caused by different sentence structure, omission of clauses or their parts or other undetectable reasons.

In agreement with Zima (1961) and Hradilová (2015), the classification of inherent expressivity recognized classes which are based on form, such as diminutives, hypocorisms and familiar names, or on a part of speech – interjections, particles, or a type of evaluative aspect of emotivity – augmentatives, derogatory words, vulgar words, euphemism. The actual analysis has also imposed demands on the addition of the classes of informal (including colloquial and slang) inherent expressives; expressives which are foreign words; and a class of unclassifiable items called “others”. Apart from that, the analysis of English-Czech corpus has revealed another group of expressive meaning that consists in adjectival modification in English.

The results presented in Tables 4 and 5 below show significant prevalence of diminutives in Czech original corpus, written by Škvorecký, since they amount to almost half of all the inherently expressive tokens (47.8%). The greater tendency towards the use of diminutives in Czech is confirmed by their English translation equivalents, because only six out of altogether 102 Czech diminutives were translated by expressive English terms. Five of the English expressive equivalents convey their emotionally coloured content by means of the adjective *little* which modifies nouns with neutral expressivity. This analytic way of marking of emotive meaning of lexemes is also mentioned by Peprník (2006: 116) and it supported the decision to include adjectival emotive modification into the classification of English inherent expressivity.



However, most Czech diminutives are translated by non-expressive lexemes, such as *kufřík* – *case/bag*; *městečko* – *town*; *zrcátko* – *mirror*, *děvčátko* – *girl*; *dvířka* – *the door*. Other more frequent types of inherent expressivity in the Czech corpus comprise derogatory words and interjections. Nevertheless, emotive lexical units with positive charge prevail in the Czech corpus, in which diminutives, hypocorisms and familiar words make up 55.8 per cent of tokens, as compared to 14.9 per cent of derogatory words, dysfemisms and vulgar words.

Derogatory words, e.g. *vrahoun*, *grázl*, *sviňák*, *prachy*, are often informal colloquial or slang terms, which, together with other informal/colloquial units with emotive connotation or denotation characterize a given person much faster, in one or two words, than a long neutral description.

An interesting finding is the occurrence of expressive words which, in addition to their emotive sense, can also trace their origin to a foreign language, usually German. Germanisms such as *ksift*, *flink*, *majznout*, *štamgast*, *štonť*, *sichr* occur especially among derogatory terms or in the group of the informal ones.

**Table 4 – Inherent expressivity in Czech corpus according to classes**

Class	Inherent expressivity in Czech corpus	
	No°	%
Diminutives	102	47,44
Hypocorisms and familiar words	18	8,37
Augmentatives	2	0,93
Derogatory words and dysfemisms	29	13,49
Vulgar (taboo) words	3	1,40
Interjections	21	9,77
Particles	8	3,72
Informal (colloquial, slang) words	25	11,63
Foreign words	5	2,33
Others	2	0,93
TOTAL	215	100,00

**Table 5 Inherent expressivity in English corpus according to classes**

Class	Inherent expressivity in English corpus	
	No°	%
Diminutives	3	1,52
Hypocorisms and familiar words	57	28,79
Augmentatives	0	0,00
Derogatory words and dysfemisms	51	25,76
Vulgar (taboo) words	8	4,04
Interjections	41	20,71
Particles	1	0,51
Informal (colloquial, slang) words	13	6,57
Foreign words	0	0,00

Others	2	1,01
Adjectival emotive modification	22	11,11
TOTAL	198	100,00

Although the English hypocorisms and familiar words have the highest frequency of occurrence in the English corpus (29%), there are only three tokens (1.5%) of diminutives, which demonstrates the difference between English and Czech as far as especially positive expressivity is concerned. Moreover, most familiar words and hypocorisms are the forms of address of the main characters – *puss* and *Tabbs*.

Besides, the high negative expressivity in English is evident from the high number of derogatory and vulgar words (24.7% to 14.9% of the Czech ones). Vulgar English lexemes in the corpus are really taboo and unsuitable for public use, while the two vulgar included in the Czech original corpus do not exhibit such a high level of inappropriateness. Interjections are used in both English and Czech corpus frequently, yet they occur considerably more in English (20.7 to 9.8% (Czech)).

Again, Czech translation does not use emotive equivalents for most English expressives. Yet, the tendency to include emotive aspect to target language is more evident in Czech. Surprisingly, all but one English interjections have been converted to Czech by means of expressive interjections. Vulgar words are not translated by equally vulgar lexemes but by terms which are not vulgar or taboo so that the tone of the Czech text is not so negative and less vulgar.

## Conclusions

The analysis and comparison of inherent and adherent expressivity of Czech and English original texts with their English and Czech translations has proved the tendency of Czech, as a synthetic language, to form more emotive words by means of the change of their structure – suffixes of diminutives, formal changes of hypocorisms. Czech original discourse also utilizes semantic lexical emotivity more frequently (3.9% of expressives in Czech and 2.9% of expressives in English).

The main distinguishing features are high occurrence of diminutives in the Czech and of derogatory words, vulgar words and interjections in the English original. Translation equivalents in both languages usually do not include equal expressive aspect, though the English interjections are translated (with one exception) by means of expressive Czech interjections.

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## Student Empowerment through Critical Language Teacher Practice: a teaching activity

*Abstract: Working from the premise that dialogue constitutes reality as a fundament of human agency, my proposed teaching activity strives to improve students' understanding of their agency in academic power relations and provide them with safe space to reconceive and realign it with their emergent critical consciousness. In applying a critical intercultural communication focus to intercultural dialogue, the aim of the activity converges with the overarching goal of the process of designing a new critical intercultural curriculum for linguistics in English-language teacher preparation at our department. The principal approach that permeates the proposed activity and will be adopted throughout the curriculum is critical applied linguistics (Pennycook) and critical language awareness (Fairclough), particularly in its aspect of constant questioning of assumptions. I also draw on autoethnography (Ellis et al.) that challenges canonical representations of culture and systematically analyses personal experience to contribute to a more socially just and conscious education (Freire; Giroux). Moreover, the critical pedagogy concept of learning through discourse and honouring lived experience (Boronski) is employed. The proposed teaching activity practises creating specific instructions to question personal assumptions and their impact in broader educational contexts.*

### Teacher education context

The educational framework of the proposed 'Over and through' activity (see Appendix II for detailed description) is a systemic innovation of the linguistic curriculum in an undergraduate and graduate programme for the preparation of ESL/EIL teachers at the department of English, Faculty of Education, University of West Bohemia, Pilsen, the Czech Republic. The activity was conducted as part of an undergraduate course focusing on academic skills for first-year students ( $n=66$ ). Moreover, for the sake of intercultural comparison, my mentor undertook the activity in a multilingual class ( $n=13$ ) in an EFL proficiency course focusing on writing skills at the English Language Institute at Seminole State College in Orlando, Florida. The aforementioned innovation aims to explicitly develop the key competencies of a foreign language teacher (such as socio-pragmatic competence, linguistic analytical skills, or target culture contextual knowledge), while integrating linguistic content and its methodological application in practical classroom contexts. The teacher candidate profile that informs the curricular changes is reflected in the teaching activity in the sense of the competence of creating a respecting and supportive atmosphere in the classroom, exercising individualised approach to students, and thus developing their intercultural communicative skills in English.

### Critical approach and its practical application

In the Czech educational context, the first-year students of teacher preparation programmes will have had such experience with learning English as a second/international language that typically allows them only to comprehend the practical aspects of using the language in everyday life. However, for future ESL/EIL teachers, this perspective is highly reductive as it encompasses solely a limited knowledge of language use without deeper understanding of the underlying linguistic principles. Pre-service teachers

need to develop their metacognitive skills to be able to reflect on their language practices from a broader structuralist-functionalist perspective and salient cultural contextual knowledge.

Another relevant aspect of teacher education that directly influences its effectiveness and outcomes is the ongoing personal maturation process and the changing status of grammar-school students (default culture) in the transitional period of commencing their dialogue with the academic community (target culture) and becoming university students/young adults. Based on the author's long-term observations of the first-year teacher candidates, this period is commonly characterised by their vulnerability to manipulation and a narrow academic mandate as they are novices to a completely different institutional setting and interactional practices. I agree with Fairclough that the first step to empowerment is building students' awareness of the discourse conventions of the academic community and what potential effects they might have. By becoming aware of the conventions and their impact in the academic practice, the course participants are better equipped to identify and defy manipulation, which is the focal point of their empowerment. In its broadest sense, through pre-service teachers' empowerment their university teachers can reinforce the fundament of democracy by creating opportunities for all of them to partake in the creation and dissemination of meanings (Clark & Ivanič).

By choosing a simple and universal personal experience of tying shoelaces and using the language material of student created oral and written instructions (see Appendix II – stage 3 and 4) the teacher can provide ample opportunities for all the course participants to co-create meaning and shared understanding. Thus, the notion of stylistic contrast in the classroom discourse appears as an efficient tool in demonstrating the need for re-focusing learner attention and sensitivity (from the perspective of an academic novice), represented by a lower degree of formality and the spoken discourse, to teacher perception (from the perspective of an educational decision-maker) that is represented by a higher degree of formality and the written register. This process can be seen as a series of developmental stages from student empowerment to *emancipation* (Fairclough). Cognitively, the proposed classroom activity revolves around the contextual use of register, the concept of learning needs/preferences and its practical classroom implications. While the role of individual differences in perception is critically reflected, they are also integrated into the classroom discourse and culture as a tool of developing cultural proficiency (Lindsey).

From the critical language awareness (Fairclough) perspective, we can assume that the specific classroom task of assessing and synthesising alternative discourse versions, followed by making informed decisions and reaching consensus (see Appendix II – stage 4, step 4) should lead to a stronger sense of responsibility in the broader academic context. Thus, the innovation in the academic skills course is represented by divergence from the traditional approach of developing selected academic skills in isolation from a broader socio-political context. The ultimate aim is using practical tasks such as the proposed activity to guide novice academics from self-empowerment to emancipation. This process should endow them with an indelible sense of autonomy through personal commitment and responsibility and, eventually, corroborate “participatory and educated democracy” (Williams, 35).

The theoretical framework underpinning my critical approach is mainly shaped by focus on the intersecting domains of critical applied linguistics (Pennycook) and critical language awareness (Fairclough). In the ‘Over and through’ activity, I suggest separating modalities (spoken vs written language) and demonstrating the distinct socio-pragmatic effects of a specific style and register (relative lower formality of the spoken language of descriptions vs higher formality of the written language of instructions). Thus, the teacher can use the students' lived experience of language, i.e., processing and following spoken instructions for tying shoelaces as a child (see *spracherleben* in Busch), to foreground individual

variation in perception and expression of a particular process, in our case the description of and instructions on tying shoelaces.

CLA (critical language awareness) is broadly defined as empowering students by “providing them with a critical analytical framework to help them reflect on their own language experiences and practices and on the language practices of others in the institutions of which they are a part and in the wider society within which they live” (Clark & Ivanič, 217). Furthermore, I employ stylistic differences as useful linguistic means of demonstrating the difference in production and perception and also information and interpretation. While describing how to tie shoelaces and when giving instructions, we work with shared factual content, i.e., objectivised information, and, simultaneously, with our personal stylistic preferences in expressing this content, i.e., personal interpretation. The interpretation in verbally formulating information is further elaborated by the receptive interpretation of my communicative counterpart.

From the perspective of critical applied linguistics (Pennycook), whose key concern is problematising normative assumptions, the internalised and deeply rooted habit of tying shoelaces was chosen for its symbolism of normativity. The reversed order of cognitively grasping a physical habit from the recipient’s perspective (see Appendix II, stage 3), moreover, verbally expressing it, is supposed to help uncover the layers of stereotypical mental processes that operate beyond our conscious realisation.

In terms of the practical application (see Appendix II – stage 1 through 5), the shared personal experience and use of student-created spoken and written authentic discourse, the activity serves the purpose of sensitising students to individual differences in perception and expression, while encouraging critical self-awareness and negotiating consensus. Eventually, Ss are led to consider selected universal principles of instructing/teaching in parallel to the practical task at hand.

Consequently, the general outcome is building awareness of differences in giving and processing information through shared personal experience. Specifically:

- Ss will have described a procedure by formulating oral and written instructions.
- Ss will have practiced appraising and prioritising action stages based on their procedural relevance and attainment effectiveness.
- Ss will have compared specific written instructions and synthesised relevant differences to negotiate consensus.

To outline the classroom context of this activity, language portraits were created in a class preceding the main teaching activity as part of a broader discussion introducing the notions of linguistic repertoire, style, and register (see Appendix I). Language or linguistic portraits (Busch; Kusters & De Meulder) are often used as an element of the autoethnographic approach to research and education (Ellis et al.). They are graphic representations of individual linguistic repertoire using an outline of a body silhouette. The aim was to introduce students to the process of linguistic reflection that is indispensable for emergent teacher identities.

As a lead-in to the shoelace activity, the course participants were asked to stand facing each other in an oval shape (20-25 students per group), while the teacher placed a broom horizontally at shoulder level on the tip of their index fingers. The group was instructed to bring the broom to the floor as quickly as possible keeping contact with the broomstick at all times, which was made difficult by the uneven weight of the broom at either end. This activity requires swift cooperative verbal and non-verbal interaction that has to lead to a collective consensus lest the effort fail.

## Critical Reflection: Potentials and challenges

When comparing different national and educational contexts, the multilingual group comprising students from all five continents taught by my American colleague displayed greater differences in procedure, perception, and formulation of instructions, particularly when students from markedly different cultural backgrounds interacted (e.g., South-East Asian, Middle Eastern and African participants). Another significant source of divergence in expression and perception could have been the differing levels of proficiency in English that were more significant than in the Czech context. This outcome was to be expected as these participants were coming from varied educational backgrounds and their purpose in enrolling in the course was improving their general writing skills. The highly homogenous group of Czech university students ( $n=60$  of Czech nationality;  $n=1$  Russian;  $n=2$  Ukrainian;  $n=2$  Spanish;  $n=1$  Mexican) in the study programme for pre-service teachers displayed minor differences mainly in the physical procedure, however, as to the perceptive and formulatory aspect of communication, the occurring differences were not judged by the students as preventing comprehension.

The observed student reception was on a scale between mildly amused to excited and the level of engagement was very high throughout the whole activity. To our knowledge, the negative emotions evoked by the activity were mainly related to frustration caused by perceived incapability to formulate or follow instructions effectively. What was identified as the greatest difficulty was a lack of specificity. Concretely, in the oral modality with focus on description, the students perceived a lack of visual/physical demonstration (see Appendix II, stage 3). In the written modality with focus on instructions, the students perceived a lack of specificity and formulatory precision (see Appendix II, stage 4).

In terms of propagating more critical teacher education practices, I find it most useful to focus on potential clashes in the process of collective meaning-making. What gave rise to occasional tension were different perspectives on the substance of communication – when inefficiency of instructing was identified, one party considered the received instructions faulty as they provided a subjective interpretation of the physical process of shoelace tying that was understood as imprecise or factually wrong. Whereas the other party was convinced they were expressing objective informative content and, thus, their instructions were beyond reproach. These moments should be more closely scrutinised by the whole class with a view of arriving at a collectively acceptable solution either in terms of shifted perception or modified formulations in the process of instructing. This format of discussion (see Appendix II, stage 4 and 5) can be replicated in different contexts and for different educational purposes, since I believe that in critical teacher education meaning should not be a pre-existing condition of a dialogue but the result of its negotiation.

In conclusion, our students needed incomparably more classroom time than originally planned to digest the re-focusing of their attention from their conventional student perspective, i.e., self-centred learning, to the emergent teacher perspective, i.e., others-oriented passing on of knowledge. Assessing personal cognitive processes that are deeply automatised such as tying shoelaces and analysing them in order to identify their subjectivity (in other words, identifying the difference between objectivised informative content and subjective interpretation) is a highly challenging task that requires a considerable amount of repetitive practice and unrelenting teacher's attentiveness. Supposedly, the more frequent the classroom practice and the more varied the contexts, the higher the likelihood of improving the ability to distinguish informative and interpretive content either in production or reception. This seemingly minor cognitive as well as affective achievement has far-reaching positive consequences in the development of critical language awareness, the academic reward being a steady progress towards student autonomy.

The author is fully aware of the complexity of reaching the desired metacognitive and ethical outcomes such as disrupting normative assumptions and attaining greater academic emancipation. It can be assumed, however, that at least some of our students were led to accepting different approaches to problem-solving as equally valid as their own. My assumption is based on the fact that such acceptance is a necessary pre-requisite to the ability of negotiating and reaching consensus. The measure of consensus was represented by the efficiency and clarity of the final set of written instructions each student group presented (see Appendix II, stage 4). Thus, judging by these two criteria, the proposed activity seems to have satisfied the identified need for critical approach (see section 2 above) and hopefully helped our students make one of their initial steps towards empowerment and emancipation in the newly entered academic community.

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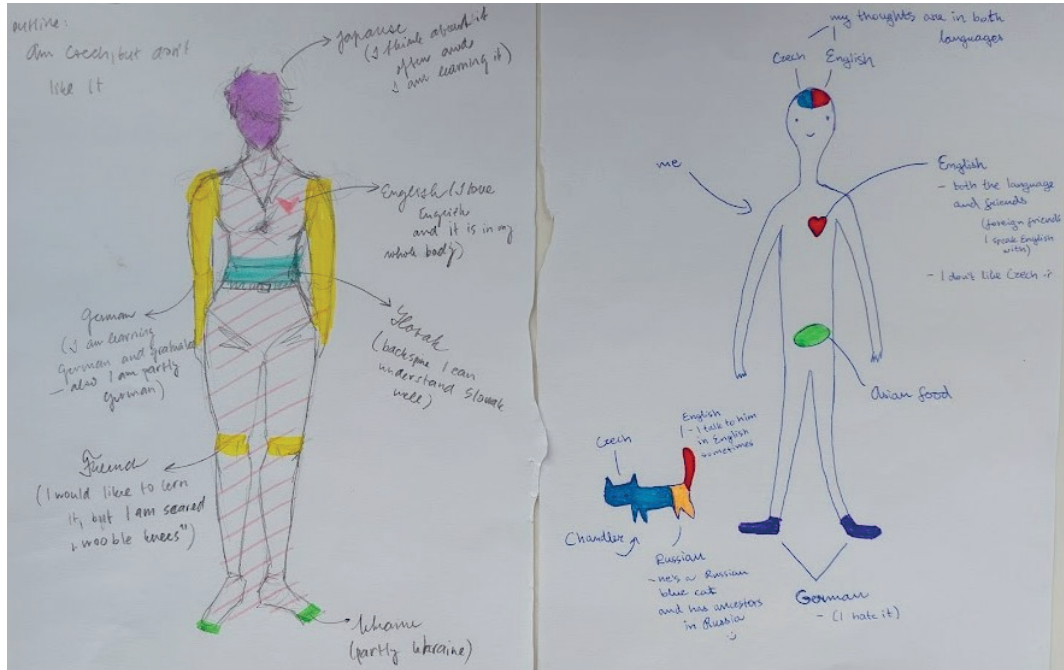
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## Appendix I

Figure 1: Two language portraits from the Academic Skills course, 1<sup>st</sup> year B.A. programme for ESL/EIL teachers.



## Appendix II

Table 1: Lesson plan of the main classroom activity for the Academic Skills course, 1<sup>st</sup> year B.A. programme for ESL/EIL teachers.

Lesson plan – OVER & THROUGH	
<b>Theme:</b>	Tying shoelaces: expressing/reflecting internalised habit and engaging with less favoured methods of performing a practical task
<b>General Focus:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>introducing the concept of learning needs/preferences and its practical classroom implications for learners and pre-service teachers</li> <li>critically reflecting the role of individual differences in perception and integrating them into the classroom discourse and culture as a tool of developing cultural proficiency (Lindsey, 2017)</li> </ul>
<b>Course Type:</b>	General TESOL courses; Introductory academic skills courses for undergraduate Ss/pre-service ESL/EIL teachers
<b>Language practiced:</b>	Lexis: locative/directional prepositions, verbs of directed motion and position Functions: describing, instructing, comparing

<b>Proficiency Level:</b>	B2+
<b>Materials needed:</b>	Piece of string/shoelace (approx. 8ins/20cm) per student if necessary
<b>Class time required:</b>	90 minutes
<b>Activity Description:</b>	Through shared personal experience of tying shoelaces and by using the language material of student created oral and written instructions, the activity serves the purpose of sensitising Ss to individual differences in perception and expression, while encouraging critical self-awareness and negotiating consensus. Ss are led to consider selected universal principles of instructing/teaching in parallel to the practical task at hand.
<b>Activity Outcomes:</b>	Students have built awareness of differences in giving and processing information through shared personal experience. Specifically: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ss have described a procedure by formulating oral and written instructions.</li> <li>• Ss have practiced appraising and prioritising action stages based on their procedural relevance and attainment effectiveness.</li> <li>• Ss have compared specific written instructions and synthesised relevant differences to negotiate consensus.</li> </ul>
<b>ACTIVITY STRUCTURE/PROCEDURE</b>	
STAGE 1: Lead-in ( <i>In pairs, Ss discuss their memories of internalised habits to introduce the topic.</i> )	
Timing estimate: 10 mins	
Instructions	
1/ Make pairs. 2/ Tell your partner about the first time you were learning to do something you can now do practically with your eyes closed (e.g., tying shoelaces, riding a bike, catching a ball). What details do you remember about it ( <i>Who was teaching/helping you? How did you feel? What was the outcome like? How long did it take for you to be good at it?</i> )? 3/ Report any relevant details back to class.	
STAGE 2: Practical task ( <i>In groups, Ss take turns to physically demonstrate how they tie shoelaces; group members observe the action while focusing on potential differences.</i> )	
Timing estimate: 15 mins	
Instructions	
1/ In groups of four, take a piece of string each. Sitting on the floor/chair lay the string flat on the ground at your comfortable reach and place one foot on top of it so that both ends are of equal length. (If all Ss are wearing shoes with shoelaces, the string is unnecessary.) 2/ Without speaking, one of you first ties the string as if it was a shoelace at their usual speed. Others observe closely. 3/ The same person repeats the action as slowly as possible. Others observe closely. 4/ Take turns until everybody has tied their laces twice. 5/ Once you have finished, discuss the provided questions and be ready to report back to class.	
Reflective Discussion (Qs presented in written form on board/screen)	
1/ How difficult was it to tie your laces slowly? 2/ What did you notice about your group members? Please describe. 3/ What was your first reaction to the observed difference? Can you describe how it felt?	
STAGE 3: Oral instructions ( <i>In pairs, Ss' attention is shifted to verbalising the manual procedure.</i> )	
Timing estimate: 20 mins	
Instructions	
1/ Individually, spend 2-3 minutes tying your laces/string and thinking about the instructions that would describe your method. 2/ Pair up with another member of your group, ideally the one who ties differently to you.	

<p>3/ Take turns to verbally instruct your partner how to tie, while they follow your instructions as closely as possible. Do not use your hands or any other props.</p> <p>4/ Once both of you have followed instructions, discuss the provided questions and be ready to report any relevant details back to class.</p>
<p>Reflective Discussion (Qs presented in written form on board/screen)</p>
<p>1/ How did your instructions differ?</p> <p>2a/ If there was no difference, how did it make you feel to follow instructions to do something you consider automatic?</p> <p>2b/ If there was a difference, how did it make you feel to follow instructions that differ from your own method?</p> <p>3/ If you experienced any difficulty, what would you have needed/what were you missing to be able to follow the instructions more easily?</p>
<p>STAGE 4: Written instructions (<i>Individually, Ss focus on instructions in a different register to develop awareness of their different audience design and impact. In groups, Ss assess and modify differences and negotiate consensus. Whole class discusses outcomes.</i>)</p>
<p>Timing estimate: 30 mins</p>
<p>Instructions</p>
<p>1/ Work individually and write up your instructions step by step on a sheet of paper in legible capital letters.</p> <p>2/ Once you are ready, re-join your group (as in stage 2, step 1).</p> <p>3/ Compare all sets of instructions and assess any potential differences. Focus on the type of difference – e.g., in the wording, content, chronological organisation, degree of detail.</p> <p>4/ By modifying the four versions, try to create one final set of instructions in writing that would be functional for all group members.</p> <p>5/ Once your final version is completed, be ready to present it to the class.</p> <p>6/ Focus on the provided questions and discuss them in your groups. Upon completion be ready to report any relevant information back to class.</p>
<p>Reflective Discussion (Qs presented in written form on board/screen)</p>
<p>1/ How did your spoken and written instructions differ? Be specific.</p> <p>2/ Which type of instructions do you find more effective? Why?</p> <p>3/ To what extent were you group able to accommodate all differences without losing clarity?</p>
<p>STAGE 5: Wrap-up Discussion (<i>Activity concludes by referring to the broader context of style, register, learning preferences and expressing internalised knowledge.</i>)</p>
<p>Timing estimate: 15 mins</p>
<p>Lead-in</p>
<p>1/ Ss take their written instructions (stage 4, step 1 above) and strings and make pairs with someone they have not interacted with yet.</p> <p>2/Sitting down on the floor/chairs, Ss position themselves side by side so that their partner's foot is between their own feet. Each S places their written instructions on the floor in front of their partner.</p> <p>3/ Simultaneously, Ss tie each other's shoelaces slowly in separate steps following their partner's written instructions, while stopping and comparing the outcome of each step visually.</p> <p>4/ Ss report back to class on how they feel about their partner's performance.</p>
<p>Discussion</p>
<p>To conclude, Ss brainstorm the differences between and different effects of spoken and written registers and are encouraged to discuss parallels between the process of instructing someone to tie their shoelaces and the process of teaching/learning in general (specific examples of T experience can be used to ease elicitation – e.g., difficulty in explaining inverted word order in interrogative sentences to an adult student caused by their unfamiliarity with the concept of the sentence subject.)</p>

## Manipulation and Power: Pragmatic Markers in Political Discourse

*Abstract: The political discourse is characterized by high degree of pragmatism. When communicating some political challenges to their electorate, politicians use various manipulative social practices to evoke the desirable response. The study presents the analysis of the discursive events of the same subject matter from Boris Johnson's and Liz Truss's political activities as Prime Ministers. Special attention has been given to the pragmatic markers that comprise a functional class of linguistic items which are significant for the organization and structuring of discourse. The descriptive method in researching the pragmatic markers reveals the interaction between power which, in this paper, is seen as manipulation, and discourse, which is considered to be the representation of this institutional power. The study is intended to prove that in a social context such an interaction, when skillfully exercised, leads to forming the positive image of the politician as well as it makes the social agents, his/her electorate, do what they are expected to do or think what they are wanted to think.*

### Introduction

In the last half of the twentieth century, some linguists drew focus toward discourse analysis as a powerful means of societal communication. In his "The Archeology of Knowledge", Michel Foucault initiated the discussion on how the "things said" might change the course of the events supposing that there is a profound relationship between power and knowledge, and together, he thought, they can be used as a form of social control through societal institutions. Using Foucault's viewpoint that in every society the production of discourse is at once controlled, selected and organized according to a certain number of procedures, the role of which is "to avert its power", we see discourse as a social construct that transmits and produces power. As Foucault puts it, each society has its regime of truth, and this truth is created by those who have the power and means of communication (Foucault 1972).

This paper is purposed to demonstrate that in the wake of the new world crisis, a far-sighted leader can obtain more power skillfully cultivating his/her image by using a thoroughly presupposed rhetoric. For this, his/her discursive self-expression may contribute to constructing their individual political reality that actually can mean power. The interrelation between power which we consider as the ability to manipulate by people's minds, and discourse, which is seen as a breeding ground to represent this institutional power, seems to be of prospective value for studying. Special emphasis is given to the analysis of the pragmatic markers that comprise the linguistic items which are significant for the organization and structuring of politicians' discourses. The pragmatic markers used by the British former Prime Ministers are viewed as the language means that can intensify the manipulative potential of their political power and contribute to influencing the audience's attitudes to the expressed ideas, as well as they secure facilitating the processes of pragmatic tenets these politicians want to be shared by their devotees.

### Methodology

With all the variety of the ways of presenting the information, the main communicative functions of any communicative act are to inform, explain, persuade and cause a counter reaction. The fundamental

purpose of political communication – to manipulate an addressee’s physical and intellectual activity – determines its pragmatics. A politician’s challenge to affect the audience is employed through various strategies and tactics. In common terms, pragmatics studies the utterances trying to explain what someone meant by saying something on a particular occasion. This occasion serves as the discourse context that influences the audience’s interpretation of that utterance. As such, the research conducts employing critical discourse analysis approach in two ways: on the one hand, the discursive act as a minimal unit that has its specific importance as a system of actions, communicative plans and strategies is taken into consideration; and on the other hand, the communicative act on the level of the utterance linguistic forms that possess some functions is considered in the aspect of the used pragmatic markers which intensify the utterance’s purpose.

As the data for the research, five discursive events of the same subject matter from Boris Johnson’s and Liz Truss’s political activities have been selected. Thereafter, this paper presents the analysis of the Prime Minister’s election victory speech, the first speech as Prime Minister, the speech on the Russian aggression against Ukraine, the speech at the Conservative Party Annual Conference, and the final speech as Prime Minister.

Our research agenda lies in the task not to analyze Boris Johnson’s and Liz Truss’s political discourses themselves but to study their speeches in the system of discourse interactions as the evidence of foisting these leaders’ political interests on others.

### **The discursive act as a means of manipulation**

Doing a good job for a politician means to accomplish specific political aims and goals, making or influencing political decisions, what actually is gathering majority support. These processes need the integration of political texts into social contexts in different communicative events like cabinet meetings, parliamentary sessions, election campaigns, rallies, interviews, bureaucratic practices, official events and so on. Political discourse is essentially defined contextually, “in terms of special events or practices of which the aims, goals or functions are maybe not exclusively but at least primarily political” (Dijk 1997, 15). As such, when it is analyzed, its analysts have to trench upon the sphere of social sciences because this genre of discourse touches upon other groups, like institutions or citizens, as soon as they appear to be involved in political events. Having this in mind, scholars undertake different approaches to the analysis of the political discourse. Many, like P. Chilton (Chilton 2003), T.A. van Dijk (Dijk 2006), R. Fowler (Fowler 1979), R. Hodge and G. Kress (Hodge & Kress 1979), see political discourse as an instrument of power and ideological control, when others focus more on studying political communication and its rhetoric (Gruber 1993; Hudson 1978). But all the researchers convincingly assume a link between language, politics, social culture, and social cognition in political discourse representation, and “this excludes the talk of politicians outside of political contexts, and includes the discourse of all other groups, institutions or citizens as soon as they participate in political events” (Dijk 1997, 15). This assumption leads us to Critical Discourse Analysis approach where language is seen as a critical factor in embodying particular power. Following out the CDA tenets supposing that the language of a politician seems as a critical factor as the embodiment of particular power, this study does not limit the political discourse to the study of political texts as far as a text itself in a political context serves as a powerful means to produce particular ideology.

## **The discursive representation of manipulation in the British former Prime Ministers' discourse**

Our investigations in the preceding chapter make us focus on the fundamental link between language, politics and social cognition in political discourse representation. As the groups of people involved in it rely on some shared beliefs rather than on their individual opinions, they willingly take part in a political event and, presumably, they are ready to be manipulated. As van Dijk proves, "both meanings and forms of political discourse variously derive from event models, or from general political representations" (van Dijk 2008, 183), the power of a politician in such an occasion, his/her moral superiority are governed by manipulative discourse convention the representation of which is practiced in a discursive act.

In this chapter a discursive manipulative act is explored by means of a social-cognitive approach by van Dijk (van Dijk 2008) when the manipulative meaning making is formed in social and political interaction. The following constituents to study the data are included into the scheme for the analysis:

- 1) emphasizing the politician's authority (i.e. superiority);
- 2) focusing on common beliefs (i.e. ideologies);
- 3) discrediting alternative views (i.e. beliefs);
- 4) appealing to the emotions (i.e. shared experience).

Thus, having the above mentioned constituents in mind, we will bring into focus the discursive events of sitting Prime Ministers of the UK: Prime Minister Boris Johnson (PM BJ), whose term started on 24 July 2019, and ended on 6 September 2022, and Prime Minister Liz Truss (PM LT) who served as PM from 6 September to 25 October 2022, in order to uncover the manipulative nature implied in their speeches.

### **Prime Minister Boris Johnson**

In 2008 at his cameo appearance on *EastEnders* to the Conservative Party Boris Johnson remarked: "My speaking style was criticized by no less an authority than Arnold Schwarzenegger. It was a low moment, my friends, to have my rhetorical skills denounced by a monosyllabic Austrian cyborg". Since then, after so many years in politics, the critics have to work harder as Johnson's oratory style has come to a higher level. Many media outlets' and linguistic analysts' opinions when it comes to Boris Johnson's discourse, can be summarized by the following statement: "His loquaciousness is a key to his success in setting himself apart as a politician, but as he takes on the job of Prime Minister of the UK, it's quite possible it could also prove to be his downfall' and his speeches 'are certainly entertaining'" (Greer 2019). His speeches are always provocative, and he "has long spun political gold from his magniloquent tongue, using what some linguists and observers say bombastic language, esoteric vocabulary, occasional crudity and episodes of bumbling bluster" (Greer 2019).

### **Emphasizing the politician's authority (i.e. superiority)**

Whatever the event is, Boris Johnson arrives at it projecting his individualism and confidence in moving beyond the ideas of 'leveling up' and finding a way towards setting out his plans. No doubt that these plans are governed by the Conservatives and inseparable from the party's political principles. But still the leader is intent on proving his individual role in providing the party ideas. He is switching back and forth between the pronouns 'I' and 'we' when keeping mentioning some prominent achievements, events and ideas having been his PM's initiatives and their results.

Johnson's longest speech at the Conservative Party Annual Conference in Manchester in October 2021 has the biggest number of the utterances that emphasize his mission to 'level up' the UK, which he described as "one of the most imbalanced societies and lop-sided economies of all the richer countries" (3). The biggest number in exempla can be explained not only by the speech timeline, but mainly by the pragmatic intention of Prime Minister Johnson to show his fellow party members that he's still a powerful and capable Tory.

(...) I'll tell you what leveling up is. A few years ago, they started a school not far from the Olympic Park. A new school anyone could send their kids to in an area that for decades has been one of the most disadvantaged in London. That school is Brampton Manor Academy, and it now sends more kids to Oxbridge than Eton. If you want proof of what I mean by unleashing potential and by leveling up, look at Brampton Manor. We can do it. (3).

Obviously the study of the first constituent proves that Boris Johnson, being in a position of power, wants to prioritize the domains of 'his politics' emphasizing on his PM's superiority in such issues as Brexit, adversarial relationship with EU, battling against COVID, the National Health System reforming and social welfare improvement. Whether PM Johnson's achievements and failures do good or bad for the UK's stability and development remains to be seen, but it is Boris Johnson's commitment to fight for his future in the British establishment that is clearly manifested as it was stated in his first speech as Prime Minister: "We (implied I, Boris Johnson) in this government will work flat out to give this country the leadership it deserves" (1).

### **Focusing on common beliefs (i.e. ideology)**

This constituent is based on the assumption that the agents of the communication, both the speaker and the audience, have the same knowledge about political realities and the shared common 'public opinion' on them. In this case manipulation by guiding a strategically built communication is by and large possible. Like that, in his election victory speech Johnson appeals to his votership as to "*one-nation Conservatives for the first time*" and keeps mentioning the party's (=his) policy promises:

(...) *And we will deliver a long-term NHS budget enshrined in law, 650 million pounds extra every week, health secretary. And all the other priorities that you, the people of this country, voted for. Record spending on schools, an Australian-style points-based immigration system, more police, how many? Colossal new investments in infrastructure, in science, using our incredible technological advantages to make this country the cleanest, greenest on earth with the most far-reaching environmental programme. And you the people of this country voted to be carbon neutral in this election. You voted to be carbon neutral by 2050 and we will do it. You also voted to be Corbyn neutral by Christmas by the way and we'll do that too* (1).

In his first speech as PM he focuses more on his domestic policy promises, the main of which was improving the broken social care system. By this, he assures both his supporters within the party and his voters that as PM he is aimed not only at completing the job of leaving the EU but also will deal with many internal problems. In such a way, new PM tries to neutralize the ones that are less enthusiastic about Brexit and to spirit the rejoined voters. He uses anaphoric repetition of the structure '*My job is*' to emphasize on his premiership in providing people with the needed public goods.

(...) *My job is to serve you, the people because if there is one point we politicians need to remember it is that the people are our bosses. My job is to make your streets safer - and we are going to begin with another 20,000 police on the streets and we start recruiting forthwith. My job is to make sure you don't*

have to wait 3 weeks to see your GP and we start work this week with 20 new hospital upgrades, and ensuring that money for the NHS really does get to the front line. *My job is* to protect you or your parents or grandparents from the fear of having to sell your home to pay for the costs of care (2).

As the targeted audience at the Conservative Party Annual Conference in Manchester in 2021 was Boris Johnson's fellow party members, he appeals to the ideals that are robust for the majority of them: *one-nation conservatism, Thatcherism, and traditionalist conservatives*. So, mentioning their outstanding fellow member Margaret Thatcher, her PM's iron-style, and social care values is quite an often-used tactic in Johnson's discourse. "Citing the former Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher is usually a guaranteed way at Conservative conference to get a rip-roaring round of applause" (Allegretti 2021), and Boris Johnson reached for that as he tried to defend raising national insurance to pay for getting through the NHS backlog and social care.

In PM's final speech Johnson's manipulative tactics are directed on persistent mentioning of his main 'battlefields', the ones where he wants to be remembered as the key agent, as The Guardian wrote in its review: "...From the COVID vaccine rollout to his stance against Russia, outgoing PM was keen to cement his legacy..." and "...Like Arnold Schwarzenegger's Terminator giving a thumbs up as he slides into molten steel, Johnson painted a bright picture of the country he is leaving behind" (Grierson 2022). Even after having had *the Partygate scandal*, he took to "repeating the vaccine mantra" (Grierson 2022) to maintain attention to the COVID vaccine programme in the UK as his success story.

(...) The people who got Brexit done, the people who delivered the fastest vaccine rollout in Europe - and never forget 70% of the entire population got a dose within six months, faster than any comparable country (3).

Initiating a range of economic, humanitarian and defensive military assistance to Ukraine when doing Prime Minister's duty, Boris Johnson made the resistance to Russia his personal credo: it used to be his strong record in office as well as it is a positive feature of his human spirit. Throwing in his support for Ukraine both individually and institutionally, inveighing to impose additional sanctions on Russia and Belarus, he uses the universal truth about the good and the evil when, in his discourse, he keeps realizing the persuasive tactic that is based on every individual's intention to live in peace, not at war.

(...) And if Putin thinks he can succeed by blackmailing or bullying the British people then he is utterly deluded (4).

(...) We are joined in our outrage by friends and allies around the world. We will work with them - for however long it takes - to ensure that the sovereignty and independence of Ukraine is restored because this act of wanton and reckless aggression is an attack not just on Ukraine. It is an attack on democracy and freedom in East Europe and around the world. This crisis is about the right of a free, sovereign independent European people to choose their own future and that is a right that the UK will always defend (5).

Relying on the quantity of the examples that prove the manipulative meaning making based on common ideological beliefs in PM Boris Johnson's political interaction, it is found that all the four speeches have very little of the constituent use (actually, two examples each). Not to say that about Boris Johnson's speech at the Conservative Party Annual Conference in Manchester in 2021. It shows the largest number of the constituent use (13 respectively), and it may stand for the fact that the more the targeted audience is politically aware, the better the speaker's skill to manipulate its public opinion must be.



## Discrediting alternative views (i.e. beliefs)

The tactic of discrediting political opponents is one of the often used ones in the political discourse as the ideological polarization is a quick way to show the contrast and bring your positive deeds to front. Notwithstanding his personal levels of popularity, Boris Johnson takes advantage of the growing disdain for his ideological opponents and uses every opportunity to clearly position certain opponents or their policies as unconventional. He imposes this way of communication on his audience quite often, and the manipulative aspect of such discursive acts manifests his desire to set his agendas in which his political position seems far-reaching.

Going back to PM Johnson's speech at the Conservative Party Annual Conference in Manchester, it tallies nine illustrations of discrediting alternative views. Of course, for this precious audience that perfectly well realizes the political challenges of the Conservative Party, Boris Johnson has to keep highlighting his victories. He does that quite skillfully using exaggerated metaphors, allusions, prop words, periphrases and sometimes the language he uses may seem abusive. In his first lines of his Annual Conference speech, Johnson refers to his rally opponent *Jeremy Corbyn* and calls him "corduroy communist cosmonaut" sending him "into orbit where he belongs" meaning the last election:

(...) And the first time since so many of you worked to defy the skeptics by winning councils and communities that Conservatives have never won in before, such as Hartlepool. And in fact, it's the first time since the general election of 2019, when we finally sent that corduroy communist cosmonaut into orbit, where he belongs (3).

From such a perspective, PM Boris Johnson demonstrates himself as a radical politician and a fierce fighter for his party's ideas and plans. The politician skillfully hides the complex processes of his individual opposition exposing the drawbacks and failures of his rivals and generates his own narrative to influence the minds of his political cohort.

## Appealing to the emotions (i.e. shared experience)

Emotions enable people to feel empathy and remain true to their most deeply held values and attitudes. They can stir people up in the most difficult times or change the routine behavior to abandon your habitual commitments. The most emotional experiences keep the central importance in memory, evaluation, judgment, and action.

Hardly any doubts exist on the opinion that Johnson's both verbal and non-verbal styles of communication are indeed highly impressive. The audience of the discursive events under analysis is highly receptive, as PM Johnson is surrounded by his adamant supporters and reliable allies, so the most pervasive common-sense notion of all his speeches is appealing to the audience's feelings as if to the real actors of the political events. What events in the current life of Great Britain can evoke a deep response? Obviously, the fight on Brexit and the after COVID-19 distress are the two long-run adjustments under PM Johnson's leadership. So, in all the analyzed speeches this or that reference to these two events can be found:

(...) You've been paying attention. Because this election means that getting Brexit done is now the irrefutable, irresistible, unarguable decision of the British people (1).

(...) When this country was sick, our NHS was the nurse. Frontline healthcare workers battled against a new disease, selflessly risking their lives, sacrificing their lives. And it is right that this party – that has looked after the NHS for most of its history – should be the one to rise to the challenge (3).

In his speech to his Conservative party fellows, Johnson wants to be praised for his actions in the light of COVID and he effectively demonstrates his responsibility illustrating it numerically for to deepen the efficacy and play on the audience's apprehension. PM Johnson even recalls his own personal experience being hospitalised with Covid in March 2020. In such a way Johnson wants to show that he had an emotional connection with everyone who had survived COVID. While doing that he resorts to a very expressive metaphor 'a hole' that in his imagination is the enemy to have been defeated and that have also been his personal fight.

(...) When I was lying in St. Thomas' Hospital last year, I looked bleakly out of my window at a hole in the ground between the ICU and another much older Victorian section. And amid the rubble of brick, they seemed to be digging a hole for someone or something, or indeed someone, possibly me. But the NHS saved me and our wonderful nurses pulled my chestnuts out of that Tartarian pit. And I went back on a visit the other day, and I saw that the hole had been filled in with three or four gleaming stories of a new pediatrics unit. And there you have a metaphor my friends for how we must build back better now. We have a huge hole in the public finances. We spent 407 billion pounds on COVID support and our debt now stands at over 2 trillion pounds. And waiting lists will almost certainly go up before they come down (4).

Using the shared difficulties of the British society in the worst days of COVID period, playing with the negative aspects of the EU and speculating about the inner problems, Boris Johnson thoroughly selects the topics in his discourse showing off his leadership, positioning his 'self' in specific political processes and making enthusiastic assumptions for the future of Great Britain.

Immediately after the Russian Federation attacked Ukraine on 24 February 2022, PM Boris Johnson addressed the British nation. He was unusually calm and less emotional, he sounded firm and confident. In his first lines he certifies all the British people that their country is strong enough to counter any aggression and to share the Ukrainian battle for independence:

The PM has vowed to hit Russia with a 'massive' package of sanctions designed to "*hobble*" Moscow's economy after Vladimir Putin's "*vast invasion*" of Ukraine "*by land, sea and air*" to define "*the clear mission*" of the UK and its allies as the victorious one.

(...) Diplomatically, politically, economically and – eventually – militarily, this hideous and barbaric venture of Vladimir Putin must end in failure (5).

Sharp, non-metaphorical epithets, reference to all public domains and mentioning the allies around make every common person in the alarm time believe: I am not alone, the truth will triumph and my government will defend me and my home. "We", said the Prime Minister Johnson, "– and the world – cannot allow that freedom just to be snuffed out. We cannot and will not just look away" (5).

## **Prime Minister Liz Truss**

In a series of the Conservative Party leaders Mary Elizabeth Truss will be remembered as the shortest-serving prime minister in the history of the United Kingdom: on her fiftieth day in office, on 25 October 2022, she stepped down amid a government crisis. Before the referendum on Britain's membership of the European Union in 2016, Liz Truss wrote an article for The Sun in which she warned that Brexit would be "a triple tragedy – more rules, more forms and more delays when selling to the EU" (Quinn 2022). But not long after that, her rebirth as a Brexit ultra gave her a chance to be included into the list of Boris Johnson's loyal supporters and that opened the door to her leadership race. She was kept being posed in comparisons to Margaret Thatcher and her campaign included the announcement of a proposed

package of tax cuts amounting to about £30bn. So, in September 2022 Liz Truss won the ruling Conservative Party's leadership contest and became Britain's new prime minister after replacing Boris Johnson.

### **Emphasizing the politician's authority (i.e. superiority)**

The beginning of PM Truss's election victory speech was full of gratitude and acknowledgement, first of all, to the Conservative Party Committee, the policy chairman, then to her family, friends, political colleagues, and, at the end, to her fellow candidate, Rishi Sunak. The political forerunner, Boris Johnson, "our outgoing leader", as she called him, was thanked the last. This speech was scarce of examples of Truss's personal authority as the new leader kept posing herself as a part of "*our great Conservative party, the greatest political party on Earth*". The only emphasis, or just a mention, to her role in the party can be heard in the following statement: "*And as your party leader, I intend to deliver what we promised those voters right across our great country*" (6) followed by the future PM's favourite word '*deliver*', being repeatedly mentioned with some obscure promises:

(...) My friends, we need to show that *we will deliver* over the next two years. *I will deliver* a bold plan to cut taxes and grow our economy. *I will deliver* on the energy crisis, dealing with people's energy bills, but also dealing with the long term issues we have on energy supply. And *I will deliver* on the National Health Service.

The same presentations of herself as just a member of "a great team" are being observed in all Truss's speeches under analysis – even at the Annual Party Conference, which is considered to the main political stage to promote ambitions, her speech was short on new ideas or policies.

Trying to be hidden behind the pronouns '*we*' and '*our*', generously rewarding her party and colleagues with praising epithets, repeating such generally used phrases as '*I know, I remember, I can't afford...*', the only challenge in her first speech as PM "This is our vital mission to ensure opportunity and prosperity for all people and future generations. I am determined to deliver" (8), Liz Truss chose such a manipulative tactics that gives her some space not to bear her personal responsibility for the decisions that are to be made and for the political actions that are to be done under her leadership in a difficult time for the British economy. Even her statement on the day of her election victory "I have three priorities for our economy: growth, growth and growth", inspired little confidence in her firm leadership as PM, and some of her fellow members, and many of the British voters, saw her as a leader without a plan.

Moreover, it seemed that many observers see the difference between PM Truss's emphasis on positioning herself as the self-styled heiress to Margaret Thatcher and the political actions she declares like she will not be there to "hand out subsidies" and does not view the economy through "the prism of redistribution" (8).

So, whatever be the tone of the PM, it's too weak to manipulate her superiority in political power and even her fellow party members suspect that little trust had Liz Truss in her own self.

### **Focusing on common beliefs (i.e. ideologies)**

Having taken on leadership of the Conservative Party in the grip of an economic, social, energy and political crisis, Liz Truss focused on few, but main promises that she proposed both to her party fellows and her voters: fewer taxes, less government, less Europe. These new PM's propositions relate to dome her future action regarding Britain and its economy and, consequently, the life of common Britons. So, the target domains as '*country, economy and person*' are often found in her speeches when she tries

to place emphasis on the ideological pillars of her party and point out their utmost importance. For instance, at the Annual Party Conference Liz Truss started her speech praising the deeds of Tory mayors – *Andy Street of Birmingham and Ben Houchen of Teesside* – to make the evident conclusion for every Tory member: “This is what modern Conservatism looks like” (8):

(...) My friends, this is what a city with a Tory Mayor looks like – it’s positive, it’s enterprising, it’s successful. And Andy Street is a human dynamo, delivering for the people of Birmingham. And our Teesside Mayor Ben Houchen is also delivering new jobs and investment (8).

Actually, the manifestation of common beliefs in order to manipulate the Tory’s ideologies is available only in Truss’s Annual Party speech when she refers again to the common beliefs of people and vaguely promises again ‘to deliver’ in the name of people and “our great country” trying to seek the Tories’ faith in her governance hall as she was elected, first of all, as “a cutter of taxes and slasher of regulations” (“Liz Truss and the Gap between Ideology and Reality” 2022), in what she still keeps the faith.

(...) High taxes mean you feel it’s less worthwhile working that extra hour, going for a better job or setting up your own business. That, my friends, is why we are cutting taxes. We have already cut Stamp Duty, helping people on the housing ladder – especially first-time buyers. We are reversing the increase in National Insurance from next month. We are keeping corporation tax at 19%, the lowest in the G20. We are helping 31 million working people by cutting the basic rate of income tax. We need to be internationally competitive, with all our tax rates attracting the best talent (8).

More declaring slogans, few realized facts deepen the gap between Liz Truss’s ideology and a bleak reality. It looks like saying that you are all about free enterprise and economic growth is easy but delivering it is much more difficult, and this was where Truss’s political superiority was fragile.

### **Discrediting alternative views (i.e. beliefs)**

Interestingly, in any of her speeches Liz Truss has been keen to avoid attacking her opponents. The only exception is her Conservative Party Annual Conference speech when she couldn’t escape criticizing because her party fellows expected her to do that. But PM Truss did that in her own way: she repeatedly called her opposition “*the anti-growth coalition*”, and this term could imply all political powers who oppose the Tories’ policy like Labour, the Liberal Democrats, the Scottish National Party, militant unions, think-tanks, Brexit deniers, Extinction Rebellion and the Greenpeace climate activists. Even her followers were dissatisfied with such a frugal term for the opposing parties.

(...) Now later on in my speech my friends I am going to talk about the anti-growth coalition. But I think they arrived in the hall a bit too early, they were meant to come later on (8).

Bringing in the fact that the party leader Truss mentioned her opponents only 3 times (compared to Johnson’s 9 times!) during the conference – the main political event for the Tories – is to prove that the positioned-herself-as-a-new-iron-lady PM Truss had failed.

### **Conclusions**

The current study brings into focus the political discourse of two Prime Ministers of the UK, Boris Johnson and Liz Truss, conducting a descriptive qualitative method and a social-cognitive approach which we apply to understand the expressive force of their manipulative techniques relevant to successful persuasion. The manipulation can thrive among targeted audiences, and such discursive events seem to be the easier platforms to manipulate political power. To prove this supposition, five discursive events

of sitting Prime Ministers of the UK of the same subject-matter, which we consider as discursive manipulative acts, are chosen for the analysis. Four specific areas relevant to successful persuasion in these acts were identified: first, how the politician emphasizes superiority through his politician's authority; second, in what way he/she focuses on common beliefs to impose his/her ideology; third, the manner they try to discredit alternative views of their opponents; fourth, the degree they appeal to the emotions of the audience and use the shared experience to manipulate.

Table 3 shows the numerical composition of the constituents found in the analytic data.

**Table 3. Comparative Quantitative analysis of the manipulative nature implied in Boris Johnson's and Liz Truss's speeches as sitting PMs**

DISCURSIVE EVENT	Speech timeline		MANIPULATIVE FORMING CONSTITUENT							
	Boris Johnson (BJ)	Liz Truss (LT)	Emphasizing the politician's authority (i.e. superiority)		Focusing on common beliefsee (i.e. ideologies)		Discrediting alternative views (i.e. beliefs)		Appealing to the emotions (i.e. shared experience)	
			BJ	LT	BJ	LT	BJ	LT	BJ	LT
PM's election victory speech	~ 7 min.	~ 7 min.	6	2	2	2	1	0	2	0
First speech as PM	~ 12 min.	~ 4 min.	5	2	4	2	3	0	2	4
PM's speech at the Conservative Party Annual Conference in Manchester	~ 40 min.	~ 35 min.	11	4	13	7	9	3	19	12
PM's final speech	~ 8 min.	~ 3 min.	5	0	4	1	0	0	1	0
PM's speech on the Russian aggression against Ukraine	~ 4 min.	~ 4 min.	1	0	2	2	1	1	7	2

A closer look at the manipulative constituents reveals that the discursive manipulation of the PMs seems to include two rather different kinds of tactics.

**Boris Johnson:** PM Johnson keeps skillfully taking to the accentuation of his personal activities in the Conservative party's policy, showing superiority; rather often he negatively evaluates his opponents, sometimes, in an offensive way; he involves emotional appeals, providing details of his arguments and emphasizing their power. These findings prove a big impact on the audience in regards towards the messages that are to be taken into accounts by public, as well as they help the politician to make half-truths, falsehoods or vagueness unnoticeable. Boris Johnson's discourse is characterized by metaphorical and hyperbolic utterances that undoubtedly switch the audience into the perceptive mode of the thing uttered. Johnson's discursive domains, his personal 'I', 'British people' ('the will of the people') and

'Brexit' are the areas of focus, giving the Conservative Party a side place. Many commentators have noted carelessness with the facts he mentions and lack of care for the truth he publicizes, but still his appeals cause response and popularity within the part of the British society. Apparent is in the fact that the more supportive the targeted audience, the bigger the response is. We consider not less important the following two issues: having Winston Churchill as his role model and having had his highly-paid career in journalism before entering politics make every of Boris Johnson's speeches "A master class in getting people to eat out of his hand without knowing what they are eating" (Allegretti 2021).

**Liz Truss:** The comparative duration of Boris Johnson's and Liz Truss's speeches shows the approximate equality of three speeches, but the first and the final Truss's speeches as PM are much shorter than the ones of Boris Johnson's. This fact seems to be important as the success of these discursive events totally lays on the two manipulative strategies – emphasizing the politician's authority and focusing on common ideological beliefs – the ones that PM Truss was not good at, as the figures of Table 3 show. When Truss became the Prime Minister, she was blamed for not having a clear-cut plan for the tenure of the prime-minister, and it was clear not only for her opponents, but also for some of her party fellows that her main campaign message "*the tax-cutting pledge*" as well as her resistance to any contrary views on the problem could cause her Cabinet immediate problems. Although, in her first speech as PM she talked about her "*three early priorities*" as Prime Minister to "*pursue*", those priorities were just general catchwords and had rather vague prospects to have been pursued ("Liz Truss and the Gap between Ideology and Reality" 2022; Singh 2023).

The statistic data of Table 3 show that quite emotional was Liz Truss's Party Conference speech in which she took to emotionalizing her arguments seemingly having more credibility among the Tory membership but the arguments could hardly be called irrefutable proofs of her superiority in the Party. PM Truss's target domains are '*country*', '*economy*' and '*world*', that often go with the combination of the process of '*building*', '*creating*' and '*delivering*' like the ways she would like to improve the current state of the British society, seem weak challenges to follow as the speaker tends to use the pronoun '*we*' as if shifting off the responsibility for the upcoming results. PM Truss's discourse is characterized by very scarce figurative language, little positive self-presentation and rather rare and mild accusations of her opponents make the analyzed discursive events as losing battles.

Those who chose the path of political life are doomed to lead a non-stop struggle for power to gain attention, to persuade the audience and to fight against the opponents. Following Aristotle's two general types of persuasive proofs as '*artistic*' and '*non-artistic*', we admit that the scope of the present study leaves gaps as for manipulation and power, regarding the psychological effects of manipulation and non-verbal tools of Boris Johnson's and Liz Truss's communication. But it is glaringly obvious that PM Boris Johnson belongs to the first type of Aristotle's classification while Liz Truss goes to the second. And another question to be solved arises: which is better for manipulation in power: to be emotionally stable or extravert-assertive? Or the answer lies in the strict result of living up to one's promises?

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### Supporting data

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## Hierarchy of verbal projections in Czech, a minimalist approach

*Abstract: The purpose of this article is to try and apply the minimalist framework to the Czech verbal projection hierarchy and situate the resulting findings where possible. Minimalism is composed on a background of predominantly English data and looks for cross linguistic examination and language specific data when needed, but not as a general rule of approach. This article tries to find cross linguistic data in Czech language and apply minimalist theory to different material than English, and also discusses differences found between Czech and English verbal projections. Differences such as negative placement, aspect realization and differences in tense and Irrealis forms. Findings of this article are not surprising and provide further proof of possibilities with regards to application of Minimalist framework while also providing an expansion upon said framework such as providing further proof of vP existing inside Czech hierarchy of verbal projection, previously undiscussed combination of two major feature categories proposed by Adger and iteration of aforementioned phenomena.*

### Introduction

*Core Syntax: A Minimalist Approach*, a book by prof. David Adger published in 2004, provides linguists with a rather thorough framework and overview of a minimalist approach to syntax. It is a sort of "reader's digest" of the past several decades of linguistic theory which has been done on the field of syntax, often predominantly by Noam Chomsky. One might argue that such an endeavor is impossible, yet here we are with a book offering just that.

Minimalism is largely based on data of the English language and calls for cross linguistic examination and data when necessary, or when adopted by other than native English-speaking linguists as a framework. Some of the usage of data is quite clever and elegant. The aforementioned book *Core Syntax* briefly covers all relevant aspects that are tied to the main topic of the book step by step and in clear and transparent fashion. This book is used as a crutch of sorts for this article. Mainly for simplicity's sake as it is fairly rudimental but offers comprehensive overview of current theory. The aim is to establish a sort of steppingstone upon which further research might be done: a very comprehensive basis, if you will. But the question is whether his findings and his approach are indeed all encompassing. They should be, since it is a piece of a so called "generative" literature that advocates universal grammar as the basis of the syntax of particular languages...

Answering this question is the aim of this article. Or at least partly. My main focus is placed on the hierarchy of verbal projections, as described by Adger, and how they compare and apply to Czech language. There are obvious differences in concrete realizations of respective features and aspects, but in theory the same universal framework should be applicable in both languages, albeit with certain modifications.

The following sections first in brief establish the basis which Adger builds up over several chapters in his book, then try and apply this basis to Czech data, and discuss how well does this basis translate to new environment and how concrete realizations happen, or might happen, compared to the source material based on English mostly. Keep in mind that the aim of this article is to provide a comprehensive overview, not a detail and perfect study of *Core Syntax*, but in Czech. Such work would be beyond a scope of mere article, although it is definitely worth pursuing as such a work as Adger's book is currently not available in Czech and for Czech language data.

## Minimalist framework

Throughout the years minimalism constructed a framework which yielded several hierarchies of projections in verbal and nominal domains. One of the key tools used in these processes are features by which Minimalism justifies and describes various mechanisms, such as verb movements, which happen, or are triggered, during construction of a sentence and later can be rendered via a tree. This is a rather simple and elegant way in which to describe otherwise complex occurrences. Among other things contemporary theory also introduces operations such as (MERGE), or (AGREE) which also play a major role in construction of a sentence and are justifiably observable during the process, which is demonstrated in the book *Core Syntax*. However, it is not a place of this article to lengthily discuss validity of this approach, be it minimalism itself, or Adger's manual, nor whether they are right or wrong. It suffices to say that these are the various tools used during the course of time to explain and account for some interesting gaps in description of language.

What is of interest to us however is the hierarchy of verbal projections. Here we will cover the string as is proposed by Adger with a brief overview of each node:

### (1) Hierarchy of verbal projections: T – (Neg) – (Perf) – (Prog) – vP – VP

#### T phrase

T is a label for a so-called functional head of a TP phrase. There are several such functional heads in the hierarchy. Their main difference from VP, which houses V, or the lexical verb and head, is that they comprise of functional category words and their primary role is not to assign theta roles as that is the job of lexical verb. This means that the lexical verb selects for its arguments, there is always at least one and that is the Agent or Subject<sup>1</sup>. Presence of other arguments depends on the lexical verb chosen in the clause. It is common though that at least two arguments can be found in a stereotypical clause and those are Subject and Object.

Functional heads, like T, instead fulfill a different role and further display certain features, for example tense or aspect. T is labeled T for tense. This head is the main head of the clause and in English it houses modals and auxiliaries.

To spot a T in English is rather easy as all Ts are subject to the co-occurring N.I.C.E. properties.

### (2) (a) N – negation

*I saw him yesterday/I didn't see him yesterday.*

### (b) I – inversion

*I saw him yesterday/Did you see him yesterday?*

### (c) C – coda

*I saw him yesterday/I saw him yesterday, didn't I?*

### (d) E – emphasis

*I saw him yesterday/I did see him yesterday.*

Notice how T does not have to be morphologically realized to still be present in the structural hierarchy. This can be observed especially with (2d) Emphasis property. It could be said that Ts as functional heads do not carry any semantics of their own, however with modals it is a bit more problematic. Nevertheless, both AUX and MOD are to be found in this position. It is also worthy to note that as the theory progressed, the boundary between lexical heads (verbs, nouns) and functional heads (T for example) became

blurred to a point where we now do not distinguish between the categories anymore. They are just heads.

### Neg phrase

Next node in line is that of negation. It originates between T and verb (or other nodes that come in between, if they are present) and only moves out of this position if it is realized as a bound morpheme and is dragged along in inverted structures together with T to the C<sup>2</sup> in a T to C movement. Previous sentence hints at how this negation is realized. It is either a full morpheme *not* or a bound morpheme *-n't*. These morphemes, be them bound or not, always follow the T, never a lexical verb and they serve as a primary clausal negation.

(3) *I saw him yesterday.*

*I did not/didn't see him yesterday.*

*\*I sawn't/not him yesterday.*

There are certain structures where *not* can be positioned after the verb, but that is no longer a clausal negation, but a constituent negation. This usage however usually does not appear in everyday language and have specific usage, or are part of idioms.

(4)(i) *I saw not him but Jane instead.*

(ii) *Waste not, want not.*

(iii) *I think not.*

In types of structures like (4)(i) the only negated element is *him*, so the scope is limited from clausal scope, if the *not* is in its original position, to taking scope over a constituent instead. (ii) and (iii) are idiomatic expressions where the clausal negation reading can be somewhat seen in (iii), but it simply is not what we understand as clausal negation.

### Perf phrase

NegP is followed by a PerfP which is the origin of one of two aspects in English – the perfect aspect. This aspect signals that whatever action is being depicted by the lexical verb has been ended. Perfect aspect is realized by auxiliary *have* and a *past participle* formed by suffix *-ed*, or third form as it is often designated in ESL<sup>3</sup> books in case of both regular and irregular verbs.

(5) *I have seen him just now.*

Now one might ask why, if the original point of perfect aspect is after the T and before V, is suddenly the AUX *have* in a T position, and the *-ed* suffix (in this case *see* is an irregular verb, so third form is chosen as that is the past participle) is attached to the verb? If that was the case and perfect aspect remained *in situ* (in its place), the result would look something like this:

(6) *\*I do have -ed/-en see him just now.*

This is obviously a very malformed sentence, so in order to get the correct result *have* somehow moves to the T position and *-ed* attaches itself to the V. Explanation for *-ed* is rather simple as it is a bound morpheme, and it has to be joined with something for it to fulfill this contextual requirement properly. There is also a question of realizing tense in English, but more on that later.

But where does that leave us with the AUX *have*? There is no doubt that *have* is the T here. It has all the N.I.C.E. properties, as can be seen in the following examples:

- (7) (a) N – negation  
I haven't seen him.  
(b) I – inversion  
Have you seen him?  
(c) C – coda  
I have seen him, haven't I.  
(d) \*E – emphasis  
\*I do have seen him.

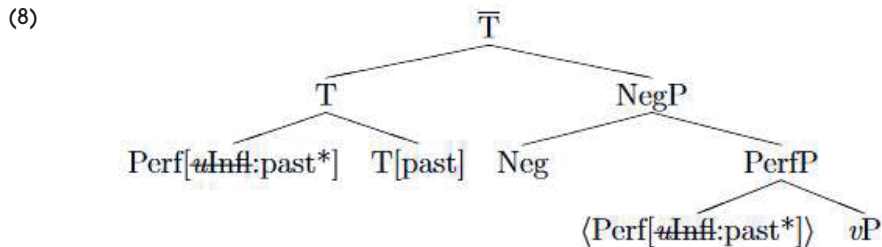
It is precisely because the last property Emphasis fails that *have* is in the T position and as such heads the clause, otherwise there would be a covert T *do* as the true T. But since it is incorrect to have an emphasis with perfect aspect, *have* must occupy the position *do* would, if it was present.

How then does the AUX *have* find itself in the T position while originating in PerfP? The answer can be found in the aforementioned features. According to Adger there are features which heads, or words, possess and they project as any features would throughout the phrase they are heading. A VP is a VP precisely because its head is a V, and it has certain features. Furthermore, Adger claims that these features have "their own, properties. One such property is *interpretability*, and another is *strength*.

This is what concerns us most here. It is because the T head has a strong property that needs to be checked, meaning its requirements have to be met. In minimalist system, this is almost always the case with uninterpretable features. Think of it as an empty slot with strong magnetic field, with specific shape that must be filled, and only appropriate object can fit. Since T has this feature so the movement of Perf to T is triggered as the checking needs to happen locally. AUX *have* then moves to T, which checks T's features and the result is successful merge of a constructions later to become a clause. Other linguists call this movement attraction, among other things, notably Haegeman and Guéron in their 1999 monograph *English Grammar*.

Once again, we arrive to the issue of tense realization in English, since the *-ed* morpheme moves to V. We will deal with this in more detail once the V node is covered in its own section.

The following excerpt is taken from Adger (2002, 145) and demonstrates the issue we have discussed so far in a tree diagram:



In this case Adger chooses a value of an uninterpretable feature Inflection, depicted as *uInfl:past*. Since it is an uninterpretable feature, it needs to be checked. And since it is a strong *Infl* feature, AUX *have* has to move in order to be in local relation to check the strong *Infl* feature. The past value can or does not have to be present, depending on what the resulting clause should look like. In general values of features serve to further specify and refine the system which is being proposed.

## Prog phrase

Another aspect that English has is the progressive aspect, realized by AUX *be* and a suffix *-ing*. The node which houses these morphemes is that of a ProgP. It can be found following the PerfP and preceding the vP. Keep in mind that these are optional and while TP, vP and VP are almost always present in a sentence, NegP, PerfP and ProgP do not have to be, unless it is called for them to be used.

Just as it was with PerfP in the previous section, ProgP behaves in the same way. The AUX also moves to the T in order to check the feature and the suffix moves to V. Since this mechanism has been discussed in detail previously, I refer you to section 1.3 for further detail.

What is of interest to us though is how the hierarchy reflects if both aspects are present, that is perfect and progressive aspect occur at the same time. Such an event is quite common in English, as can be seen in the following example:

(9) *I have been seeing him for quite some time now.*

The example sentence (9) is a totally normal everyday sentence that you can encounter easily when dealing with English speakers. Recall now the hierarchy which has been rendered in the introduction of this section:

(1) **Hierarchy of verbal projections:** T – (Neg) – (Perf) – (Prog) – vP – VP

Notice how PerfP precedes ProgP and they both follow NegP. Same can be observed in the (9) example where the highest AUX, that is the *have* of PerfP moves to T and is then followed by ProgP realized by AUX *been* and suffix *-ing* on V. Should we break this succession, the result would be an ungrammatical sentence.

(10) *I have<sub>AUX PERF</sub> been<sub>AUX PROG</sub> seeing<sub>v</sub> him for quite some time now.*

*\*I been have seeing him for quite some time now.*

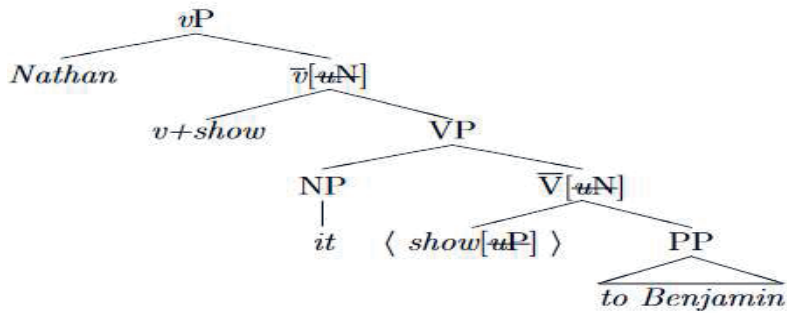
It is clear that PerfP and ProgP have a clear and rigid order which cannot be changed for the result to be grammatical.

## v phrase

Perhaps the most novel, albeit not so much to some linguists, verbal phrase in the hierarchy of projections is the vP. The reason as to why this projection exists can be described in a rather complicated manner, but for the purpose of this article I will cover it only briefly.

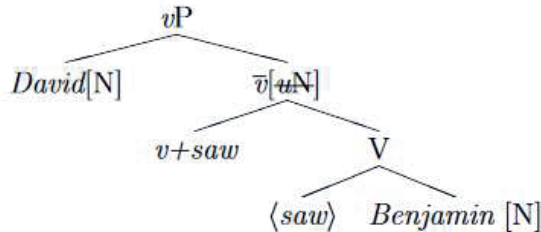
It seems that ditransitive verbs are somewhat special in their process of assigning theta roles. The structure is relatively easy to capture in ternary branching, but not so much with the binary approach. Not only for this reason Minimalism develops a new and clever step in the hierarchy which incorporates a new phrasal node into the said hierarchy, and that is vP. This new phrase is present not only in case of ditransitives, but also for other verbs as well, ditransitives only sparked the notion there might be another projection in-between. It is another category that is always present, but its content widely varies based upon semantics of a lexical verb in VP. Resulting structure then renders which theta role is assigned to which constituent based upon the general rule of c-command (which constituent controls which in the tree; keep in mind that the tree of a clause is a hierarchy of its own and the relations with respect to hierarchy matter). To further illustrate the idea being presented, consider the following examples:

(11)



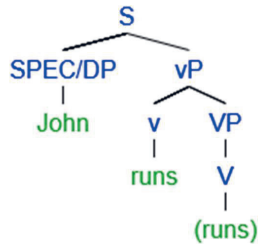
This tree (Adger, 109) showcases what Minimalism proposes in more concrete terms on a simple sentence with a ditransitive verb. Notice how the verb *show* originates in V, and moves to *v*, leaving behind a trace. The reason was explained above – *show* must assign theta roles and c-command resulting constituents, namely, to simply assign case to a subject. It would not be possible if it was further down the tree.

(12)



On the other hand, this tree shows us how the same principle translates to types of verbs other than just ditransitives. It works even for unergative<sup>4</sup> verbs which have only the agent/subject as an argument:

(13)

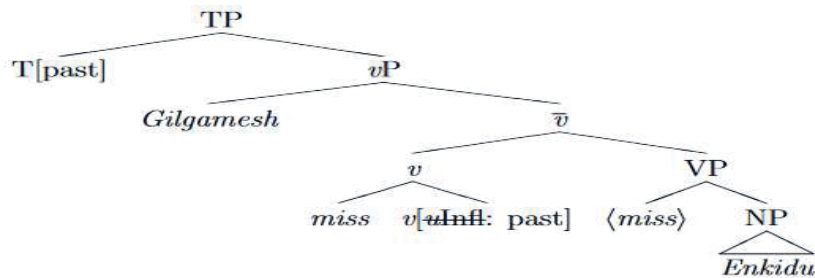


### Tense

What is left to discuss now is the tense assignment on V. With AUX and MODs it is relatively easy, as they are in T in the first place, so any tense or inflection by extension will appear besides them naturally. Lexical verbs do not behave like that and they by no means move up to the T, as discussed above. This means that the feature "moves" down to the lexical verb, or rather is realized further down the tree on a V. One of the reasons is the strength. Recall what was discussed in section 1.3 about the properties of features

and how strength triggers movement. Strong features trigger movement since they need to be checked. Hence features that are higher in the projection, located on functional heads perhaps, when they are strong, trigger movement to their position. This case however is different. Again, it is worth mentioning that in other literature, notably Haegeman and Guéron, this inflection is attracted by lexical verb, because this feature is weak enough to move and not strong enough to trigger movement. The following tree from *Core Syntax* illustrates the phenomenon (Adger, 137):

(14)



Notice the value of features, also mentioned above. In this case T assigns (past) value to V's uninterpretable (unfl) feature. This way the tense gets assigned in simple tenses like Present Simple or Past Simple, in this specific case resulting in

(15) (NP *Gilgamesh*<sub>Subj</sub>)(T<sub>(past)</sub>) (V *misses*<sub>(past)</sub>) (NP *Enkidu*<sub>Obj</sub>).

Present Simple is a bit more complicated, since it is the unmarked tense, and the only value T carries in these cases is just (number) since present tense is overtly realized on the 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular as suffix -s. In some languages, for example French, the features on T are strong enough so they trigger the movement of V to T.

This is not the only option we are left with. Emonds (2022) believes, and demonstrates, that (Past) is in fact a feature located on highest projection of V, whatever you might call the resulting label. This means that T does not house (Tense) and it is not "lowered"<sup>5</sup> on V. In broader scope this is also not so controversial as Emonds and Veselovská (2015) demonstrate that (Tense) is in fact located canonically<sup>6</sup> on V not only in English, but in Czech as well, leaving T to house the feature (Mood). More on that later.

### Application to Czech

The previous section dealt with Minimalism's proposed hierarchy of verbal projections. This one turns to applying the discussed theory to Czech, reflecting upon differences in realization and trying to capture the underlying predicted similarities at the same time. If it was not stated previously clearly enough, it is my belief that both languages are more similar than different, as they should be, considering the core tenants of Minimalism are Universal and Generative Grammars.

### T and tense

Before we deal with further analysis it is important to mention one obvious difference between Czech and English – due to the rich inflectional system Czech has, many of the features are realized very

differently from those that Minimalism describes in English. With that in mind let us tackle the T position and tense in general.

Since minimalist approach is sort of a condensed generative grammar theory, it is safe to assume that the same proposed hierarchy should be widely applicable across many languages, Czech included. That in turn means we do have a T position, or as it is called by Veselovská, the Omega position. Consider the following example with N.I.C.E. properties, which were used to establish the T position:

- (16) (a) N – negation  
*Ty jsi nebyl doma.*  
*You weren't at home.*
- (b) I – inversion  
*Byl jsi doma?*  
*Were you at home?*
- (c) C – coda  
*Ty jsi byl doma, ne?/Ty jsi byl doma, že jo?*  
*You were at home, weren't you?*
- (d) E – emphasis  
*Ty jsi byl opravdu doma.*  
*You were really at home.*

As one can see applying N.I.C.E. properties to Czech data is clumsy at best. Czech questions do not undergo the same inversion English ones do. Coda is realized not by repetition and negation (or not) of the T content, but by different means, if at all. Emphasis is realized by other means than emphatic *do* and that goes even for non-analytic Czech tenses like present.

- (17)  $I_{Sub/Agnt}$                        $do_{AUX EMPH}$                        $play_V$                        $the\ guitar_{Obj}$   
 $J\check{a}_{Sub/Agft}$                        $opravdu_{Adv Deg}$                        $hraju_V\ 1st\ p.sg.$                        $na\ kytaru_{Obj}$   
*Já opravdu hraju na kytaru.*

Despite that, negation can still serve as a useful diagnostic tool to determine both T and V heads and their respective placement in the projection hierarchy. More on that in the following section on NegP.

The number one problem we encounter is that the tenses are realized differently across the two languages. Present in English is unmarked and only possesses agreement realization, nothing more. Czech present realizes agreement fully with postfixes, with present forms being created by adding the stem suffix of corresponding category of a verb. Not so in English where bare infinitive is all we get. To further add to the contrast, past tense in English is only the suffix *-ed* or a concrete form of irregular verb, but Czech past tense is analytic using the AUX *be* in present form with respect to the specific person and number with the past participle ending with participle suffix *-l-* (and at times postfix for number).

- (18) *I saw him yesterday.*  
*Já jsem viděl jeho včera.*  
*Viděl jsem ho včera.*

The only tense that can be considered somewhat similar in making is the future. English uses AUX *will* which is housed in T, obviously. The same thing works for Czech as well with AUX *bud-*



- (19) I<sub>Subj</sub>                      will<sub>AUX</sub>                      play<sub>V</sub>                      the guitar<sub>OBJ</sub>.  
 Já<sub>Subj</sub>                      budu<sub>AUX</sub>                      hrát<sub>INFV</sub>                      na kytaru<sub>OBJ</sub>.  
 Já budu hrát na kytaru.

Even that is not an ironclad rule as many future tense verbs realize their future tense via other means, for example prefixes like *po-*, *pů-*:

- (20) (i) Já                      půjdu                      do obchodu.  
 Já<sub>SUB</sub>                      půjdu<sub>V FUT</sub>                      do obchodu<sub>ADV P</sub>.  
 I will go to the shop.  
 (ii) Já                      pojedu                      do města (autem).  
 Já<sub>SUB</sub>                      pojedu<sub>V FUT</sub>                      do města<sub>ADV P</sub> (autem).  
 I will go to the town (by car).

That is however a first glance analysis that is not sufficient. One might assume that *bud-* behaves just like *will* and is placed in T, since the tenses look similar, and both use auxiliaries. This is not the case here. The reasons as to why will be explained in following sections together with motivation behind it. For now, let's just accept that *bud-* is different from *will* (it is not a modal for one) and is also not situated in T, but instead in lower sections of the hierarchy.

However, there is no real reason not to assume T is also present in Czech. Auxiliaries *j-* and *by-* respectively seem to be placed in T in analytical past and conditional tenses respectively. Since T is the actual head of a clause and provides finiteness, just by that virtue alone it must be present in Czech as well. There are other diagnostic tools and proves that that is indeed the case. One such diagnostic could be negation, as was mentioned above.

### Neg phrase

It seems that just as in English, Czech NegP also originates between T and V. How can we tell? Well first of all, its position is fixed in relation to other content, like other prefixes for perfect aspect and they do not change their order, thus hinting at the notion they are bound to functional heads, which always have a very rigid structure. Negation then consistently attaches itself as a bound morpheme *-n't* to T in English, but in Czech as a prefix *ne-* to the V. *Not* follows the T and is either realized as such, or by said bound morpheme. Notice the order of prefixes in Czech in the following example:

- (21) My                      jsme                      nedohráli                      zápas.  
 My<sub>SUB</sub>                      jsme<sub>AUX PAST</sub>                      ne<sub>NEG</sub> do<sub>PERF</sub> hráli<sub>V PAST</sub>                      zápas<sub>OBJ</sub>.  
 We have not finished the match.

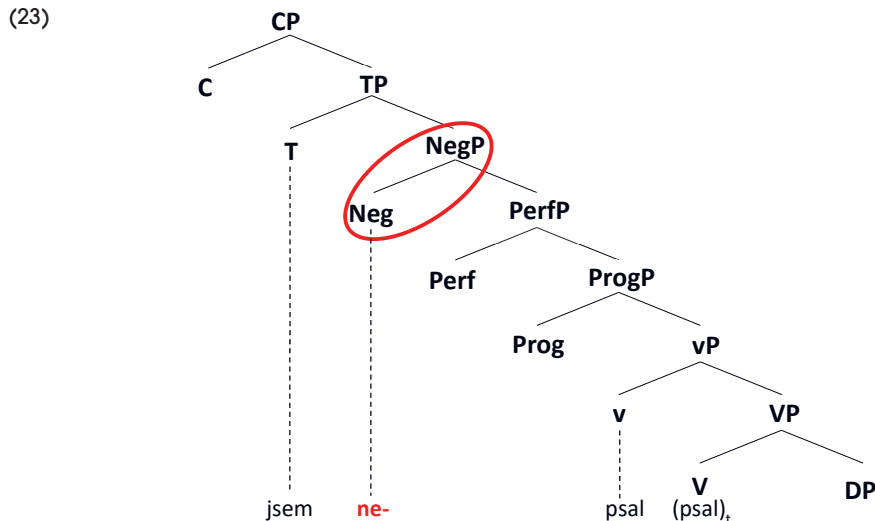
In example (25) *ne-* would have to be bound to AUX *jsem*, but that would result in ungrammatical sentence with *nejsem dohráli*, or absolutely ungrammatical *jsem* with a suffix *-ne*. Instead, it goes on V and in specific order with regards to other material, namely perfect aspect *do-*. This order is always the same, mirroring the placement of respective functional heads Neg and Perf, as was demonstrated in the section for English data treatment. This way we can be sure that NegP is really in its place even in Czech. Since it is not possible to realize negation as a suffix in Czech, but rather as a prefix, not only does that validate the previous point of AUX *bud-* being placed in lower parts of verbal projections (some part of VP shell), but also clearly shows that the AUX *j-* must indeed be in T since Neg never precedes it, even if it is realized as a prefix, since it would be raising of Neg to a place in front of it. The same mechanism of negation that English has is simply not possible.

In minimalism terms this would mean that the NegP is not morphologically realized as a free morpheme, but instead, following the template of feature checking and realization of past tense suffixes in 1.6, the Neg head has a feature with value (Neg) which then values the uninterpretable *Infl* feature (*infl*) that is valued as *neg* by the Neg head and then it is checked. This should, in theory, if my execution is right, result in negation on the verb, provided a rule that introduces proper spell out of the negative inflection is presented as follows:

- (22)(i) Neg(Neg)...v(*infl*:Neg)  
 (ii) Pronounce v(*infl*:Neg) as *ne-*

Once again notice how NegP also adheres to the hierarchy order, but in a different realization, further providing evidence of Neg being placed after T and before V. If a verb realizes perfect aspect as a prefix *do-*, which it does in many cases, but there are verbs who already have aspect encoded in them. Again, if we were to put together a negation and perfect aspect on one verb, consisting of multiple prefixes *ne-* and *do-* they would follow the same order as T – NegP – PerfP – ... respectively, as can be seen in (25).

If we were to render a more concrete picture of the hierarchy as it stands now, for both Czech and English, it would look something like the following tree diagram:



More on PerfP in the following segments, but for now it suffices to say that the predicted order in the hierarchy is valid across both languages.

## A closer look at tense

### Czech past tense

Now that we have more tangible rendition of how the hierarchy of verbal projection looks like, especially with respect to positions of heads and nodes, and that we now have a diagnostic tool in negation, we can tie up some loose ends from the previous chapters. Following up on the previous discussion, let us

ask the question if Czech past would warrant its own node. If we would truly entertain this notion, this would mean that Czech hierarchy of verbal projections has a PastP which would behave very much like the English PerfP or ProgP – an Aux *j-* would move to T while T would value the (*uInff*) feature on V as (past) where the spell out of the past suffix would be *-l*.

(24)(i) T(*Past*)...v(*uInff:Past*)

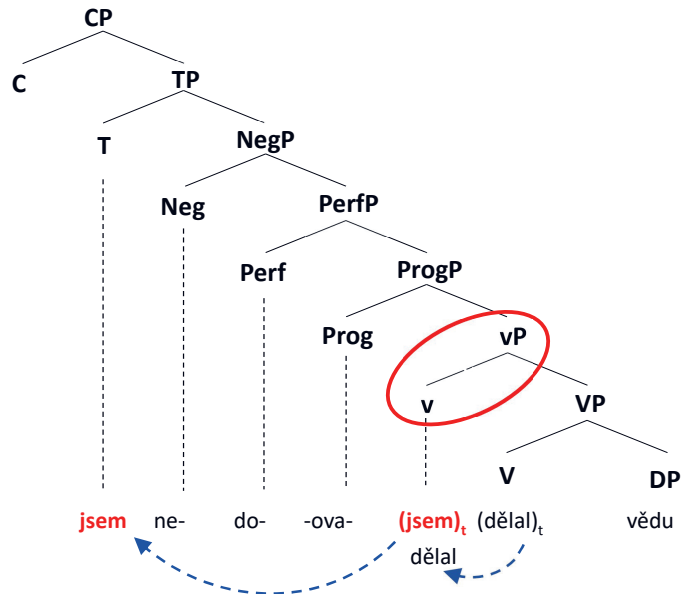
(ii) Pronounce v(*uInff:Past*) as *-l*

But such a notion is by no means a proven realization of Czech past tense... What I am trying to do here is to just render a possible application of theory found in minimalism to Czech. The reason for this line of thought is my trying to be consistent with observed theory presented by current literature and see, if it really fits different data. In that case, if PerfP is realized by AUX *have* and suffix *-ed*, in similar fashion Czech realizes past tense with AUX *j-* and postfix (possibly interfix) *-l*. If PerfP has its own node under these circumstances, why should it not be the same case for Czech past?

To answer that question, or the very least slightly modify the existing answer, I refer to Veselovská (2004). In this article she analyses several (assumed) forms of verb *být* as an AUX and copula respectively. It is not that the AUX *j-* and copula *být* and future AUX *bud-* are one and the same verb but in different positions. It is true however that in my assumption these verbs would appear in different positions and their differences would be captured not only semantically, but also structurally. According to Veselovská, these verbs are placed in vP.

The point is that AUX *j-*, if it originates in its own node, does not have to be bound to a separate functional head Past in a node PastP, but it can easily be placed into vP from where it moves to T to check the strong features there. This way the previous assumption is preserved and there is no need for separate node, thus satisfying economy principles. Then the final version of Czech past would look like this:

(25)



## Czech future tense

It has been established that Czech indeed does have a T where AUXs are housed just as it works in English. While in English future tense the modal *will* is used to convey the future meaning of the clause's tense, meaning it is some time in the future. In more concrete terms we would say that future is some time that is not now. Czech is similar in this respect, but it does not use a modal for future, instead Czech future uses AUX *bud-*. They are somewhat similar in the sense that they both take infinitives, but *bud-* is simply not a modal. There is however one crucial distinction between Czech and English futures. Previously it was assumed that *bud-* is just like *will* and is housed in T only to later accept the postulation that *bud-* is in fact in vP. If the previous assumption was true, negation, now used as a diagnostic tool for placement in the hierarchy, would in Czech system attach itself to V for future, because *bud-* is in T and that is not where negation goes in Czech. But as (26) demonstrates, that is not the case.

(26) *Já*                    *nebudu*                    *malovat pokoj.*  
      \**Já*                    *budu*                        *nemalovat*                *pokoj.*  
      *I will not paint the room.*

This means that *bud-* is situated much lower in the structure and does not even move to T. The only place it can go to is once again vP. Of course, one could assume that Czech future has its own node, just as was my previous assumption that Czech past has its own node. But it is again not necessary as *bud-* can comfortably sit in vP as demonstrated.

## Possible modification of proposed system

A thing worth mentioning before we move on: In *The Cross Linguistic Homes of Mood and Tense* Veselovská and Emonds (2015) analyze thoroughly Czech and English data with regard to how tense is realized in both languages and where it actually originates. Here is a brief summary of the article: In results of their analysis, they place the "home" of tense in Czech in V instead of T (or I if you will). The process of uncovering is rather lengthy and involves features which have not been mentioned in the article so far, like (Mood) and its respective division, how it interacts with tense and verbal constructions. For more detailed explanation please refer to the article itself, but the basic idea is, that tense is located not in the T functional head, as was previously believed, by on V instead. The same assumption is made and demonstrated as being correct for English data as well. Recall how in previous section on English I have talked about Emond's approach to past tense being placed to highest V in the hierarchy. Notice the V, not T, which, once again, has been treated as a main source of tense, so to speak.

Such a finding though does not mean T is meaningless as it still houses the various AUXs, even if tense is really at home in the V position. Since it is realized in many cases on V anyway (English past, Czech past as well, AUX only agrees with the subject, which can be observed with the omission phenomenon mentioned above), nothing changes much. Plus, T possesses more features than just tense and could potentially still serve as a head that values uninterpretable features of other constituents. This then leads to T reverting back to its previous thought of form I, where I stands for inflexion. The previous linguistic theory that later led to refashioning of said theory into what we now know as minimalism viewed I as the "core" of a clause just as T is viewed so now. Emonds (2022, ch.1) provides analysis of why it is the case to call I an I, but not I for Inflection, but I for Irrealis for English hierarchy. Coming back to Emonds and Veselovská (2015) where they explain the feature (Mood) which in their framework is now housed in I, formerly T. In more simple terms, I possess the feature (+/-Mood) realized as Irrealis and Realis

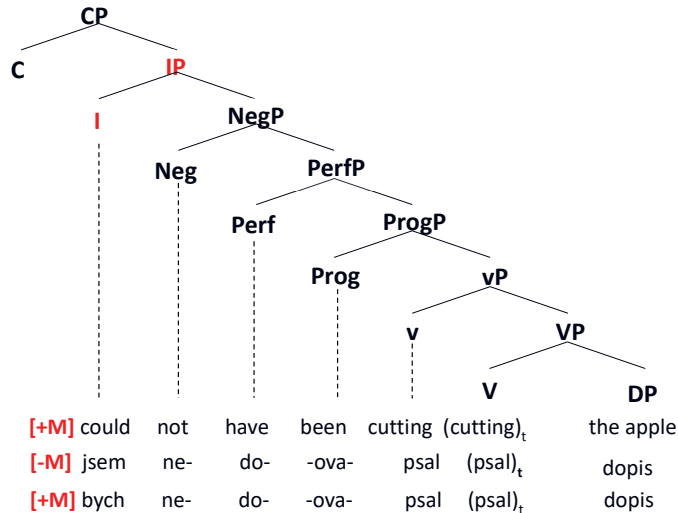
respectively. In their terms the tenses which are Realis are the ones that are real and concrete, while Irrealis are more abstract and not real. (27) demonstrates the four-way division and the theory with concrete tenses in more comprehensible way.

(27)

Tense/Mood	Realis (-M)	Irrealis (+M)
Now (-T)	Present	Future
Not now (+T)	Past	Conditional

This would also mean that tense gets its final reading in a context of features, or absence thereof, and not as one single defined feature that has its clear placement in this or that node. Yes, simple tenses like Present appear as one feature on V, but it is precisely the absence of content in I that makes the reading as it is. This is sufficient for the time being, so let's close the topic for now with a tree rendition of what has been said so far in (28).

(28)



### Perf phrase

As we have seen in Adger's approach, English perfect aspect has its own node and is realized by AUX *have* and a suffix *-ed*. The situation is very different in Czech. Perfect aspect is often realized by productive prefix *do-*. There are other verbs which use different prefixes to mark perfect aspect like *při-*.

- (29)(i) On přijel.  
 On<sub>SUB</sub> při<sub>PERF</sub> jel<sub>V PAST</sub>  
 He has arrived.
- (ii) Oni dostavěli svůj dům.  
 Oni<sub>SUB</sub> do<sub>PERF</sub> stavěli<sub>V PAST</sub> jejich dům.  
 They have built their house.

But just like I have proposed with NegP, there could be a functional head Perf, that values the uninterpretable (*Inf*) on *v* which will then be realized as a corresponding prefix'

- (30)(i) Perf(*Perf*)...*v*(*uInf*:Perf)  
 (ii) Pronounce *v*(*uInf*:Perf) as *do-*

Obviously, the rules for pronunciation, or spell out, of the respective prefixes would have to be numerous. Some verbs are inherently equipped with the perfect aspect in the lexicon, which often seems determined by their semantics, for example verb *usnout - fall asleep*. While *fall asleep* is not perfective by default, it would have to be made so with perfect aspect, *usnout* is and as such can never be used to express present tense. Same thing goes for all perfect aspect verbs in Czech. They either express action completed in the past or in the future. No present perfect can be made in Czech.

### Prog phrase

Czech does not possess a progressive aspect which would correspond with English one exactly. There is however a certain approximation.

- (31) *Zrovna*                      *dopisuju*                      *dopis.*  
*Zrovna*<sub>ADV</sub>                      *do*<sub>PERF</sub>*pisuju*<sub>PROG V</sub>                      *dopis*<sub>OBJ</sub>  
*I am writing a letter right now.*

Notice how in fact in Czech we have to introduce the perfect aspect first in order to get the Prog aspect. Without it, there would be no possible form that expresses this progressive aspect.

- (32) *do*<sub>PERF</sub>*pis ova*<sub>PROG †</sub>  
 \**pisova*<sub>PROG †</sub>  
*to be writing*

This means that it is not really clear what is the position of both aspects with respect to each other in the hierarchy. But for the time being let's assume that the succession is Perf - Prog as it is in English.

Furthermore, one interesting observation can be made about Czech progressive aspect. If we define progressive aspect as an action expressed by the verb that is currently taking place, or is taking place in some point in time, be it past or future, then progressive aspect would be the unmarked state for most Czech verbs.

- (33) *Co je, řídím.*  
*Co je, (já*<sub>SUB</sub>*) řídím*<sub>V PROG</sub>  
*I am driving.*

It is only with the perfect aspect prefixes that verb becomes non progressive, if we would call it that way. This would imply that by default Czech tenses always have a progressive aspect, unless the perfect aspect is introduced.

Recall the example in the previous segment about the verb *usnout - to fall asleep*. It was stated that this verb has a perfect aspect by virtue of its lexical entry. There are more verbs like this one in Czech, though they are not common by any means. However, by slightly changing the morphology from *usnout* to *usínat - to be falling asleep* we could also change the aspect from perfect to non-perfect, or progressive, if you will. This comes at a cost. It is not a suffix that changes aspect or something like that. By introducing

new material, the whole verb changes, and with it its “makeup”. First of all, Czech has a system of verb classes, each class has its own paradigm. Classes are differentiated on the basis of a stem suffix, which attaches to the root of the verb. This stem is most visible in 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular.

(34) On<sub>3<sup>rd</sup> sg</sub> děl-**á**-0  
He is doing (something).

In the example (34) we can see the underlined root and a stem suffix in bold. It is a suffix native to verbs. Together they form a stem, to which respective postfixes for person and number than attach to realize agreement. 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular has no such postfix, so it is marked as null, or empty.

This stem suffix corresponds with that of the fifth verb class. Paradigms for this class are verbs *dělat* – to do and *kopat* – to dig. To specifically tell which verb goes to which paradigm, 3<sup>rd</sup> singular preterit form of the verb is used. In our case it would be *dělal*. Since the chosen example verb already is a paradigm, let's choose a different in following example.

(35) hrát – to play  
On hra-**je**-0 ► third verb class, paradigms *krýt*, *kupovat*  
On hrá-**l**-0 ► special paradigm *oral* – to plough

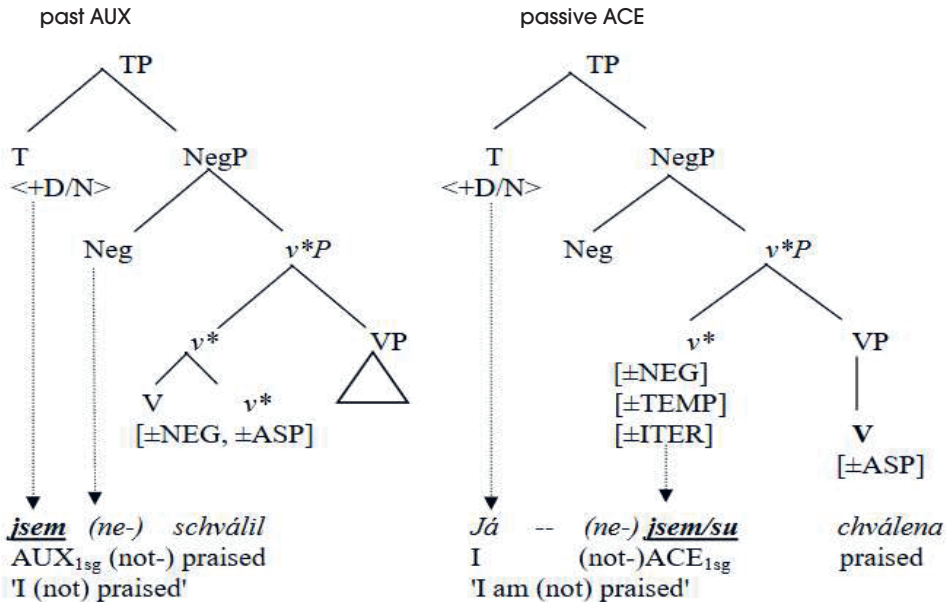
As we can see the determination of class and paradigm is not often as clear cut as just simply comparing the respective forms and that is that. Many verbs tend to have alternative realizations which changed between classes in their respective forms. This makes determining class and paradigm problematic. And such verbs are not that uncommon either. But that is not a subject of this section.

So what is the point of this exercise? I am trying to demonstrate that simply by changing what might appear as a suffix for a verb actually means changing the makeup of the word drastically and with it its nature, so to speak. Refer to previous examples and the passage about *usnout* – *usínat*. It is peculiar that certain verb classes tend to form perfect aspect verbs while others default to the progressive aspect, if we would opt to call it that way. This is an interesting phenomenon, since it seems that certain classes of verbs incline to certain makeup. For the time being I will not delve into this issue any further, but allow me to at least impose a few ideas on you: Is it possible that verbs have their own structure that comes pre-equipped with all sorts verbal features? One of those features, or rather group of features, could be referred to as *aktionsarf*. There are other features like that out there and while certain linguists ascribe them to overlying structure, it seems that this structure is already in the lexical entry of a word. This idea needs some further “entertaining” and I will try to formulate it, and issues related to it like aspect, in upcoming works. But for now, let's go back to the topic at hand.

## vP phrase

There is no reason to assume that vP is not present in Czech as part of the so-called verbal shell. In her 2004 article *The Extended Verbal Projection in Czech* Veselovská demonstrates that when it comes to the verb *být* – to be there are several kinds of it in Czech and the difference can be captured in tree diagram where they each originate in different positions (Veselovská, 2004,7):

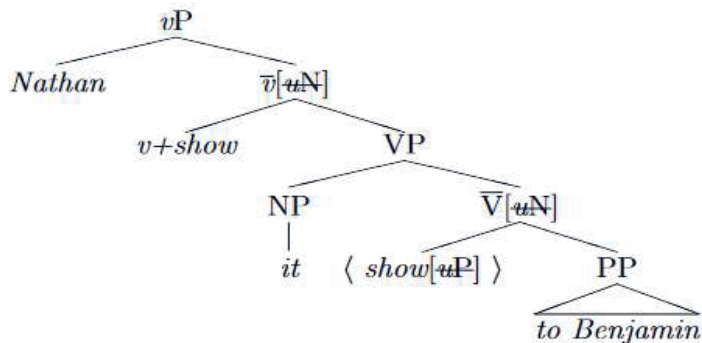
(36)



As we can see the AUX *být* or *j-* in more general terms is placed in T. The auxiliary/existential/copula *být*, ACE for short, can be found in v. After all the vP is found in the AUX example as well.

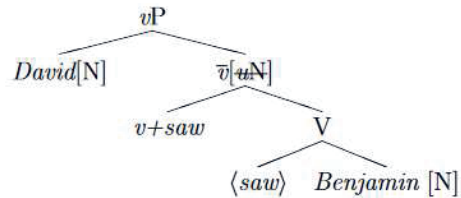
The thing is with vP that the way Minimalism sets it up, it either is or is not in the hierarchy. Since the ternary branching has been abandoned in favor of binary branching, another step in the hierarchy of verbal projections has to be included for the ditransitives to work out in the binary trees. Recall (11) and (12) trees in section 1.5, repeated here for convenience.

(11)





(12)



In (11) *show* moves from V, where it assigns the theta role to one argument, and c-commands it, to v in order to do the same to another argument, resulting in object and subject respectively. It is necessary precisely because of c-command of arguments by a verb. The same thing then works with other not ditransitive verbs, as can be seen in (12). Adger “blames” it on the fact, that there are actually two verbs in the tree, one that designates cause. So, *show* is in fact an amalgam of verbs *cause* and *show* as in *cause to show* where the Agent does such an action which causes the action of something being shown to someone.

The same thing should be applicable to Czech as well, since not only ditransitives also exist in Czech, but the same theta assignment mechanism has to work in Czech as well, since Czech has subjects and objects to, and as has been demonstrated so far, the languages are more alike than one would think beforehand.

## Conclusion

During the course of this article, I have tried to apply the theory found in current minimalist literature, namely that captured in David Adger’s *Core Syntax*, specifically a hierarchy of verbal projections, to Czech language, and discuss whether and how this application happens. The results are not surprising since in theory minimalist framework should be applicable cross-linguistically. There are certain discrepancies stemming from the different language systems, for example the rich inflectional morphology of Czech as opposed to analytical type predicates of English. Where possible I tried to devise explanations for certain mechanisms in each respective phrasal projection found in the hierarchy of projections as proposed in Minimalism. Whether these are truly a faithful rendition of how Czech hierarchy of verbal projections works remains to be seen and is up to further expanding upon. The aim of this article was to briefly cover both theory as well as application of said theory to Czech data, not to thoroughly analyze each respective node and put together carefully considered justification for my claims as a serious proposition of how the Czech hierarchy of verbal projections actually works. Such an endeavor would be beyond the depth of an article, that mainly targets to briefly explain and apply minimalist theory as a comprehensive overview for researchers on Czech wanting to get acquainted with minimalism and theory found in current literature. It might seem as a very “surface scratching” attempt, yet I have tried to outline thoroughly the differences between languages and also their similarities and how well can current theory capture that.

## Notes

- (1) Not all subjects are agents. Keep in mind subject is a structural position, agent is its role in informational structure of a sentence.

- (2) C is a head of another phrasal projection that is found above T in the tree. It is also a functional projection like T, but of different kind and it governs clausal boundaries with its head being a complementizer. It is not relevant to our discussion here in this article, so any further talk on it is omitted, but should you be more interested the bibliography section presents several books that deal with this topic in more detail.
- (3) English as second language
- (4) Verbs often depicting movement like run for example.
- (5) Lowering is somewhat forbidden in minimalist theory. In order to avoid it, the spellout rules and value operations have been introduced. Emonds's *Alternative Realization* and his approach of (Tense) being located on V and its projections elegantly circumvents this issue without the extra work and rules of spellout.
- (6) Standard location
- (7) Aktionsart is lexical aspect as opposed to grammatical one we can see with prefixes in Czech and have + past participle in English

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## Lexical complexity measures as indicators of essay quality

*Abstract: This study explores how the results of lexical complexity measures can be used to indicate quality in argumentative essays written by L1-Czech L2-English high school students. Final-year students (n=104) from three local high schools participated in this study. The essays were manually graded to give a vocabulary score and automatically analysed for lexical features of density, sophistication, and variation using the Lexical Complexity Analyser developed by Haiyang and Lu (2010) and Lu (2012). The results indicated a strong correlation between the indices used and essay quality, verb-based measurements in particular. The study contributes towards understanding the connection between lexical complexity and quality in L2 argumentative essays.*

### Introduction

Research on second language (L2) complexity, accuracy, and fluency (CAF) production can (depending on the indices used) reveal information about a learner's level of proficiency in the target language (Khushik & Huhta 2020). CAF-based research is a crucial factor that serves as an indicator, diagnostic, and major parameter for L2 learning, teaching, and research (Bulté & Housen 2014, Wolfe-Quintero, Inagaki, & Kim 1998).

The complexity branch of the CAF triad includes syntactic complexity and lexical complexity (LC), the latter being a multidimensional construct that encompasses lexical density, diversity, and sophistication (Lu 2012). Numerous L2 academic writing studies have explored the extent to which these measures can serve as reliable and valid determiners of learners' general language proficiency, particularly the quality of their writing performance (Bulté & Housen 2014, Mazgutova & Kormos 2015). For example, essays that were score higher use less frequent words (Crossley et al 2011, McNamara et al. 2013)

Though writing well in a second language can be challenging for learners, the writing process can be made less so through a better understanding of what makes for good writing. This study aims to contribute towards that goal by analysing the lexical complexity of timed independent argumentative essays written by L1-Czech L2-English high school students in their final year of studies, in order to investigate whether there are proficiency-related differences in the lexical complexity features used by the students. A further incentive for this study is that, to the best of my knowledge, few studies have been conducted on the lexical complexity of the writings of Czech EFL learners at a high school level.

### Lexical complexity

Studies exploring the correlation between L2 writing performance (and/or L2 writing development) and lexical complexity have mainly centred on two factors: (a) measures within the text, such as lexical density – calculated as the proportion of lexical (or content) words to total words, and lexical diversity (also referred to as lexical variation) – the ratio of unique words to the total number of words; and (b) external measures such as lexical sophistication, usually calculated as the relative frequency or infrequency with which the L2 writers' lexis appears in the target language (Lu 2012).

## **Lexical density**

Lexical density refers to the ratio of content words (nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs) to the total number of words in a text (Johansson 2008). Lu (2012) excludes modal verbs from being included in the verb classification. According to Johansson, the study of lexical density can explain the concept of information packaging, meaning that a text with a high use of lexical words conveys more information than one that has a high use of function words (such as prepositions, articles, conjunctions, and pronouns).

## **Lexical diversity**

Studies investigating lexical diversity have found a positive correlation between lexical diversity, regardless of how it is measured, and L2 writing performance (Crossley & McNamara 2012, Grant & Ginther 2000, Jarvis et al 2003). In an analysis of essays written by English learners at a Korean university, Kim (2014) found that proficiency correlated with diversity. Furthermore, Yoon (2017) noted that variations in lexical diversity may occur when the same writer is composing in different genres. They found that when composing argumentative essays, both L1 and L2 writers used less varied lexis, whereas a broader range of lexis was used when composing narrative essays. Conversely, metrics of lexical sophistication indicated that L1 and L2 writers used less frequent but more advanced (sophisticated) lexis in their argumentative essays compared to their narrative essays.

Type-token ratio (TTR) is a commonly used measure to determine lexical diversity, however, it has been criticised as it is affected by text length. Attempts were made to address this, with the corrected TTR (CTTR) (Carroll 1964) and root TTR (RTTR) (Guiraud 1960 cited in Torruella and Capsada 2013), though criticisms remain (Vermeer 2000). However, Lu (2012) and Daller et al (2003) had some success finding correlations using TTR and RTTR as measures of lexical variation and language proficiency.

## **Lexical sophistication**

The vocabulary of advanced L2 writers has been studied using frequency information to compare their lexicon with that of English corpora and academic word lists (Davies 2008, Nation 2006). Studies on L2 writing have discovered that using a broader range of low-frequency lexis indicates L2 writing development and performance (Johnson et al 2013, 2016). However, as mentioned in the previous section, Yoon and Polio (2016) have indicated that argumentative L1 and L2 writing incorporates less frequent and more sophisticated vocabulary than narrative L1 and L2 writing, suggesting that the higher informational density of argumentative genres is achieved through the use of less frequent lexis.

## **Software analysis**

Lexical complexity is typically analysed using specifically designed software, such as the Lexical Complexity Analyzer (LCA) (Lu 2010, 2012). The LCA allows researchers to analyse the complexity of written English using 25 different measures of lexical density, variation and sophistication (see Table 1). As the table shows, lexical density (LD) has one measure, lexical sophistication five, and lexical variation 19. Words are counted as sophisticated if they do not appear on the list of the 2,000 most frequent words according to the British National Corpus.

Table 1 - Lexical complexity indices used by the LCA

<b>Lexical density (LD)</b>
<b>Lexical sophistication</b>
Lexical sophistication-I (LS1)
Lexical sophistication-II (LS2)
Verb sophistication-I (VS1)
Verb sophistication-II (VS2)
Corrected VS1 (CVS1)
<b>Lexical variation</b>
<b>NDW</b>
Number of different words (NDW)
NDW (first 50 words) (NDWZ-50)
NDW (expected random 50) (NDW-ER50)
NDW (expected sequence 50) (NDW-ES50)
<b>TTR</b>
Type/Token ratio (TTR)
Mean Segmental TTR (50) (MSTTR-50)
Corrected TTR (CTTR)
Root TTR (RTTR)
Logarithmic TTR (logTTR)
Uber Index (Uber)
<b>Verb diversity</b>
Verb variation-I (VV1)
Squared VVI (SVV1)
Corrected VVI (CVV1)
<b>Lexical word diversity</b>
Lexical word variation (LV)
Verb variation-II (VV2)
Noun variation (NV)
Adjective variation (AdjV)
Adverb variation (AdvV)
Modifier variation (ModV)

## Methodology

This study focused on the relationship of lexical complexity to the expert raters' judgments of the quality of argumentative essays produced by Czech learners of English in their final year of high school studies. Specifically, I addressed the following research questions:

1. How does lexical density relate to the raters' judgments of essay quality?
2. How do the different measures of lexical sophistication relate to the raters' judgments of essay quality?
3. How do the different measures of lexical variation relate to the raters' judgments of essay quality?

The definition of essay quality in this case refers to the vocabulary score assigned to each essay by a pair of trained raters.

## Data collection

Three local high schools took part in the research, specifically, the students in the final year of their studies. Each participating student completed the same task in the same conditions, responding to the statement *Some people think that teachers should be paid according to how much their students learn* within 45-minutes and using between 160-180 words.

The time limit was determined by circumstances of the collection context – the written data collection had to happen with the students' regular 45-minute school lesson. Though more time would have allowed the students more opportunity for planning their response, we can say that the task does mimic a typical school writing assignment, and so is able to add to the generalizability.

## Data preparation and processing

Essays that were longer than 180 words (and so having exceeded the word limit) were trimmed to the nearest sentence near the word count in order to ensure that the essays were all within a similar range. Essays that were shorter than 160 words were removed from the process. This was a necessary step as the length of a text will have an impact on some of the complexity measurements. Also removed were essays written by non-native Czech speakers.

Two raters were recruited for the study, Rater A and Rater B. Rater A has 11 years of English language teaching experience, and Rater B has 8. Both raters have extensive experience preparing students for Cambridge suite exams – including the B2 Cambridge First, on which the marking rubric is based.

While other studies have either used or adapted rubrics from TOEFL (Kyle 2016), TOEFL-IBT (Biber et al 2016), IELTS (Shadloo et al 2019), and the Cambridge PET (Bi & Jiang 2020), an adapted Cambridge First (formerly FCE) rubric is used in this study. Cambridge First participants are marked according to B2 on the CEFR and so is a suitable choice as the participating schools assess their final year students at the same level. Furthermore, it was a tool that the two raters were already familiar with.

It was necessary to adapt the rubric as in the existing rubric grammar and vocabulary are included together as part of the language 'section'. With this study focusing on lexical complexity, it was necessary for the grammar and vocabulary based descriptors to be separated. The separation of vocabulary and grammar means that each element has a 'clean' score – neither is affected by the other. This has the added bonus of allowing for future research on syntactic complexity and task fulfilment using the same set of data.

The raters were introduced to the adapted rubric and were then guided through an 'instruction manual' to clarify terminology and to synchronise marking. The raters then entered their results into a prepared recording document.

The essays were then processed using all 25 indices on Lu's LCA (see Table 1).

## Results

104 essays were processed. Each rater scored vocabulary out of five – with five being the highest possible score and one the lowest. These individual scores were then combined (see Table 2). The majority of the participants scored between six and eight points, with, interestingly, a similar pattern of outliers on either side.

**Table 2: Combined vocabulary score and frequency of occurrence**

Number of essays: 104	
Vocabulary score (/10)	Frequency
10	1
9	8
8	25
7	39
6	22
5	8
4	1

Tables 3 and 4 report only on the indices demonstrating a correlation with vocabulary score. Of the 25 indices, 11 reported no correlation with vocabulary score (LD, LS2, NDWZ, NDW-ER, NDW-ES, TTR, MSTTR, logTTR, AdjV, AdvV, and ModV). Table 3 shows that of the five lexical sophistication measures, LS1, VS1, and VS2 showed a weak positive correlation, with CVS1 showing a moderate positive relationship.

**Table 3: Lexical sophistication measures**

Index	Pearson's r p-value
LS1	0.215 0.031
VS1	0.241 0.015
VS2	0.219 0.028
CVS1	0.263 0.008

These results show that as in McNamara et al (2010) that higher proficiency writers make more use of less frequently occurring, or, more sophisticated, language.

**Table 4: Lexical variation measures**

Index	Pearson's r p-value
NDW (number of different words)	0.205 0.040
Type-token ratio	
CTTR	0.262 0.008

RTRR	0.262 0.008
Uber	0.270 0.006
<b>Verb diversity</b>	
VV1	0.215 0.031
SVV1	0.317 0.001
CVV1	0.309 0.002
<b>Lexical word diversity</b>	
LV (lexical word variation)	0.221 0.027
VV2	0.259 0.009
NV	0.216 0.030

Of the results shown in Table 4, NDW, VV1, LV, and NV have a weak positive correlation. TTR, CTTR, RTRR, Uber, SVV1, CVV1, and VV2 show a moderate positive relationship.

The results show that higher-evaluated essays were written with a greater lexical diversity. Overall, the indices that demonstrated the largest difference across the proficiency levels among the 25 lexical complexity measures were the verb indices and the root and corrected TTR measurements, having shown the stronger positive correlation to vocabulary score. This aligns with the idea that more sophisticated and varied language usage is characteristic of higher proficiency writers.

A possible reason for these results is that less proficient writers use a writing style similar to that of spoken/conversational language. This corresponds with Biber et al (2011), who suggested that early developmental stages of complexity features are more likely to contain verbs commonly used in conversation. This also suggests that more capable writers are able to access and use a broader range and more specialised vocabulary, resulting in a better quality essay.

It is also clear that though positive trends exist between some of the lexical complexity measurements and vocabulary scores, these trends are mostly weak – or at best, moderate. This would suggest that, while having some useful implications, lexical complexity alone is not a sufficient indicator of proficiency.

## Implication

The results of the lexical complexity measurements suggest several practical classroom implications. Given the positive correlation between the sophistication and variation measures and vocabulary scores, it seems that students would benefit from teaching strategies designed to enhance their range and use of more sophisticated vocabulary beyond the 2000 most common words, with particular attention being given to lexical items that are more likely to occur in academic writing.



The findings are also of benefit to teachers or those working in test development. Lexical complexity should be taken into consideration when setting a task, with regard to the type of language a student is expected to produce in response, and also during assessment – particularly when constructing an assessment rubric. By incorporating insights from lexical complexity research, teachers and assessors can create a more targeted and specific evaluation tool.

### **Limitations and future research**

Though offering such insights, this study was not without limitations. First, this research was completed with the use of a rather homogenous group of participants – they were all of a similar age and academic background. Future studies would benefit from the inclusion of different age groups and/or a wider range of English proficiency. The wider participant range may more starkly reveal correlations between lexical complexity measurements and proficiency and may lead to more generalisable results.

The 45-minute time limit was a necessary condition of the collection context, however, future research can investigate the effects of longer time allowance. On constraints, it is likely that the word limit affected the output – a higher word count, or even removing the limit, would have possibly allowed some participants to write much more rather than feeling confined.

As complexity can be affected by task genre (essay, narrative, report, etc), given that different skills are necessary to write successfully within those genres, future research should also test how responsive lexical complexity measures are to task type.

To close this section, the relationship between syntactic and lexical complexity is worthy of investigation, as no single independent measure can truly capture and inform on the quality of writing as a whole – a good essay is much more than a diverse range of sophisticated vocabulary.

### **Conclusion**

This study investigated the relationship of 25 measures of lexical complexity to the quality of L1-Czech L2-English high school student argumentative essays, providing insights into the lexical features of students' writing abilities at different levels of proficiency.

The study demonstrates the effectiveness of using lexical complexity measurements through analytical software to identify features indicating proficient writing and has confirmed the findings of previous research in this area.

These findings can aid teachers in designing writing courses and materials to enhance the writing skills of more advanced students while also addressing the needs of less skilled students. In addition, the findings can also support rater training as well as incorporating automated tools as part of assessment and evaluation procedures.

Finally, and as mentioned previously, the quality of writing product is clearly determined by several factors, including accuracy and syntactic complexity, as well as task type, genre, and sociolinguistic factors. These factors can be used to guide future research.

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**LITERARY AND CULTURAL STUDIES**

## Language, Multilingualism, and Translation in a Contemporary Trinidadian Novel: An Exploration of Caroline Mackenzie's *One Year of Ugly*

**Abstract:** *The economic and humanitarian crisis in Venezuela has been ongoing for several years, with a corresponding impact on nearby nations such as the small state of Trinidad & Tobago. Although the two polities are close in geographical proximity, as an English-speaking former colony of Britain (and previously Spain) with significant Francophone heritage, Trinidad & Tobago has a completely different ethnic, social, cultural, and religious composition to its Latin American neighbour. Though moves have been put into place to make Spanish the official foreign language of Trinidad & Tobago, in practice this aspiration has remained largely unrealised. Indeed, the arrival of a substantial number of migrants from Venezuela has had significant ramifications. A literary response to the situation is Caroline Mackenzie's 2020 novel *One Year of Ugly*, which tells the story of Yola Palacios, a young Venezuelan translator who has come with her family to Trinidad as an undocumented migrant. Through detailing their escapades, the book deals with important questions relating to language, multilingualism, and translation in the migrant context. This article explores how these topics are portrayed in the novel, as well as how they are interlinked with wider sociocultural aspects of Trinidadian society as a whole.*

### Introduction

As observed by the American philosopher Thomas Nail, “the twenty-first century is an age of mobility. Enormous numbers of people are on the move today in increasingly unequal ways” (Nail, 147). Indeed, this mobility comprises vast numbers of people, ranging from tourists and international expatriates to refugees, asylum seekers, and migrants.<sup>(1)</sup> The reasons underpinning this movement of refugees, asylum seekers and migrants are manifold, and may be related to political, socio-economic, and conflict-related factors. Indeed, the issue of migration has dominated news headlines in recent years and remains of worldwide relevance, involving Europe, the Middle East, Africa, the Americas, Asia, and Oceania.

Accordingly, there have been a number of literary and cultural responses in different languages and contexts to this increasingly prevalent phenomenon, as exemplified by works such as Mohsin Hamid's acclaimed novel *Exit West* (2017). In Central Europe, an example is Timur Vermes's German-language satirical novel *Die Hungrigen und die Satten* (2018), recently translated into English as *The Hungry and the Fat* (2020). Literary scholars have also devoted attention to the topic, as seen by the numerous contributions to a recent special issue of the Polish comparative literature journal *Porównania* (Zduniak-Wiktorowicz), which analysed aspects of how modern-day migration and refugees have been portrayed in Central Europe's various literatures. Additionally, several of the contributions to the newly-released *Routledge Handbook of Refugee Narratives* (Espiritu Gandhi, Nguyen) also centre on the literary portrayal of refugees in various world regions, such as the role of migration in works by the Indian novelist Amitav Ghosh (De).

Turning to the Western Hemisphere, the issue of recent migrants into the United States has also been addressed in fiction, for example by Jeanine Cummins's hotly-discussed novel *American Dirt* (2020). Yet perhaps due to its recency, creative responses to the migrant crisis caused by the challenging economic and socio-political situation in Venezuela have been less common to date. Hence, through the lens of Caroline Mackenzie's 2020 novel *One Year of Ugly*, the focus of this contribution is to briefly explore the

effect of this migrant crisis on one of Venezuela's neighbouring countries, the small dual-island nation of Trinidad & Tobago. This will be done by employing an interdisciplinary approach focusing on how language, multilingualism, and translation is portrayed in the work, together with how these factors intersect with wider Trinidadian society overall.

### Venezuela and Trinidad & Tobago: A Comparison

To provide the necessary context for the events portrayed in *One Year of Ugly*, this section outlines the required historical and socio-cultural background regarding the two countries concerned. In geographical terms, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela (*República Bolivariana de Venezuela*) is situated in the north-eastern part of the South American continent. Previously inhabited by indigenous Amerindian groups, it became known to Europeans in the late 15<sup>th</sup> century when the explorer Christopher Columbus claimed it for Spain. As with the other Spanish possessions on mainland South America, it remained a colony until the 1810s, where it eventually attained its independence under the noted freedom fighter Simon Bolivar, who was born in Caracas and whose name is reflected in the country's official designation. Occupying approximately 916,500 km<sup>2</sup>, Spanish is the country's official language, and the 33.7 million Venezuelans are overwhelmingly Catholic (85%) (Lieuwen et al.).

With a land area of just 5,500 km<sup>2</sup> and a population of around 1.3 million, Venezuela's close neighbour of Trinidad & Tobago is very different not only in size but in terms of its historical and ethnocultural composition. Focusing on Trinidad, which is the centre of the novel's events, the island was part of the Spanish empire (with a strong French influence from the 1780s onwards) until it was conquered by the British in February 1797.<sup>(2)</sup> Linked administratively with Tobago in the late nineteenth century, the colony received its independence in 1962. The legacy of colonialism, slavery, and indentured labour has meant that the country has a mixed population (of mostly African, East Indian, but also European descent) and four official religions are recognised (Robinson et al.). English is the only official language; an English creole is also spoken but, in common with elsewhere in the Caribbean, has no official status (Hoyte-West, "Spanish and Creole"). Other languages that were once formerly spoken (such as a local variant of a French-based creole and also Hindi) are now no longer common. Until recently, Spanish could have been considered in that category, despite efforts made to promote the language through the Spanish as the First Foreign Language (SAFFL) policy from the early 2000s onwards (Hoyte-West "A Return to the Past"). However, recent geopolitical events have changed this.

Despite these obvious differences, the two nations do also have certain similarities. For many decades, the economies of both countries have been based on petroleum and natural gas. The volatility in the price of these resources has meant significant economic booms when prices are high, but also challenges when prices are low. In Venezuela, income from oil and gas revenue was used to fund expansive social policies, firstly under the rule of Hugo Chávez (1999-2013), and latterly by Nicolás Maduro (2013-present). However, from the early 2010s onwards, economic difficulties – worsened by the falling price of oil – precipitated a profound financial and economic crisis in Venezuela which the country is still struggling to emerge from. Widely covered in the global media, one of the iconic symbols of the crisis was an unfinished skyscraper, the *Torre de David*, situated in the country's capital of Caracas. Though abandoned during the early 1990s, the building achieved international prominence in the mid-2010s when it was occupied by a group of homeless squatters and their families, an event which also provided the creative stimulus for British-Nigerian-American writer JJ Amaworo Wilson's dystopian novel *Damnificados* (2016) (see also Hoyte-West "Disaster Management").

More prosaically, the economic crisis has also provoked a large wave of migration from the country. As noted in a 2020 document prepared for the International Organization for Migration, this has included neighbouring countries such as Colombia, Brazil, Guyana, and Trinidad & Tobago (Chaves-González & Echevarría Estrada 2). In the context of the latter, though exact numbers may be uncertain (Herbert 5), the number of Venezuelan migrants may comprise up to 3 percent of Trinidad & Tobago's total population (John 438). Accordingly, as an example of South-South migration (Chami & Seemungal), a number of issues have arisen within Trinidad & Tobago itself. This has included not only the need to develop the necessary infrastructure and policies at the governmental and societal levels, but also to deal with aspects relating to crime and people smuggling (Anatol & Kangerlee), as well as regarding negative public perceptions and stereotyping (Herbert).

### **Caroline Mackenzie's *One Year of Ugly***

Published in 2020, *One Year of Ugly* is the debut novel by Trinidadian author Caroline Mackenzie. In addition to her writing career, she is a freelance translator, educated in modern languages and specialist translation at prestigious universities in the United Kingdom. *One Year of Ugly* is published by Borough Press, an imprint of Harper Collins. In an interview with the author, Trinidadian media have also reported that the rights for the book have been sold to Netflix (Pires). This global interest in *One Year of Ugly* also mirrors wider foreign interest in Trinidadian literature, as demonstrated by recent articles in international media outlets such as *The Guardian* (Roffey "The Pendulum") and *The Irish Times* (Mathur). Despite its small population, to date Trinidad & Tobago boasts one Nobel Laureate in literature – Sir V. S. Naipaul, who was born there in 1932, and received the award in 2001 (The Nobel Prize "V. S. Naipaul"). Additionally, the country had a lengthy association with the St Lucia-born laureate Sir Derek Walcott through his Trinidad Theatre Workshop (The Nobel Prize "Derek Walcott").

In recent years, Trinidadian authors have performed well in terms of literary prizes. For example, for the second time in just over a decade, all three categories of the 2023 OCM Bocas Prize for Caribbean Literature were won by Trinidad & Tobago authors (Loop Lifestyle). In the 2020 edition of the United Kingdom-based Costa Prizes (which sadly are no longer awarded), Trinidadian authors were recognised as winners of the First Novel Prize (Ingrid Persaud's *Love After Love*) as well as the Novel Prize and overall Costa Book of the Year (Monique Roffey's *The Mermaid of Black Conch*). Trinidadian authors also feature prominently in annual reviews of Caribbean literary production. With specific regard to *One Year of Ugly*, the novel has been reviewed in prestigious scholarly outlets such as the *Journal of Commonwealth Literature* (Alonso Alonso 564) and the *New West Indian Guide/Nieuwe West-Indische Gids*, (Price and Price 67). As observed in the latter review, the events portrayed in the novel are set in 2016. It details the story of the Palacios family, who are a clan of Venezuelan illegal migrants:

"We'd all moseyed across the twelve kilometres of ocean separating Trinidad from Venezuela in fishing boats in the dead of night" (Mackenzie 13).

Yola, the novel's narrator, is a translator by profession, and she lives seemingly quite happily as an undocumented migrant in Trinidad with her parents, siblings, aunt, uncle, and twin cousins. However, tragedy strikes: her Aunt Celia, who is something of a foul-mouthed matriarch figure – dies suddenly. Amid the situation, it transpires that the family owes a debt to a local gangster and people trafficker



known by the sobriquet of 'Ugly'. Accordingly, the Palacios family have to do many different things in order to pay off this debt; this includes feeding and housing other Venezuelan migrants, as well as contact with the seedy underbelly of society. In these difficult times, however, Yola relies on an autobiographical notebook which her late aunt has left behind for her. It acts as both a source of solace and of guidance.

As observed by Mackenzie in the novel's 'Author's Note', the creative impetus for the work was informed by her professional occupation as a Spanish-English translator, as well as by the day-to-day realities of life in Trinidad & Tobago from the mid-2010s onwards (Mackenzie 367-369). As such, mindful of the complex social, cultural, and linguistic situation faced by Venezuelan migrants to Trinidad, this contribution aims to briefly examine broader social issues and the characters' interaction with Trinidadian society at large through the portrayal of languages, multilingualism, and translation in the novel.

### **Language, Multilingualism, Translation and their Interplay with Trinidadian Society**

Though the novel is of course written in English, the setting, themes, and Venezuelan heritage of the principal protagonists mean that the Spanish language plays a significant role. It is used, of course, for the names of characters – e.g. Sancho, Milagros, and Mauricio – but Yola also uses the Spanish words for mum and dad (Mamá and Papá); interestingly, her late aunt is never referred to as Tía Celia, using the Spanish term, but always in English as 'Aunt Celia'. Many other words and phrases from the language of Cervantes are sprinkled throughout the book; however, unlike personal names, these lexical items are always italicised. As highlighted by Swiss scholar Miriam A. Locher (307) in her study of multilingualism in fiction, this use of an additional language within the text can be attributed to various factors. In the case of *One Year of Ugly*, by highlighting the origins and non-English-speaking status of Yola and the other members of her family, it undoubtedly contributes to both cultural enrichment as well as character positioning. Spanish is frequently used for endearments, profanities, as well as to introduce conversations which are written in direct speech. However, the excerpts from Aunt Celia's notebook are always presented in English; however, to show that it was written in 'Spanish', the text is italicised. This also has the helpful visual function of distinguishing the memoir from the rest of the novel.

Another notable feature of the novel is its use of structures and phrases typical of Trinidadian English Creole, primarily by Papá, Yola's father. Having had more contact with local Trinidadians due to his job driving a bus and from listening to local talk radio for long stretches, he has acquired forms and vocabulary typical to local speech. This is demonstrated early on the novel when Ugly makes his unwelcome first appearance:

“Best explain what you doing at my brother-in-law house, man, before crapaud smoke your pipe” (Mackenzie 8).

Here, 'crapaud smoke your pipe', a common vernacular expression which means that someone is in big trouble (Inglis) is utilised, thus adding characteristic colour and a moment of comedy to an otherwise fraught situation. This leads Ugly to exclaim with laughter:

“You talk like a real Trini, man! Better than Celia. Celia never knew no Trini lingo at all!” (Mackenzie 8).

A similar situation occurs at another difficult moment later on the novel:

“‘Oh Lawd,’ said Papá in his faux-Trini accent. He exhaled. ‘Why she didn’t call we?’. The usual nervous-tic Trini dialect” (Mackenzie 197).

Here, using spelling and grammar which do not adhere to the rules of standard English forms, the demotic form is reproduced clearly. Though these aspects are not mentioned explicitly as being creole borrowings or structures, nonetheless it is twice signposted to the reader that this is authentic local Trinidadian speech, in the guise of a specific accent or dialect. In addition, it emphasises, as in the earlier example presented above, that this is the character’s stress response to a situation of anxiety and uncertainty.

Turning to the role of translation in the novel, interestingly there are very few direct references either to the act or the practice of translating. This is despite the fact that Yola earns her living as a freelance translator; however, the main focus appears to be on her literary aspirations (the reader learns that she is a prize-winning author of short stories). Accordingly, her translation work is only occasionally mentioned in passing; for example (“At least my distraction strategy of writing and translating at a manic pace worked”), when one of her translated short stories is accepted to the highly prestigious *Paris Review* (Mackenzie 141-142). Yet, given the constant situation of Spanish-English language contact in the novel, it can be presupposed that the everyday practice of translation appears to be omnipresent and somewhat implicitly involved in the novel’s events, albeit very much in the background.

In terms of social aspects, the novel highlights the middle-class origins of the Palacios family in their native Venezuela. Indeed, this is the major reason for their debt to Ugly, as Aunt Celia required false paperwork to enrol the youngest children in secondary school in Trinidad. As such, the narrator Yola notes of her cousins that “... they’d gone to glamorous English-speaking expat schools their whole lives” (Mackenzie 14). However, their relatively privileged origins notwithstanding, the Palacios family show themselves to be extremely adaptable, displaying admirable flexibility when Ugly makes them house a ragtag group of other illegal migrants from Venezuela.

In exhorting his family to be hospitable to the new houseguests, Papá states that they should “‘Just remember, these are our people” (Mackenzie 42). Indeed, the general behaviour of the Palacios family can generally be contrasted favourably with that of their visitors. Notably, these guests include the cosseted and vain Manriques, a wealthy couple who affect false Argentinean accents in order to appear more sophisticated and cultured (Mackenzie 104-105), as well as the ridiculously-named Kingsley de Oruña Willoughby (Mackenzie 129). These moments of levity caused by the visitors’ behaviour are a foil to the general challenges caused by the whole situation.

Regarding the intersection with wider Trinidadian society, the use of the local English-based creole by Yola’s father has already been commented on. Additionally, Yola also offers her own commentary on Trinidad’s multiracial society, observing its nominal cosmopolitanism yet acknowledging its “Otherness” for those – such as Latina women like herself – who fall outside of the main ethnic mix (Mackenzie 56). Trinidad’s diversity is also highlighted later on in the novel where, on noting the physical appearance of a group of other Venezuelans, Yola observes that “...the older men looked almost identical. Perhaps I’d been living away from Venezuela too long and was only used to the Trinidadian race rainbow now” (Mackenzie 75). Another feature which marks the novel is the way that the Palacios family have adopted the culinary traditions of their new country, as demonstrated by the appetising listing of typical Trinidadian Christmas fare:

“Seasonal sorrel juice, highly alcoholic eggnog called punch-á-crème, pastelles made of cornmeal and minced meat (almost exactly like the *hallacas* we ate in Venezuela at Christmas)...”  
(Mackenzie 74).

Indeed, as illustrated in the relevant anthropological literature (e.g. Terragni and Roos), this phenomenon is relatively common among new immigrants, where cuisine from the host country progressively supplants foods from the country of origin. For the Palacios family, the degree of culinary conversion also appears to be becoming absolute, with just a traditional Venezuelan festive savoury remaining as an edible vestige of their heritage:

“Back in the house, we ate our traditional *pan de jamón*, one of the few Venezuelan customs we kept up” (Mackenzie 119).

In a further illustration of the Palacios family’s moves towards greater acculturation within the Trinidadian context, the narrator details other native festive traditions that the family have adopted, though as per Spanish custom they still open their Christmas gifts on Christmas Eve rather than Christmas Day (Mackenzie 120). For example, these include listening to *parang*,<sup>(3)</sup> Trinidadian Spanish-language Christmas music (Mackenzie 74), as well as the usage of Christmas crackers as festive decorations, with Yola observing that “Aunt Celia had taken an unexpected shine to this lingering British tradition in our adopted country” (Mackenzie 132). Interestingly, however, despite the inclusion of elements of Trinidadian cuisine, it is notable that nowhere in the novel is there any reference to what might be considered quintessentially Trinidadian food such as roti or doubles.<sup>(4)</sup>

## Conclusion

This article has aimed to briefly examine the portrayal of the Venezuelan migrant crisis in Trinidad & Tobago through the prism of a contemporary novel, adopting interdisciplinary perspectives on language, multilingualism, and their interplay with broader society. Indeed, as highlighted above, Spanish plays an important role in *One Year of Ugly*, not only in terms of situating the protagonists and the events which takes place, but also in providing additional cultural input. To this mix is added the presence of words and phrases from the local English-based creole, thus displaying a clear degree of multilingualism. However, though implicit in the fabric of the work itself, the explicit act of translation appears to be much less important in the novel, and interestingly no bilingual interpreting is featured within the novel. These factors are interlinked with observations regarding the behaviour and social class of the Palacios family – especially compared with some of the other Venezuelan migrants that they are forced to accommodate. Furthermore, going beyond the use of the local creole, the adoption of various Trinidadian culinary and festive traditions also denotes the degree of assimilation and acculturation espoused by Yola and her family.

Recognising the exploratory character of this contribution, it could be interesting to contrast some of the portrayals presented here with other fictional representations of migrants from elsewhere in the world, including those works written not only in English but also in other languages. Given the current global geopolitical situation, it seems that the situation for migrants, asylum seekers, and refugees will remain important and relevant. In the Trinidad & Tobago context, it seems clear that the Spanish language will become more and more prevalent over the years to come. Accordingly, given the growing prominence of Trinidadian literature at the global level, there will unquestionably be other creative and literary responses to this evolving phenomenon.

## Notes

- (1) More information on the definitions and differences between the latter three terms (refugees, asylum seekers, and migrants) is available via Amnesty International's website. For an academic perspective, see also the article by Douglas et al.
- (2) For more information on the role of translation and interpreting during early British rule, please see Hoyte-West "On the Trail").
- (3) For more information, please see Wikipedia "Parang".
- (4) For more information, please see Wikipedia "Roti" and Wikipedia "Doubles".

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## Permanent Revolution in J. K. Rowling's Wizarding World: A Study of Totalitarianism in the Harry Potter series

*Abstract: Although J. K. Rowling's Harry Potter is usually considered a piece of children's literature or young adult fiction, several critics have pointed out that the series, mainly in its later volumes, shows a strong affiliation with dystopian works as well. This essay focuses on this aspect of J. K. Rowling's series, attempting to offer a more systematic study of the connection between Harry Potter, dystopia and totalitarian regimes. For this analysis, a seminal work of comparative political theory discussing the features of a totalitarian state, Sigmund Neumann's Permanent Revolution (1942), is employed, focusing on three of the categories mentioned by Neumann (the totalitarian leader, the political lieutenant and the one-party state) that are compared to the depiction of the society in J. K. Rowling's series. Based on this comparison, the present study proposes that, in order to create a hostile, dystopian-like world in the later instalments of her series, J. K. Rowling has indeed employed tropes of the totalitarian state not only as a background for her fantasy stories, but in a more systematic manner to create an accurate picture of the danger of misusing power and its ramification for the whole society.*

### Introduction: Dystopian Literature – Past and Present

According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, dystopia is defined as “(a)n imaginary place or condition in which everything is as bad as possible; opposed to utopia” (“dystopia”). Utopia, on the other hand, is usually defined as an ideal place existing nowhere (Vacková 22). While the dichotomy of these two *topoi* seems straightforward, the boundaries between them can be very unclear, and one man's utopia, so to speak, can be another man's dystopia (Booker 15). In literature, the beginnings of dystopia as a distinct genre can be traced back to Plato's *Republic* (Πολιτεία), written around 375 BC. In his treatise, which is usually considered to be part of the utopian rather than dystopian tradition, Plato, for instance, suggests a maintenance of a stable population through eugenics (179), presenting the idea that wives and children should be shared across the existing community (174). Even though Plato's ideas might sound profitable for the human race in theory, the themes of eugenics and polygamy are actually commonly present in modern dystopian works, for example, Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* (1932), in which children are artificially created in laboratories to maximize the potential of the chosen ones (3) to provide them with the best genetical predispositions, and promiscuity is highly encouraged by the government (46); monogamy, on the other hand, is something the citizens should be ashamed of in Huxley's novel. The dystopian genre became quite popular in the socially and ideologically turbulent twentieth century, producing some of the most well-known dystopian works such as George Orwell's *1984* (1949) and Yevgeny Zamyatin's *We* (Мы, 1924). In the twenty-first century, the tradition of dystopias continued with novels such as Dave Egger's *The Circle* (2013). The popularity of these particular works has been perpetuated by a number of film and TV adaptations, which made them known to a new generation of audiences, who consequently found them pertinent to their contemporary experience.

Dystopia has always worked as a critique of society and politics. Apart from a number of themes and topics that became staples of the genre (such as “the post-apocalyptic man”, the end of liberalism, paranoia, both literal and metaphorical isolation, suppression of individuality, the state's surveillance

and absolute control of its citizens, and many others), post-WWII dystopias have typically depicted totalitarian worlds which have often been modelled on real-life totalitarian states and ideologies, mainly fascism and communism (or, later, religious dictatorships, such as in Margaret Atwood's 1985 novel *The Handmaid's Tale*).

While the fictitious regimes of these works are not always identified by name, and sometimes they even seem surreal and outlandish (such as the double government of the Christian-Islamic Church and the Scientific Legate in Philip K. Dick's 1981 speculative fiction dystopia *The Divine Invasion*), they share a number of features that are recognisable in real-life oppressive systems, both from the past and present. This article will focus on this aspect of dystopia in the latter instalments of the *Harry Potter* series, arguing that J. K. Rowling has not only employed elements of totalitarianism on the surface level as a background for her fantasy story, but has paid special attention to depicting them accurately in respect to their real-life parallels with which the readers are familiar.

### **Harry Potter as Dystopia?**

Especially in recent years, dystopia has been associated, and blended, with other literary genres, including young adult fiction. For example, the popular *Hunger Games* (2008–10) by Suzanne Collins and *The Maze Runner* by James Dashner (2009–11) can be classified as both young adult fiction and dystopia. Of non-English works, we might mention Petra Podolová's 2020 novel *Futurum*, which takes place in post-apocalyptic Prague, developing "the post-apocalyptic man" trope for younger reading audiences. In this context, we might even mention Matthew Nicholls's novel *A Fistful of Cherries* (2009), which brings the struggles of both individuals and the whole society in a dystopian world to pre-teen reading audiences.

Among the most popular young adult literary works of recent decades is J. K. Rowling's *Harry Potter*, a series about the adventures of a young British wizard and his fight against an ever more tangible evil (published 1997–2007). The first couple of volumes of *Harry Potter* seemed to be envisioned as rather conventional stories for children, reading like fairy tales about young wizards going on quests. It has been pointed out that these earlier stories resemble conventional heroic tales, both in terms of their structure and character roles (see Berndt and Steveker; for an analysis of the series from a mythological perspective, see Krajník). However, as the series progressed, and the main characters grew older, the later volumes began transforming into young adult fiction, focusing on more mature topics, such as romance or questioning adult authorities. It has also been pointed out that, with the progress of the overarching story, the series got darker, more serious, and more oppressive in terms of its overall atmosphere than the first instalments. Picking up on these aspects of the series, some critics have suggested that *Harry Potter* might also be classified as dystopian fiction, or at least as employing some of its elements.

Benjamin H. Barton, for instance, points out that there is a lack of democratic elections in *Harry Potter*'s wizarding world (1524) and also criticizes the selfishness of the Ministry of Magic's workers, which is repeatedly presented throughout the series (1530). Similarly, Kris Swank compares the saga to purely dystopian books like George Orwell's *1984* and *Animal Farm*, even placing *Harry Potter* in the context of the real-life world and recent European history, mainly to Nazi Germany (157). Laurie Johnson and Carl Nieker also find elements of fascism in *Harry Potter*, likening the fifth *Harry Potter* volume (*Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*) to Franz Kafka's short story "In the Penal Colony", which is centred on a fictitious execution machine that tortures condemned prisoners to death (3). Shira Wolosky, too, wrote a study on the fascist elements in the fifth *Harry Potter* volume, focusing on how the Ministry of Magic's



worker Dolores Umbridge “gradually creates a regime with traits that could be called ‘fascist’ first in her classroom, and then throughout the school” (1). Other authors have focused on the rather unfavourable living conditions of *Harry Potter*, while not specifically calling *Harry Potter* a dystopia. For example, Jack Zipes comments on wizards overseeing the questioning of the half-bloods and Muggle-borns about their family trees on Lord Voldemort’s orders, all while embracing “the vicious sadism of Voldemort” (Zipes 180). Additionally, Jane Sunderland et al. pointed out that in *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince*, there are prominent traces of “a discourse of inferiority of Muggle-borns” (28), though it must be noted that they can be found in other *Harry Potter* volumes as well.

While these individual observations are all pertinent and contribute to our understanding of the series and its interpretative potential, no systematic study of the totalitarian elements in *Harry Potter* from the perspective of political theory has been conducted so far. The present essay, therefore, offers a more focused and methodical approach to the issue, with the aim to determine to which extent *Harry Potter* (mainly the last three *Harry Potter* volumes: *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*, *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince* and *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*) does indeed show signs of belonging to the dystopian genre in terms of political, social and power relations. For the analysis, Sigmund Neumann’s seminal study of comparative political theory, *Permanent Revolution: Totalitarianism in the Age of International Civil War* (first ed. 1942), was employed as the theoretical framework, focusing chiefly on the signs of totalitarianism in J. K. Rowling’s depiction of her fictional wizarding society.

Neumann (1904–1962), an American political and social theorist who taught at several institutions of higher education in the US and Germany, wrote *Permanent Revolution* as a study of the social structure of totalitarian states. During the Second World War, he worked as a consultant for the US intelligence agency Office of Strategic Services and was a visiting expert on higher education for the US military government during his five-month stay in Germany in 1949. Besides *Permanent Revolution*, Neumann wrote several influential works of political theory and history, including *The Future in Perspective* (1946) and *Germany: Promise and Perils* (1950).

In his *Permanent Revolution*, Neumann maintains that totalitarian states are usually viewed as permanently at war and permanently in the midst of a revolution (231–32), covering the basic features according to which a totalitarian state could be recognised. From these, three will be addressed in this paper: the totalitarian leader, the political lieutenant and the one-party state – the most crucial components of any totalitarian regime. For the purpose of this study, mainly the wizarding society of Great Britain as described by Rowling will be discussed, as the main focus of her series is on this specific community and it is most important for the main characters’ “dystopian experience”, so to speak. Even though Romanian and French wizarding communities are mentioned in *The Goblet of Fire* and onwards, and the author of *Harry Potter* wrote additional short articles about several other wizarding schools across the world (Rowling, “J.K. Rowling Originals”), there is little to no information about how the wizarding communities are structured and function in different states apart from Great Britain, meaning there is not enough data to properly include those communities.

## Harry Potter and the Totalitarian Leader

When it comes to the totalitarian leader and his position within the totalitarian hierarchy, Sigmund Neumann describes the leader as a general, because “[l]ike the system itself, he is the creation of war” (64). The leader of the British wizarding community in *The Order of the Phoenix*, the Minister of Magic Cornelius Fudge, indeed commands the armies of dementors (747), powerful magical creatures, and

an army of Aurors (665), a wizarding form of police. The Minister in *The Half-Blood Prince*, Rufus Scrimgeour, has equal power at his disposal during his time in office. In the last *Harry Potter* volume, *The Deathly Hallows*, Lord Voldemort becomes the unspoken leader of the wizarding community. He commands not only an army of dementors like his predecessors but also has an army of werewolves (Rowling, *The Half-Blood Prince* 334), giant spiders (Rowling, *The Deathly Hallows* 639), giants (626) and Inferi, dead bodies enchanted by dark magic (35), at his disposal.

Sigmund Neumann mentions that the totalitarian leader expects first and foremost flattery, devotion and reassurance that he has earned his position and that greater power is on the way (65–66). All of the aforementioned leaders from Rowling's novels, indeed, expect devotion from their fellow wizards; Lord Voldemort, however, is seen most often throughout the series as expecting reassurance from his followers (Rowling, *The Deathly Hallows* 5), despite his cold and detached behaviour.

Sigmund Neumann also maintains that the totalitarian leader employs propaganda to sway citizens to his side, as "(p)ublic opinion and propaganda undoubtedly represent vital issues of daily social and political life in democracies as well as in dictatorships" (205). In the *Harry Potter* series, all the three leaders, indeed, make use of the government-controlled newspaper *The Daily Prophet* to influence their wizarding subjects. This particular motif in *Harry Potter* is especially significant as the (ab)use of mass media, or other forms of information transfer, to channel propaganda to the citizens is indeed a common theme in dystopian literature. For example, in Egger's *The Circle*, which is set in the near future, the eponymous company "subsumed Facebook, Twitter, Google, and finally Alacrity, Zoopa, Jefe, and Quan" (22), and the Circle's leaders use their newly acquired influence as owners of a now-dominant social network to shape the opinions of millions of people all around the world, with only a minority of the population calling out the Circle's actions.

*The Daily Prophet* itself has a history of unreliability. For example, in the fourth *Harry Potter* volume, Harry observes that in a transcript of an interview with him, the *Daily Prophet's* journalist Rita Skeeter "had reported him saying an awful lot of things that he couldn't remember ever saying in his life" (Rowling, *The Goblet of Fire* 314). However, as the *Daily Prophet* is said to be delivered by owls daily to nearly every wizarding family in Britain (Rowling, "The Daily Prophet"), its impact on the community is still great. For example, during the reign of Cornelius Fudge, the newspaper often prints articles full of falsehoods discrediting Harry Potter and Albus Dumbledore, the Headmaster of Hogwarts (Rowling, *The Order of the Phoenix* 105), and readers mostly believe them. Before Lord Voldemort's accession to power, Rufus Scrimgeour tried to use Harry Potter as a propagandistic symbol of the Ministry of Magic (Rowling, *The Half-Blood Prince* 345), and had he been able to succeed, he would certainly have glorified Harry Potter through the *Daily Prophet* and other means.

Ironically, the *Daily Prophet* ultimately does use Harry Potter as a symbol, but in an opposite way. In *The Deathly Hallows*, Lord Voldemort uses the newspaper to mark Harry Potter the "Undesirable Number One" (252) and offers a reward for capturing this supposed enemy of the community. Voldemort, indeed, employs propaganda not only to turn British wizards against Harry Potter but also to mark all wizards of mixed descent as public enemies, despite the fact that he himself is not a pure-blood wizard either. In the context of these actions on the part of Voldemort, the readers might find similarities between him and Adolf Hitler, who praised the Aryan race, even though he could hardly be considered as a model Aryan himself.

## Harry Potter and the Political Lieutenants

When describing political lieutenants, also called the “Number Two Men”, Sigmund Neumann points out that these closest political allies of the leader usually help with the political organization of their political party (77–78). This definition fits the description of the Death Eaters, the closest political allies of Lord Voldemort (Rowling, *The Goblet of Fire* 142), as well as the character of Dolores Umbridge, the so-called right hand of the aforementioned Cornelius Fudge (Rowling, *The Order of the Phoenix* 93).

According to Neumann, the selection of new lieutenants is certainly not made through an open competition, as it “depends to a large extent on the personal choice of the leader” and “(f)avouritism plays an important part in it” as well (92). In the *Harry Potter* series, there is no mention of how Umbridge became the right hand of Cornelius Fudge; however, it is shown throughout the series that Death Eaters are indeed handpicked by Voldemort (Rowling, *The Half-Blood Prince* 33), as there is little to no room for democracy when it comes to Voldemort’s way of ruling.

Lastly, Neumann asserts that the political lieutenants expect to get prestige and political power for their servitude, and they are loyal to the supreme leader as they derive their power from him (82). Again, this characterisation fits both the Death Eaters and Umbridge. Among Death Eaters, Bellatrix Lestrange, one of the few female members of the organisation, frequently boasts about her loyalty to the Dark Lord, stating that “(t)here can be no higher pleasure” than serving him (Rowling, *The Deathly Hallows* 9). However, when Bellatrix and her family fail their leader, Voldemort confines her and her family to their house as a punishment and does not consider them his allies anymore (Rowling, *The Deathly Hallows* 527). In the meantime, another Death Eater, Severus Snape, is allowed to keep his position of the Headmaster of Hogwarts, which was given to him as a reward for his past services to the leader (Rowling, *The Deathly Hallows* 225). Despite the image of Lord Voldemort as a villain and of the previous ministers as essentially positive characters, Rowling informs her readers that being rewarded the position of the Hogwarts Headmaster is actually quite a tradition in the wizarding world. Indeed, in one of the previous volumes, Dolores Umbridge was appointed to this position for her loyal support of Cornelius Fudge (Rowling, *The Order of the Phoenix* 624). Benjamin H. Barton has commented that this new Headmistress “has generally turned Hogwarts into a mini-fascist state” (1530), further proving the identity of Umbridge as a totalitarian lieutenant of her own kind. It could be argued that, while it could be tempting to associate the series’ totalitarianism with Voldemort as its main antagonist, it is, in fact, the whole anti-democratic system of Rowling’s world that invites the misuse of power under any leader.

It should also be noted, however, that Dolores Umbridge does not fit the description of a totalitarian lieutenant perfectly, as Neumann states that ideally, the lieutenant’s identity is “often unknown to the uninitiated outside world” (Neumann 73). In contrast, the Death Eaters, whose uniform consists of hooded cloaks and masks (Rowling, *The Goblet of Fire* 119), do keep their identity hidden from the general public, as Neumann’s political lieutenants should. In this respect, Death Eaters resemble the political lieutenants appearing in Zamyatin’s *We*, in which the subleaders helping the leader of the One State, called the Benefactor (1), to oversee the state are neither known to the main characters nor to any other ordinary citizen.

## Harry Potter and the One-Party State

In *Permanent Revolution*, Neumann mentions that there is usually only one political party existing in a totalitarian state, even though the “one-party system is a contradiction in itself, (as) only the coexistence

of at least one competitive group makes a political party real" (118). In the *Harry Potter* series, there is no mention of political diversity of any kind when it comes to the Ministry of Magic; it truly seems that there is only one political party existing at a time in the wizarding world. Neumann also maintains that the one party regulates and educates the masses (126). This is particularly true in *The Order of the Phoenix* and *The Deathly Hallows*, as in these volumes, the wizarding government is indeed trying really hard to influence the curriculum at its only existing wizarding educational establishment, Hogwarts.

In the fifth *Harry Potter* volume, Dolores Umbridge, appointed by Cornelius Fudge the High Inquisitor, meaning an overseer of the happenings at Hogwarts (Rowling, *The Order of the Phoenix* 306), monitors events at the school and eventually meddles with the curriculum and rights of the students and the teaching staff as well. In the seventh *Harry Potter* instalment, Voldemort, as the leader of the wizarding community, not only installs Severus Snape as the Headmaster of Hogwarts but also appoints two other Death Eaters, Amycus Carrow and Alecto Carrow, to the teaching staff (Rowling, *The Deathly Hallows* 226). Under the Carrow siblings, the subject that was once called Defence Against the Dark Arts is now called Dark Arts (573), and instead of learning defensive charms, the pupils are taught offensive ones like the Cruciatus Curse, a previously banned offensive spell which can be used to torment other human beings. Additionally, the formerly elective class of Muggle Studies, which used to teach young wizards about non-magical folk so that the former could understand the latter in a better way, is made compulsory for every student, and students are forced to listen to "how Muggles are like animals, stupid and dirty, and how they drove wizards into hiding by being vicious toward them" (590), which is supposed to justify the war the new government is planning to wage upon the Muggles.

Finally, Neumann states that in a totalitarian state, the recruiting of new party members is almost exclusively reserved to a very specific pool of people, as the party "closes its ranks and admits only new members who have risen through the recognized channels of its youth organisation, membership in which is made compulsory for every child" (136). In the wizarding world, there is no need for the government to create these organisations, as almost all young British wizards attend Hogwarts and are thus gathered in one place for the majority of a year. Additionally, in *The Deathly Hallows*, it is even decreed by the Ministry that even those children who were previously home-schooled have to attend Hogwarts to gain their education (210), making it even easier for the wizarding government to influence the largest possible number of young minds and showing that J. K. Rowling understood the importance of influencing the young when writing the totalitarian settings of the last *Harry Potter* volume.

Still, in the fifth *Harry Potter* volume, Dolores Umbridge initiates the creation of the so-called Inquisitorial Squad, a "select group of students who are supportive of the Ministry of Magic" (Rowling, *The Order of the Phoenix* 626). During the time of their existence, the Inquisitorial Squad's members are entrusted with spying on other pupils and informing the Ministry of any rebellious behaviour (626). A similar example of a youth organisation operating under a totalitarian regime can be found, for example, in Orwell's *1984* as well, namely under the name the Spies (20), which consists of children spying on all the citizens, even their parents, on behalf of their government. All these fictional groups of young spies are likely based on the real-world League of German Girls and German Youth, two youth organisations existing in Germany from the 1920s to 1945 (Swank 163), further showing that J. K. Rowling took inspiration for her later volumes of the *Harry Potter* series from the same totalitarian settings that other dystopian authors employed in their works.

## Conclusion

From this analysis of the politics of J. K. Rowling's fictitious world, it can be argued that the *Harry Potter* series is based on tropes similar to those that are employed in dystopian classics, such as *1984*, *We* or *The Circle*. Since totalitarian leaders, the leader's political lieutenants and the one-party political system, as defined by Sigmund Neumann, can all be easily identified within the *Harry Potter* volumes, it is apparent that Rowling's description of the oppressive environment of her novels closely resembles that of a dystopian totalitarian state. The present study has thus elaborated on the notions of previous authors, such as Johnson and Niekerk, Swank, Barton and Wolosky, showing that the wizarding world of the *Harry Potter* series is truly systematically depicted as a totalitarian one, often bearing similarities to real-life undemocratic regimes from the past or present. It is precisely this aspect that *Harry Potter* shares with the tradition of the dystopian genre of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and this way of looking at the *Harry Potter* series can potentially contribute to the further understanding of J. K. Rowling's work and its relevance. However, to what extent Rowling's series will be able to serve as a social commentary or a cautionary tale of a kind, as dystopian novels usually do, is still somewhat too early to determine.

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## New Perception as Message of Contemporary Digital Environment

*Abstract: The effects, consequences of the contemporary social media are common, unmarked phenomena in the recent digital environment. From the perspective of the predigital text-based environment, however, these effects are highly marked. They may include boredom, impatience related to real-life processes, the popularity of memes, contemporary fashion, behaviour transferring TikTok into physical reality and the BeReal platform defined as anti-Instagram. These effects can be explained by the new media altering human perception and creating a new one. The new altered perception is the real message of digital media. The message of digital technology, the altered perception of its users, permeates all levels of society. Popular news sources like news websites, radio and TV have been replaced by TikTok and YouTube. The cognitive experiences acquired on digital platforms are creating hitherto unrecognised emotional needs limited only by the imagination of their designers. Digital games offer tailored emotions and returning to physical reality is becoming increasingly difficult. Interactivity of the digital technology is the standard and scrolling has become a new literacy. The environment is programmed for psychic effect even without reading and writing.*

### Inferiority of any new environment

We need to distinguish what the new perception is (e.g. visual, auditory, cognitive and tactile changes), what the common goals of social media are (e.g. instant gratification, instantly available but never satisfied approval, amplification of emotions, enhanced visuals etc.) and what the surface effects are (e.g. neurotic urge to be connected, behavioural changes, merging of physical and virtual experiences etc.) This classification allows us to avoid value judgments and gain better awareness of the contemporary cultural digital-based environment.

Our reactions to the constantly changing cultural and social effects of the current environment and the associated different behaviours, the urge to stay connected etc., of the contemporary teenagers in the digital environment are sometimes limited to value judgement. Klein's article specifying three reasons for Instagram's harmfulness states that "the way Instagram works is changing how teens think, second, that it is the fault of the platform. And third, that it's bad." (2022) The statement that a social medium is "bad or good" is not its effect, but a subjective evaluation of its effects. Its users may not agree with, or even perceive the social medium as "bad or good".

Value judgement is a common reaction to the effects of any new environment that is a product of new technologies. People who grew up in text-based environments consider the current digital environment to be impoverishment to the previous one. The new environment is always considered to be inferior. Condemnation of the current environment by the older generation is a regular phenomenon; Socrates in Phaedrus considered the invention of writing to be the cause of the decline of education, and contemporary teachers believe that digital media have the same effect on students (Řeřicha and Práger 18).

In spite of their attitudes many children are enthusiastically learning history not from textbooks but from a digital medium, from computer games. Producing more attractive, visually – based textbooks is a misunderstanding of the current cultural digital environment. These new textbooks are certainly more

attractive than the history textbooks of the 20th century, but they cannot stand up to digital history games. The content of these digital games is an involving digital version of the dramatic oral legends of pre-alphabet cultures. The dramatic technology of oral narrative has become content of digital technology.

### **The case of BeReal**

Social media also react to itself. The social platform BeReal defines itself as the anti-Instagram. "At a random time each day, it sends out a notification to all its users and gives them exactly two minutes to drop everything and take a near-simultaneous pair of photos: a selfie from the front of the camera, to show your general vibe; and a snap facing outward, to show what you're up to." (Michael Sun, 2022)

BeReal, which profiles itself as "not another social network" has been failing to establish itself in the marketplace, much like the contemporary visually appealing history textbooks that are becoming nostalgic reminders of the previous text-based environment in the digital environment. The concept of the social medium Be Real does not respect the common denominators of social media. The speed of social media is dramatization of experience and they amplify the perception of physical reality. The fact that the speed of social media has the ability to amplify emotions is acknowledged by Klein writing in his critique of Instagram that (Instagram) supercharges (teenagers') need for approval of how they look and what they say and what they are doing ..., the countless role models/influencers are creating/establishing patterns of look, fashion, behaviour, lifestyle (2022).

BeReal wants to enhance the real identity but chooses the wrong medium to do so because the very technology of social media and its speed amplifies emotionality. The reasons for this are several and well known, instantaneousness, instant gratification and instant responses from social media combined with involving visuals prioritizing emotional reactions and the speed precluding a longer cognitive response. Maybe, BeReal has been wrong as a concept because Michael Sun (2022) "can't imagine anything more boring than confirming (one's) authenticity" several times a day .

A photograph placed on social media increases the sense of awareness of oneself. Photography on social networks has an unlimited audience and at the same time unlimited competition increasing the user's self-consciousness. BeReal couldn't make much headway because its premise did not respect the rules, the anti-Instagram wanted to be social media that ignored the basic means of social media success.

BeReal was a conception error. But the significance of errors is that they imply existence of the system, BeReal apparently did not understand the system of the digital technology. The pursuit of a "real identity" on social networks is futile because the nature of social media is to augment physical reality and emotions by technology.

A BeReal user thus again identifies with the established role of photographer, author and actor seeking instant three-layered gratification of taking the picture, uploading it and waiting for response. The user turns themselves into a product of social networks, similar to baking a cake, posting a photo of it on a social network and looking forward to the reaction. Although the product as a cake still has a fourth level of gratification.

BeReal cannot recreate the physical experience, but only continues the trend of finding ways to attract attention and moving the user's image to a social media platform.

Analyses of digital media and AI applications are often concerned with the effects, with perceivable consequences of the digital environment. Johann Hari (2022) writes that "we are living in a serious attention crisis". According to De Marcos in his article of 2020 attention has become a valuable resource



in the age of material-based economy shifting to attention economy. McLuhan in *Understanding Media* anticipated that "Attention has become commodity. Advertisers would gladly pay the reader, listener, or viewer directly for his time and attention if they knew how to do so." (1974, 228)

Hari's solution for the environment where young people seem "to be whirring at the speed of Snapchat and college students can "now only focus on any one task for 65 seconds" (2022) is to introduce a profound environmental change, specifically, limit the time spent with digital media. Neoluddism has been a nostalgic solution of an older digital technology user who was educated in the previous text-based environment. Hari sees digital technology as something that can be avoided. He does not realize that the issue is not stolen attention but "stolen", changed perception. Hari who suggests limiting digital media has something to go back to, to the text-based perception giving him the freedom of the "flow". But digital natives are denied this option because they do not understand, they are unable to perceive the previous technological environment. When Hari's article states that "there is no way we can have a normal brain today" he assumes a firm viewpoint which is the property of the text-based environment only. Cognitive degradation as a consequence of the "switch-cost effect", i.e. losing time while permanently refocusing, is a valued judgement, another term for a different perception, digital natives cannot have a permanent point of view, their perception being based on permanent emotional involvement. The permanent instant gratification achieved by the scrolling technique is without a context, syntax or logical narration. Hari's ideal is getting into flow by choosing one goal, "focusing in long effortless stretches". But the digital environment has no goal, no periphery and centre, no point of view.

### **Social media as a popular news source**

BeReal is an example of a greater fragmentation in the digital market where users visit different applications for different experiences, getting bored quickly is one of the effects of the new perception. In the long run, the content of electronic media is negligible compared to the cognitive changes of users. One of the observable effects of these changes is news viewing. Masterson quotes an Ofcom report (2022) that, for the first time, Instagram was the most popular news source among teenagers, used by 29% of them in 2022, while 28% used TikTok and YouTube. BBC One and BBC Two, previously the most popular news sources in this age group, were pushed down to fifth place.

Young people, and audiences more generally, want bitesize news they can fit into their busy schedule, "People get bored quickly. They don't want to be dragged on. News needs to be incredibly precise. ... If you sit down and watch BBC news, you'll probably hear 10 stories in a half-hour period, but you'd get that in five or 10 minutes on TikTok." (Sharma 2022)

Most teenagers don't watch the news on TV like older people. They keep up with current affairs while scrolling.

McLuhan accents that the content of any new technology is the previous technology. Each technology is an extension of physical or nervous system of a human being. The alphabet/text is an extension of memory. The content of the self-driving car technology is the horse as a means of human transport, the content of a film is a book or a theatre performance. The content of FB is holiday postcards, photo albums, telegrams. The content of digital games is a film or TV. The content of the TikTok social network is silent movie, comedy sketches that are emotionally enhanced by music (score) and graphics. TikTok is an example of rhythm made visual often digitally accelerated for deeper involvement.

Users are being continually primed for the new perception. The recent attempts to increase TikTok video speed is based on the expectation that digital environments have primed users for faster perception

and alternation of visual stimuli. A consequence of this new perception is not only the rejection of “slow” continuous perceptions such as reading a text or a newspaper article, but a compulsion to speed up physical reality.

### **New perception gives rise to new emotional needs**

Digital games are becoming TV series and TV series are becoming digital or even board games. A reviewer of the TV series *The Last of Us* based on a digital game complains about the absence of strong emotion missing in the TV series, specifically the absence of fear of death that he, as a player, experienced in the digital game: “They threw the player into chaos and by the nature of the videogame format left him fearing for his life because unlike a TV show, a game character can die. It is possible to fail, and all the more rewarding when the player moves on in the story. I miss that sense of fear and the joy of escaping almost certain death in the series.” (Zelenka, 2023)

There are two reasons for Zelenka’s disappointment. The difference between the emotional involvement aroused by film and digital play results from the different extensions of the nervous system of digital gamers. Authentic emotions when watching a movie relate to an external object. The effect of the movie is stronger than the effect of a novel, and the effect of the digital medium is stronger than that of the movie, because both are given another medium as “content.”

In the case of a digital game, the player’s nervous system is extended and transferred to the platform of the game and becomes fully controlled by the fast pace and dramatic narration of the game. McLuhan in a letter from 1951 writes that “The young today cannot follow narrative but they are alert to drama. They cannot bear description but they love landscape and action” (1987, 222).

The reviewer requires that the digital game environment mimic physical reality as much as possible in order to be able to fully identify with the game. This is also the goal of the developers. The borders between physical and digital reality begin to blur when Palmer Luckey starts developing a “VR Headset that kills you if you die in the game” (Ropek 2022) Palmer Luckey seemingly connects real life and an avatar, physical and digital reality, but it is a one-way transfer, externalizing the player’s nervous system and transferring it to the game platform, trying to maximize the player’s experience.

The problem is that when the game ends, the player crosses the borders returning to physical reality with a new perception, much like soldiers return from war with post-traumatic stress disorder. The experience of the game induces a state where the traumatic experience from the game cannot be integrated among other everyday experiences. Players who are returning from a virtual reality to a physical reality with a new perception will be puzzled and will find it difficult to navigate the physical reality, just as a pre-digital story – reader would have difficulties with the perception when navigating a digital game.

Similar to escapist literature, movies and TV shows, feel-good videogames are emerging offering “warm and/or light-hearted experiences that are sure to strike a chord with players craving a laid-back solo or even multiplayer gaming session.” (Kurten 2023)

Both, the action and feel-good games serve emotional needs of users and at the same time, like any technology (medium) or tool, change the user cognitively and perceptually. It is this change that is the real “content”, message of digital/video games. The return from the game to physical reality is often involuntary and it will be increasingly complicated because of the changing perception. The new perception acquired on digital platforms is creating new emotional needs. Players are returning to games because they are compelled to do so by their changed new perception, which is less and less adapted to physical reality but offers a much more intense experience in virtual reality. Users have had

this new perception imposed on themselves by the technologies of the digital environment, and because the new perception is a gateway to more intense experiences, to deeper involvement than the one available in physical reality, they have willingly accepted it as a natural learning process. Previous media such as text, cinema or theatre are not readable by this new perception, or only with a greater effort (therefore media like movies at least superficially imitate the social media). Physical reality cannot compete with digital game designers who – limited only by their own imagination – allow players to pursue their fantasies, albeit in virtual reality for now. They will create visual, auditory and other emotion-maximising perceptions and consequently emotions, as emotional response, full attention to auditory and visual stimuli is the desired goal of the social media.

The concept of game in the digital environment is based on the human faculty to imagine the impossible, on fantasy. McLuhan's article from 1978 reprinted in *The Handstand* in 2004 suggests that "The world of fantasy is an inner world whereas the world of dreams tends toward outer orientation and aspiration and deferred gratification. On the other hand fantasies are instant and are their own satisfaction." (McLuhan 2004)

Digital games could be classified by their percentage of fantasy content. Just as slapstick comedies are the content of the electronic environment of the TikTok social network, war movies and thrillers are translated into digital games. The instant gratification that is evident when playing digital games is directly proportional to the player's association with the fantasy role they choose in the game. These games may be based on juvenile illusory extensions of the players' physical and psychological abilities into imaginary environments but their satisfaction is authentic and their perception changed.

### **Any marginal area can become centre**

In a letter from 1960 McLuhan wrote that "with electronics any marginal area can become center, and marginal experiences can be had at any center." (1987, 278) He returned to this in January 1961 where he writes, "What our technology has done electrically, and will do with ever-increasing intensity, is to increase the flow of information in all directions and at all levels." (1987, 279).

In the current digital environment, we can describe a number of other effects confirming the shift from marginal areas to the centre. These effects act to transfer the user into a virtual environment where with the help of a headset they gain a more perfect "illusion" that they are actually being in the presence of others. The second effect is the transfer of digital events into physical reality, e.g. a transfer of a digital platform to movie theatres or contemporary fashion. Lauren Cochren (2022) describes " a small bag in the shape of a pigeon as a stunt, a meme come to life... Memes are now a formative part of public discourse."

### **Digital environment priming and changing perception**

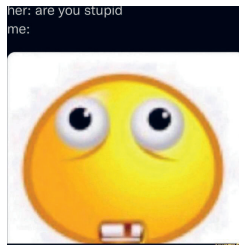
The term new perception refers to the perception that is definitively adapted to a medium, whether it be press, TV or digital technologies. This perception has been the subject of our paper. Some authors, such as Velasco and Obrist (2021), similarly argue that multisensory experiences are increasingly transformed by advances in technology. The sensory elements can be physical or digital. They describe the reality-virtuality continuum, the continuum can go from real though mixed reality (augmented reality) to fully virtual reality. The problem is that Velasco and Obrist consider senses to be stable, given and acted upon by different realities to create an experience.

Perceptual preferences are also noted in advertising (Truong, McCall and Kitchen, 2010), where customers prefer interactivity. The phase in which electronic devices only informed us has shifted to the phase of mutual communication between man and electronic machine. There is an agreement on consumers expecting an interactive and entertaining contents of advertising.

The expectation of interactive content is part of the new perception, we have learnt to change the reality (virtual) with the magic touch of our finger. Scrolling is a new literacy. The content of online newspapers and news sites is the obsolete medium of television, the online newspapers and news sites have been leading a lost battle similar to the modernized design of the present-day textbooks which would have been a miracle thirty years ago, at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In the present-day digital environment online newspapers and news webpages just superficially imitate the popular social media.

We interpret what we see and hear, or rather we perceive how we have been determined by media. That is also the reason why we do not perceive the impact of the media, only their effects. We perceive only what we have been predisposed or primed to by the media, we see low-definition icons that accelerate and create cognitive patterns. When we perceive an unknown reality, we associate it analogically with the perception acquired through the media. This makes it harder for social media users to accept the current physical world, which is slow and full of printed text. For today's teenagers, the world outside of digital media is uninviting and incomprehensible. When they leave the social media environment, they return to a contemporary physical reality that - to their new perception - is obsolete and irrelevant. For the older generations, whose perception has been determined by the technologies of the previous text-based environment, the contemporary digital environment is the future, a kind of science fiction.

The new perception includes visual, auditory, cognitive and tactile changes. Social media are more cool in the McLuhan sense; low-definition therefore inviting a higher participation of senses and a deeper involvement on the part of the user. They draw the user into their digital platforms, or in the case of TikTok, onto a digital floor of song and dance, because it is the spontaneously shared singing and dancing that creates complete emotional involvement with the user.



The meme above is a typical example of cool media, creating involvement by a pause, by a void, "me: silence". It has parallels in the pause in rhythm in jazz, in emojis, in TV, everywhere when you need to supplement the information, visual or auditory. Where silence is the answer, total involvement is created.

In the case of the social media based on visual and written communication, digital media that by definition amplify emotion and suppress narrative text force the user to communicate by emotional verbal expressions. Digital media have been making the printed word obsolete. The printed word, which separated itself from speech in the 15th century Europe, engaged only the eye. McLuhan writes in Guttenberg Galaxy: "When only eye is engaged, the multi-levelled gestures and resonances of Senecan oral tradition

are quite impertinent.” (103). Social media that are audio-tactile replace gestures by emojis and the resonances by a lexicon consisting of a few words graphically accenting emotional pronunciation, cf. *Noooooo, WILLLL, adorableeeee, moo* or its upside down version of *woo*, and frequent dramatic repetition, cf. *wow, wow, wow* etc.

In Guttenberg Galaxy McLuhan shows (103) that print eliminated the verbal pun, point, alliteration and aphorism from literature, however these emotion-enhancing stylistic devices have returned in memes retrieving literary tradition and confirming McLuhan’s repeated opinion that old media are always the content of the new environment. Puns, prints and metaphors are the basic expressive devices of the pictorial meme that is a product of the audio-tactile digital environment. The meme is cool, low-definition inviting higher effort of the users. Viewers have to make an effort to add the context thus increasing their involvement. McLuhan adds that it is “relevant to consider that the old prints and woodcuts, like the modern comic strip and comic book, provide very little data about any particular moment in time, or aspect in space, of an object. The viewer, or reader, is compelled to participate in completing and interpreting the few hints provided by the bounding lines.” (1974, 179) Unlike woodcuts the memes change while changing its audience who are also its authors. It is the perceptual and emotional enhancement that is the message of the new digital medium, the content, a verbal pun, point, alliteration and aphorism are from the viewpoint of perceptual and cognitive consequences immaterial.

“Why teach literacy,” asks McLuhan in his lecture on James Joyce and Television at Fordham University (1966), “when you can program the environment to have the psychic effect even without reading and writing. People respond to environment even if they do not respond to teaching.” The present-day environment of social networks based on visuals/clichés designed to have the greatest appeal to attract maximum attention and maximum emotions confirms his expectations.

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Věra Tauchmanová jr.

## Features of propaganda in London-based Czechoslovak Exile Government during the Second World War

*Abstract: The London-based Czechoslovak exile government's radio broadcast was during the Second World War a very important source of information about the real situation in the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia. Concerning it to be a part of the resistance, the Protectorate government banned listening to foreign radio stations and clearly claimed that those who would listen to foreign radio stations would be sentenced to jail or to death. The aim of this paper is to provide characteristic features of the propaganda of the BBC radio station and to provide reflections on the theory of seven secrets of propaganda success by A. J. Mackenzie which were presented in his publication Propaganda Boom. Reports which informed about five specific events that occurred during the Second World War were analysed – The arrival of Reinhard Heydrich in Prague, the Assassination of Reinhard Heydrich, the Battle of Sokolovo, Moravian-Ostrava Offensive and the Prague Uprising. The aim of this analytical research was to find out whether the BBC broadcasters observed or did not observe all the maxims the maxims. If all the maxims are observed, it can be claimed that the propaganda was successful.*

### Introduction

*Do not lose heart, endure a new wave of violence and remain faithful to the legacy of the great Tomáš Masaryk. Do not forget the banner that President Edvard Beneš and his colleagues have raised in our free country. The hour of liberation is approaching. Your tragedy has opened the eyes of the whole world and the world is bound to correct the wrong that has happened to you. The English Labour Party has adopted the principle of restoring Czechoslovakia and the freedom of the Czechoslovak State.*

This speech told by Josef Kosina, the secretary of the Czechoslovak Trade Union Congress, was broadcasted from London in September 1939, twelve years after the British Broadcasting Company (the BBC) was officially established by the Royal Charter. In the very same month the Second World War started.

It was pretty clear in 1920s and in 1930s that electronic media were becoming more and more powerful and authorities considered them to be a decisive means of propaganda. It was then no surprise that after the establishment of the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia and hence the establishment of the Czechoslovak Government-in-exile in London, the authorities wanted to spread news via media and for this purpose, the BBC radio broadcasting programme in the Czech language was chosen and established. Being given an exact period of time to broadcast every day, members of the Government presented their agenda abroad, their point of view of the Second World War and the situation in Europe, but most of all, they were constantly trying to give people hope that better days will come and that the Czechoslovak Republic will be re-established very soon. Similarly to the report in the introduction to this paper, there were two people seen as the greatest Czechoslovak men ever born – Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk, the first President of Czechoslovakia, and Edvard Beneš, the second President of Czechoslovakia (who returned into the office after the end of the Second World War).

After the Second World War, the members of the Czechoslovak Government-in-exile were celebrated as heroes, however, in the period between the years 1948 and 1989 when communists had the power of the country, they were criticised, some of them were even imprisoned and some are claimed to have

died because of the persecution of the communist regime. The main reason for this was without a question the fact that in the war years, they cooperated with the United Kingdom and not with the Soviet Union (moreover, they presented their critical opinion on the Soviet Union and concerns about their position and power in the post-war Europe). Their broadcasts vanished from our history for more than forty years. Both recordings and their transcripts were hidden in the archives. Even though the files are now accessible in the building of the Czech Radio in Prague, they had not been given any attention before the author of the submitted paper chose them as the subject of her research.

This paper examines how the Czechoslovak Government-in-exile worked with propaganda by answering the questions on how and whether the seven maxims of propaganda proposed by a pre-war propaganda theoretician A. J. Mackenzie.

## **Theoretical framework**

### **Media in the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia**

To understand how people could listen to the BBC radio broadcasting, it is necessary to present the system of media in the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia.

The number of more than forty newspapers published daily pre-war was reduced to eight – these eight legal daily newspapers included propagandistic content and only journalists collaborating with the Nazis could have published their articles. Everything which was published in legal media was the subject of censorship. Several institutions were established at the beginning of the Second World War, namely *Central Censorship Commission*, *Press Department of the Presidium of the Council of Ministers*. The guidelines and code of ethics for journalists were published in the document *Collective Overview of the Directives for Press Inspection*. (Köpplová, 2003)

Contrary to legal newspapers, Resistance groups did their best to keep people informed about their activities and therefore, illegal media were published. As their content provided people with information about resistance activities and information about the exile government's activities, being involved in their production, distribution and perception was banned by the Protectorate government and consequently, those would have been involved in any of the above mentioned activities, would have been sentenced to death. (Končelík, Orság, Večeřa, 2010)

Reaching people was without any question the most challenging for the third group of media, the exile media. Journalists and other people involved in the production of media content with their centres in London (namely London's exile government) and Moscow (namely members of the communist resistance) were well aware of the fact that it was impossible to transport paper media from abroad which meant that the radio was the main means of exile media. We can claim that for Nazis, the thought of people listening to information from abroad was more threatening than having access to illegal media – with the ongoing war years when the Third Reich became losing more and more, legal media did not stop with their attempts to make people believe that Germany would win. Contrarily to this, exile media told them that the Allies were on the verge to reach the victory. (Červinka, 2002)

Regulation measures of listening to foreign radio stations claimed the following points:

- 1) Those who would listen to foreign radio stations would be sentenced to jail or death and those spreading information received from the broadcast would be punished equally;
- 2) Short wave listening components (foreign radios broadcasted on short waves) had to be removed from radio receivers). (Köpplová, 2003)



## BBC Radio Broadcasting

It did not take more than five days after the shots of the Second World War to launch the broadcasting in Czech language. On September 6, 1989, the audience could hear the transmission of the Morse Code of letter V, standing for victory, for the first. During the Second World War, the time the BBC devoted to broadcasting in the Czech language varied from three fifteen-minute blocks in 1939 and 1940 to six fifteen-minute blocks since 1941. (Hrdlička, 2003)

Both journalists by profession and politicians became voices of this station; this was pretty obvious as journalists by profession were used to codes of ethics from pre-war times, while politicians from time to time left their diplomatic position behind and became sometimes even too open and frank in terms of their visions and opinions about who should have been punished for atrocities. (Singleton, 1943)

Josef Kosina as the head of the Advisory Committee was constantly highlighting two points of BBC broadcasting – both of them are connected to A. J. Mackenzie's principles of propaganda on which this paper is methodologically based. Kosina claimed that people in the Protectorate hear more than enough lies from the official media and consequently, what they deserve is true and nothing but true information. Whether all the information were true will be one of the subject of the research. The second one is connected to the appropriate timing – Kosina insisted that the BBC radio should be the first informer mainly if something bad happened and that the audience would hear about potentially negative events from the BBC first. (Kocourek, 2013)

The BBC broadcasting had to follow the guidelines of the British wartime propaganda issued by their Ministry of Information, emphasizing three leading principles:

- 1) Call to Arms, to Effort, to Self Sacrifice;
- 2) What is at Stake;
- 3) The Way to Victory. (Kocourek, 2013)

Even though there are *three* basic principles, they are all connected to the vision of the victory and to giving up everything, even one's life, for it.

## Propaganda

The way how our society perceives the term of propaganda is ambivalent. Some regard it as a negative term, mainly due to the fact that totalitarian regimes used propaganda to achieve their goals, frequently harmful for people. On the other hand, propaganda can help to make people believe in something which might be helpful for them and for the rest of the society. (Jirák, Köpplová, 2009)

From various types of division of propaganda, the one of Oliver Thompson's can be presented in the theoretical part of this study as all types can be anticipated to be present in the propaganda of the Second World War:

- 1) political (to gain and keep political power);
- 2) economic (to sell more products);
- 3) military (to demoralize enemy and to encourage soldiers);
- 4) diplomatic (to make people love friends and hate enemies);
- 5) didactic (to educate people);
- 6) religious (to spread ideology);
- 7) escapist (to divert people's attention). (Thompson, 1999)

In the war, there are two sides fighting against each other, there are friends and enemies. Consequently, the world is seen only as black or white. The propaganda divides the world into two parts: *our world* and *the world of others*. *Our world* is considered to have only good qualities and it has to face the threat of inhumane and barbaric creatures who want to destroy it. *The world of the others* is full of enemies against whom it is necessary to mobilize one's hatred. (Welch, 2018)

It was A. J. Mackenzie, a theorist of propaganda, who defined seven maxims that must be followed so that propaganda could be considered successful:

- 1) Repetition – the information should be repeated as frequently as possible;
- 2) colour – the specific attention paid to the components of the message;
- 3) kernel of truth – the core of the information must be based on true and credible facts;
- 4) slogan – the motto which makes people understand what is significant;
- 5) specific objective – something which needs to be set;
- 6) concealment of the motive – something to conceal that audiences are manipulated;
- 7) timing – spacing out the appeals at definite intervals of time. (Mackenzie, 1938)

### **Methodology – Qualitative research analysis**

The method which the author of the thesis has chosen to reach valid conclusions was qualitative analysis, being divided into two parts – data collection and data analysis.

Selected data providing qualitative reflections were collected in the Archive of the Czech Radio in Prague. For the reason that not all recordings are available to be accessed, the author took the transcriptions of the radio broadcasts as the source. In order to have a general overview of the broadcasts, their structure and their message, the author started with reading the transcripts of the very first broadcasts from the beginning of the war and the BBC wartime broadcasting itself. As the next step of the data collections, only broadcasts connected to the analysed events were chosen:

- 1) *Reinhard Heydrich's arrival in Prague and the first martial law (September 27, 1941 and the reports which appeared within one-month period);*
- 2) *Reinhard Heydrich's assassination (May 27, 1942 and the reports which appeared within one-month period);*
- 3) *the Battle of Sokolovo (the reports appearing from the starting point of the event until its end);*
- 4) *the Moravian-Ostrava Offensive (the reports appearing from the starting point of the event until its end);*
- 5) *the end of the Second World War in Europe – Prague Offensive (the reports appearing from the starting point of the event until its end).*

The process of the analysis was structured in order to give the general picture of the BBC propaganda. To establish how it was worked with, the seven maxims of successful propaganda proposed by A. J. Mackenzie were asked:

- Did the BBC broadcasts work with repetition?;*
- Did the BBC broadcasts work with colour?;*
- Did the BBC broadcasts work with the kernel of truth?;*
- Did the BBC broadcasts build their propaganda around a slogan?;*
- Were the BBC broadcasts directed toward a specific objective?;*
- Did the BBC broadcasts conceal motives?;*
- Did the BBC broadcasts use appropriate timing?. (Mackenzie, 1938)*

## Data analysis

### Maxim no. 1: Did the BBC broadcasts work with repetition?

It was no later than the seventh day of the War when Jan Masaryk, the Foreign Minister, expressed his belief that the victory of the Allies would come. We can observe the connection between the repetition and the timing as the conviction of the victory was emphasized mainly on the day which were in a certain way significant for the nation as festive days or March 15, the day when the beginning of the Nazi occupation back in 1938 was commemorated. Not only explicitly, but also implicitly were Czechoslovak people reminded that the victory would come as the members of the Czechoslovak Government-in-exile were revealing their activities planned for the time period after returning to their homeland.

Another feature of the broadcast were calls for moral and physical fight. The calls were changing in their character during the war. At the beginning of the global conflict, the members of the Czechoslovak Government-in-exile presented themselves as someone who is involved in active fighting.

#### examples from the broadcasting:

The usage of pronouns derived from the personal pronoun "we" were indicating that audience and members of the Government-in-exile belonged to the same group:

*The freedom is of our state! This is our goal, this is what we will fight for. And if it is necessary, we will die for it! (1)*

*Victory is ours! (2)*

*Fight against your enemy! (3)*

### Maxim no. 2: Did the BBC broadcasts work with colour?

From the structure of the broadcasts, it can be observed that the government paid a significant attention to the colour of the broadcasts. The opinions expressed were supported by quotes of respected personalities, comparisons with and reflections on events from the history were made. The work with colour was the apparent when the enemies – Nazis – were depicted. One may how Germans who were not SS members or Adolf Hitler's supporters were depicted. The broadcasters considered all people who lived at that time or had lived before in the area of the Third Reich to be the same and presented it in the way that all Germans are Nazis as there are too many similarities which they share with them. The negative depiction was present in the broadcasts in which respected personalities and their warnings against Nazis were quoted. The events from the past which showed the cruelty of Germans were remembered. To conclude this paragraph, the aim of working with colour was to throw negative light on Germans.

#### examples from the broadcasting:

The work with colour can be demonstrated on the example of the following broadcast from the period of the battle of Sokolovo when in the report from April 2, the date of beginning of the Nazi occupation, March 15, 1939, was commemorated. The last victory of the Third Reich on East was described as it was covering the oncoming collapse of the German front. They were covering something – the same what they did while occupying the Czechoslovak Republic.

*The acts of the Germans surpass in moral perversity all their crimes against humanity and international law. (4)*

*The unhappy date of 15th March will remain an outstanding milestone not only in the history of our nation or of the Czechoslovak Republic, but also in the history of this war. The commemoration of the Czechoslovak Republic and the brutal occupation of the Czech lands opened the eye of the whole world. It showed beyond all doubt that Hitler's action at Munich was merely a pharisaical concealment of the true aims of Nazi imperialism which were laid completely here on the occupation of the Czech lands. The Germans announced the capture of Kharkov to the sound of fanfares. But they did not disclose the high price which they had to pay for that success. If we look at the events at Kharkov in the clear light of facts, without misleading impressions and illusions, then it is soon that the German success is the outcome of an extremely hazardous and fundamentally defensive effort which is aimed at averting the collapse of the whole German front in the East. (5)*

One more example of working the colour is persuading the people that stay always should stay together in unity:

*The Government calls all Czechoslovak patriots to stand firmly by one another, to help one another in danger and to swear everyone who should violate the nation's honour. (6)*

*We call upon all citizens of Prague, all Czech people, to unite in fight, to help with all their powers the fighting patriots. (7)*

### **Maxim no. 3: Did the BBC broadcasts work with the kernel of truth?**

In the BBC broadcasts, people were told by the members of the Government-in-exile themselves to be careful what to believe and what not to believe. They kept their promise and told people the truth with only one exception – Heydrich's assassination. These days, everyone knows that the government actually had organized the assassination. Opposed to this fact, it was denied in the broadcasting that the Government-in-exile were anyhow involved in the assassination.

### **Maxim no. 4: Did the BBC broadcasts build their propaganda around a slogan?**

It may be a subject to discussion whether slogans actually appeared in the broadcasting during the Second World War. Exclamation sentences could have been observed in the broadcasting (as presented among examples in maxim no. 1) but in the author's opinion, none of them could be considered as a slogan.

### **Maxim no. 5: Were the BBC broadcasts directed toward a specific objective?**

Two specific objectives towards which the BBC broadcasts were directed were found in the broadcasts – making people active in their fight for freedom, while being persuaded that lives of individuals are not as important as lives of the nation and nation and therefore, risking one's own life is always worth it. The level of persuasion increased after the assassination of Reinhard Heydrich. The second objective was the constant rising of hatred towards the Germans and the Nazis.

#### examples from the broadcasting:

In 1940, people were urged to think about the future and to put it on air as the future was claimed to be supreme.

*Sacrifices are the best investment into the future. (8)*

The call for fight reached the climax of intensity and pressure at the end of the war:

*We call upon citizens of Prague, all Czech people, to unite in fight, to help with all their powers the fighting patriots. (9)*

In the final broadcasts of the war, the hatred towards Germans and the call for arms were blended:

*Go on killing the Germans! Death to the Germans! The Germans will be bloodily defeated! (10)*

#### **Maxim no. 6: Did the BBC broadcasts conceal motives?**

The Czechoslovak Government-in-exile wanted to persuade the audience that everything presented was true and right and that they were open about all presented issues. Manipulation was declared as being refused, even though we later learned the truth about the background of the assassination of Reinhard Heydrich.

example from the broadcasting:

Since Adolf Hitler and his party's rise to power, the impact on propagandistic efforts was unquestionable. To show how different the members of the Czechoslovak Government-in-exile, they openly refused they would use propaganda to influence other people's attitudes and opinions.

*The Czechoslovak Government-in-exile do not manipulate people. London does not make any propagandistic efforts. (11)*

#### **Maxim no. 7: Did the BBC broadcasts use appropriate timing?**

As it has been already mentioned, people were repeated to do anything which would bring back the better past on the days which were somehow important for the nation. Commemoration of sad events or birthdays and death dates of significant Czechoslovak personalities. There was better timing concerning the broadcasts of the events which were somehow linked with the Czechoslovak Government-in-exile; the timing substantially depended on the amount of the news delivered from the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia to London.

examples from the broadcasting:

When something alarming occurred, the broadcasting was more targeted at the emotions of the audience. The arrival of Reinhard Heydrich was assessed as a situation the consequences of which were estimated to be tragic.

*You are to be still more ruthlessly robbed of your property, still more cruelly compelled to work for the benefit of your slave-drivers, still more maliciously murdered, still more foully humiliated in your human dignity. (12)*

During the final fights in Prague, the Czechoslovak Government-in-exile made it clear that they wanted to have the power to rule Czechoslovakia when the Second World War is over.

*We call to the Czech people to rise in order to finish off once and for all the rule of the enemy and to return the management of our affairs into our own hands. (13)*

## Conclusion

We can state the BBC broadcasts observed six out of seven maxims listed in the theoretical part of the thesis. The most apparent feature of the broadcasting was the repetition (maxim no. 1) and the direction of the broadcasting to specific objective (maxim no. 5). Principally, the audience was constantly addressed and reminded what to think of certain issues, what to do and how to behave. Simultaneously, the audience was repeatedly reminded of the forthcoming victory. These two maxims were tightly connected and appeared from the very beginning to the very end of the Second World War.

In the introduction to this paper, it was stated that the propagandistic efforts of the BBC broadcasting will be considered successful if all maxims were observed. After the analysis, the author of this paper would like to highlight that she realized that it is not necessary for propagandistic efforts to be regarded successful to follow all seven maxims. Considering the impact the BBC broadcasting had on the audience and the hope and strength the audience were given, it can be considered successful, even though the propaganda was not built around a slogan.

From the seven types of propaganda as proposed by Oliver Thompson, military, rational and diplomatic propaganda were observed. The enemy was demoralized and soldiers and civilians were being encouraged. The broadcasts were based on real facts and differences between friends and enemies were repeatedly stressed.

The contemporary theoretician of propaganda Nicholas O'Shaughnessy claimed: "In the twentieth century also emerged a recognition that public opinion could be commodified, brought and sold." (O'Shaughnessy, 2012) The author sees this as a typical feature of propaganda of totalitarian regimes. This can be regarded as evidence that the regime which the BBC broadcasts of the Czechoslovak Government-in-exile supported was not a totalitarian one as it was not primarily focused on forming public opinion but more likely on supporting people and giving them hope. Still, some features of commodifying public opinion could be observed, mainly in terms of the people's opinion on the Germans.

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## Luring Back the Red Wall: Examining Keir Starmer's Discourse Strategies to Regain Labour's Heartlands after 2019

*Abstract: In 2019, the Labour Party suffered the worst election defeat since 1935, with the “Red Wall” constituencies in the Midlands and the North taken over by Boris Johnson’s Tories. Among other things, the loss was blamed on Labour’s excessive focus on issues popular with the progressive metropolitan electorate rather than the traditional working-class communities from left-behind regions. In order to re-engage the disaffected voters, the new Labour leader Keir Starmer faced the necessity of emphasizing policies and issues favoured by an essentially socially conservative electorate. Using the method of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and drawing on a variety of political speeches and news broadcasts, the paper examines Keir Starmer’s rhetoric aimed at reclaiming the lost Labour voters, even at the cost of contradicting his previous attitudes or potentially alienating the younger and more liberal part of Labour’s supporters.*

### Introduction

Since 2010, a string of Conservative governments have held power in the United Kingdom, most of them wedded to the agenda of cuts to public services and welfare expenditures. The pursuit of austerity measures, only temporarily interrupted by a number of job-saving policies during the pandemic, has resulted in a dramatic rise in poverty, including child poverty. In addition, homelessness has skyrocketed, and food banks, a rare sight before 2010, have mushroomed all across the country (Tihelková 2019, 35).

The dire social situation has presented the opposition Labour Party with a rare opportunity to reclaim power and reverse the essentially neoliberal policies pursued by the Conservatives. However, in December 2019, Labour, led by Jeremy Corbyn, suffered the worst election defeat since 1935. It involved a major loss of the so-called Red Wall seats in the North of England and the Midlands, traditionally considered the party’s loyal heartlands. In contrast, Boris Johnson’s Conservatives gained an eighty-seat majority and, unexpectedly, attracted more working-class than middle-class voters, with the plainly articulated pledges to “level up” and “get Brexit done” resonating among the communities disempowered by years of deindustrialization, infrastructural underinvestment, and social deprivation at the expense of the thriving South (Perrigo 2019).

The election defeat resulted in the resignation of Jeremy Corbyn, perceived by many as too left-wing and unpatriotic compared to the forward-looking, flag-waving Johnson. He was replaced with the more mainstream character of Keir Starmer, a knighted barrister and former Director of Public Prosecution with working-class roots and a markedly centrist (some even suggesting Blairite) idea of Labour’s mission. Upon taking office, Starmer pledged to reclaim the lost Red Wall voters. Addressing a Labour conference in September 2020, he said, “To those people in Doncaster and Deeside, in Glasgow and Grimsby, in Stoke and in Stevenage, to those who have turned away from Labour, I say this: we hear you. I ask you: take another look at Labour. We’re under new leadership; we love this country as you do” (Walker 2020).

This appeared to be a position that resonated with many Labour members; according to a YouGov poll conducted in January 2020, fifty percent of the party believed that having a sense of patriotism was important in their leader. However, the Labour Party has traditionally had a complex relationship with patriotism due to its diverse supporter base, and making productive use of the patriotic message posed a clear challenge to Starmer (Malik 2020).



## Paper aim and methodology

The paper aims to deliver a critical examination of Keir Starmer's rhetoric intended to reclaim the former Labour heartlands that fell to the Conservatives during the 2019 election. In particular, it seeks to identify and analyze those themes and strategies that target specifically the attitudes and values (whether real or assumed) of the disaffected traditional voters, even at the cost of contradicting Starmer's own long-held political beliefs.

The source material for the analysis comprises a corpus of Starmer's speeches (ten in total) and media appearances from the years 2019-2023, complemented with news coverage, sociological reports, and academic papers. Starmer's rhetoric is analyzed from the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) perspective. Pioneered by Norman Fairclough, CDA is an interdisciplinary research method for critically describing and interpreting spoken or written language in relation to its social context. According to Kramer, CDA is a system that examines discrete portions of language with a specific socio-historical context "with an aim of providing a multi-layered analysis of how the language operates communicate surface level language as well as underlying dynamics of interpersonal relations, cultural traces, institutional influences, and ultimately power" (Kramer 2007).

The analysis is conducted on a qualitative basis, the aim being to uncover the persuasive strategies employed by the Labour leader to regain the trust of the lost voters. The analysis is divided into three parts, each of them focusing on one strategy by means of which Starmer seeks to attract the target voter group. In line with the principles of CDA, a critical evaluation is carried out for each strategy to assess its efficacy and/or potential weaknesses. To provide some context to the issues currently faced by the Labour Party, a brief historical outline is also included.

## Historical background

Since its very birth, the Labour Party had the reputation of a "broad church", comprising both working- and middle-class supporters through "affiliated organizations: trade unions, socialist societies, trades councils, women's associations, professional groups and, from 1918, constituency parties and co-operative societies" (Worley 2009, 1). The majority of its supporters were of a working-class background. Concentrated in trade unions, they were conservative in their political outlook and had no overwhelming desire for a socialist revolution, focusing instead on the improvement of the working and living conditions of their class. On the other hand, the Independent Labour Party and the socialist societies had largely middle-class members who regarded Socialism as a political priority and sought to put it on the parliamentary agenda. Contrary to the conservative and patriotic working class, they also showed more liberal and internationalist leanings. Therefore, the seeds of two competing visions for the Labour Party were already present in the early years of its existence. Despite this, a compromise concept for the Labour Party was found, one based on the redistribution of wealth and accentuation of decent conditions for Britain's working class, rather than on a Bolshevik-style revolutionary ideology. The moderate, "bread-and-butter" Socialism was what was typical of the Labour Party for the subsequent decades. "Across its diverse currents," historian Matthew Worley writes, "Labour has successfully maintained its position as the principal alternative to Conservatism in Britain for nearly a hundred years" (Worley 2009, 1).

Representing the culmination of the post-war economic growth, the affluence of the Sixties brought an increased individualism and dissolution of collective identities as working-class families sought to pursue more middle-class lifestyles. The weakening of the social fabric accelerated during the Thatcher

era, which witnessed the disintegration of post-war consensus politics, the dismantling of trade union power, and the onset of neoliberal policies. The Thatcher revolution left the Labour Party in a political wilderness for over a decade until Tony Blair's New Labour project saw the party return to power in 1997.

Under Blair, Labour moved towards an acceptance of the capitalist state and the embrace of globalization as an economic and social force. Unlike Old Labour, traditionally patriotic and cautious about immigration for fear of upsetting working-class communities concerned about employment and housing, New Labour welcomed the free movement of people, an attitude that materialized in one of the largest immigration waves in modern British history (Watt and Wintour 2015). In addition, the prevailing social conservatism of Old Labour gave way to more liberal attitudes as Labour was transforming into a party of metropolitan middle-class voters. While the traditional working-class base demanded that the party be "willing to conserve community and industry", the middle-class supporters' priority was that the Party should be "liberal and open-minded" (Savage 2018). The changes gave rise to claims that Labour was drifting too far away from its original purpose, leading the *Guardian* columnist Christ Bickerton to remark that "as a party of working-class self-representation, Labour is already dead" (Bickerton 2019).

The 2019 election revealed the true depth of the disconnection between Labour's course and its traditional voters. Although Jeremy Corbyn could boast a long history of activism on issues such as austerity, poverty, job insecurity, or affordable housing, voters in the Red Wall constituencies and other Labour heartlands tended to perceive him as unpatriotic, lacking in a positive vision for Britain and being inconsistent on Brexit (despite being widely known as a lifelong eurosceptic, he campaigned for Remain). As noted by Professor Darren Lilleker of Bournemouth University,

Corbyn's consistent questioning of UK foreign policy allowed an image to be promulgated of him as opposing the national interest. This included his open anti-nationalism, open opposition to most instances of military intervention, and the proposing talks, however unlikely that option. The working class voters reference many of these principled stances Corbyn adopted as signs of his inability to lead Britain. Britain, to those voters, is a strong and decisive nation. It attacks enemies, it is the country that 'won' the Second World War, 'Britannia rules the waves', this jingoism which is embedded in British culture, jars with Corbyn's pacifist political character (Lilleker 2019).

The perceived lack of patriotism, together with the poor handling of the Brexit issue (regarded by many as a betrayal of the working-class vote) drove voters away from Corbyn. Furthermore, as noted by Bickerton, the Labour voter base became even more narrow, with Labour increasingly becoming a party of young, middle-class southerners, London, and university cities (Bickerton 2019). As Boris Johnson was making inroads into the dissatisfied electorate with his simple patriotic message tinged with a sense of rebelliousness against the stale establishment, the new Labour leader Keir Starmer pledged to regain the lost votes, putting to use strategies identified and examined in the following section.

## **Starmer's strategies to reclaim the lost Labour voters**

### **Adopting an anti-establishment stance**

Part of Boris Johnson's populist appeal to voters was rooted in his ability to market himself as a political daredevil defying the rigid political order with non-elitist simplicity and a kind of mischievous irreverence. By honing this image, Johnson was deliberately tapping into the rising demand for a leader with the

qualities of a political outsider stemming from the growing public disillusionment with mainstream politics. Not limited to Conservative Party supporters, this sentiment was also widespread among the Labour electorate. As noted by economist Adrian Pabst, author of *Postliberal Politics – The Coming Era of Renewal*, there was an anticipation of a new social theory to form a new social order as “the legacy of Max Weber and Beatrice and Sidney Webb – bureaucracy for progress – has morphed in our time into a horrible alliance of big government, big business and big media” (Kruger 2021).

In response to the public appetite for anti-system approaches, Starmer, despite his reputation as a man of caution, has made an effort to distance himself from the Westminster establishment in his public proclamations. He openly identified with the 1960s Labour Prime Minister Harold Wilson, who had famously maintained that the energies of blue and white-collar workers were being “held back by an incompetent elite that only controlled company board rooms because of privileged family connections” (Fielding 2020). Speaking in a similar vein to Labour Party members at University College London’s innovation and technology campus, Starmer made the following statement:

No more sticking plaster politics. No more Westminster hoarding power. Britain can be run in the interests of working people. ... That’s why I came into politics eight years ago. A new way to serve. A new way to get things done. More opportunities to change our country for the better. But I have to say – I haven’t found much of that in Westminster. Yes, there are good people of course – many MPs share my determination to tackle Britain’s problems quickly. But as a system – it doesn’t work. Nothing has changed, but the circus moves on (Starmer 2023).

In his speech, Starmer positions himself as standing outside the Westminster bubble, sharing a platform with ordinary voters. The impression he seeks to make is that he has gained his distance from the Westminster “circus” by first being part of it, only to find it inefficient and working against the voters’ needs. Such a position corresponds to the role of a “maverick” as defined by Robert Barr, a US political scientist. Barr describes a maverick as an individual who has risen to prominence within an established party but then abandons it to run as an independent or seeks to reshape the party radically (Barr 2009, 34). The radical reshaping of the party is one of Starmer’s pledges; for example, in an interview for *Financial Times*, he declared that he would “turn the Labour Party inside out” (Parker 2021), a claim he has made repeatedly.

Starmer also appeals to traditional Labour voters by emphasizing his working-class roots while downplaying his prestigious education and legal career. For instance, in his speech delivered to the Trade Union Congress on 20 October 2021, he spoke of the class prejudice faced by his blue-collar father: “despite being a skilled toolmaker throughout his working life, my dad thought people looked down on him because he worked on the factory floor. He was right about that” (Rogers 2021). The “them and us” dichotomy applied to his background serves to create even more distance from the inefficient establishment and give reassurance of solidarity with ordinary workers.

For all his efforts to strike a nonconformist note, there is little evidence of anti-establishmentism in Starmer’s actual conduct; on the contrary, many of his proclamations contradict his professed grassroots sentiment. Thus, for instance, in an interview with BBC’s Emily Maitlis, Starmer declared: “Westminster is too constrained. Once you get out of Westminster, whether it’s Davos or anywhere else, you actually engage with people that you can see working with in the future.” (Steerpike 2023). His openly declared affinity to the Davos elites, which drew criticism not only from Labour Party faithfuls but also from right-leaning commentators, such as Steerpike of the *Spectator* magazine, stands in contrast to his projected image of the champion of the underdog.

An even more conspicuous example of the discrepancy between Starmer's proclaimed loyalty to the "working people" and his real actions is his refusal to support striking trade unions. In 2022, amidst soaring inflation and the cost of living, the UK was swept by a series of industrial actions, most notably by railway workers, but also bus drivers, postal workers, NHS staff, and other occupations. While the former Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn readily joined the picket line in solidarity with the striking workers, Starmer repeatedly refused to lend his support. When confronted by BBC Radio Sheffield on the issue, he said, "No, I don't think the job of the leader of the Labour party ... my job is to get Labour into government and to be the prime minister" (Weaver 2022). Given the fact that the origins of the Labour Party are rooted in the trade union movement and the two forces have been intertwined for much of Britain's modern history, Starmer's stance surprised many. Hilary Schan of Momentum, a Labour grassroots group, declared that Starmer's comments "fly in the face of Labour principles, party democracy and the public's position" (Weaver 2022). However strong her claim, Starmer's reluctance to take the side of the hard-pressed workers (possibly motivated by his prime ministerial aspirations) does raise questions about the genuineness of his "them and us" position adopted to appeal to Labour's traditional voters.

### **Doubling down on patriotism and traditional values**

In terms of social and policy issues, Red Wall residents and traditional Labour voters in general are widely assumed to be patriotic, proud of English identity, and resistant to the ideas and policies that attract socially liberal voters, such as green and cultural issues. Dominic Cummings, Boris Johnson's former advisor, famously remarked that climate change "didn't matter to people in Red Wall seats," and was instead "just an obsession of posh boys in southern seats" (English 2023). Similarly, Professor Matthew Goodwin has argued that Red Wall voters were wooed by Boris Johnson's appeals on "family, nation, tradition, and established ways of life" (English 2023). In the 2019 election campaign, these sentiments were amply exploited by Boris Johnson in his patriotic appeals to Britain's greatness and promising future despite the existing struggles in the wake of the Brexit referendum and covid crisis. To boost his popularity with Red Wall voters, Starmer has borrowed heavily from Johnson, seeking to strike a radically different note from the allegedly unpatriotic Jeremy Corbyn. In a speech delivered on 4 January 2022, he declared, "Today, I want to do something that leaders of the opposition rarely do. I want to celebrate the country we live in. ( ... ) Think of all that the British have to be proud of. The rule of law. Her Majesty the Queen" (Keir Starmer's Speech Setting Out the Contract 2022). Starmer's accentuation of Britain's greatness and the value of the monarchy stands in contrast to Corbyn's anti-monarchism and critical appraisal of the country's imperial past. Some of Starmer's statements, fairly untypical for Labour discourse, seem almost copied from Boris Johnson's vocabulary, such as when he declares that "the best of British is the best in the world" ("Keir Starmer's Speech on Labour's Mission 2022). Another of Starmer's strategies to reclaim traditional Labour voters is placing added emphasis on the role of the family. Starmer's predecessor Jeremy Corbyn paid the institution of the family no great attention unless referring to families living in poverty or facing other social hardships (Samuels 2016). Many working-class voters regarded Corbyn as too "woke", with some expressing a willingness to vote for Starmer if he showed himself to be on the side of traditional values (Guttridge 2023). In response, Starmer has made an increased effort to present himself as a family man. His official profile on the Labour Party's website opens with the words "Keir Starmer is a husband, father, and former lawyer who has fought for fairness his whole working life. He is now leader of the Labour Party of Great Britain" ("Introducing Our Leader Keir Starmer 2023"). In

presenting himself to voters, his family identity is given precedence to any other professional or political credentials. Similarly, in a speech of 22 September 2020, Starmer reassured his audience:

Family values mean the world to me. I was lucky enough to grow up in a loving family and I have the great joy now of a family of my own. The mission of the Labour Party I lead is to extend that same opportunity to everyone. And my vision for Britain is simple: I want this to be the best country to grow up in and the best country to grow old in. A country in which we put family first. A country that embodies the values I hold dear (“Full Text of Keir Starmer’s Speech at Labour Connected”).

Despite the general perception of Red Wall voters being staunchly socially conservative, a recent YouGov poll conducted among them has challenged this assumption, concluding that instead of being a bastion of social conservatism, the constituencies in the North and Midlands contain a considerable diversity of opinions and widespread support for a number of progressive policies and opinions (English 2023). Questioning Red Wall respondents on several topics such as immigration, multiculturalism, climate change, or trans rights, the YouGov poll found, with the exception of Brexit, no great differences of opinion from other UK regions:

Furthermore, there is nothing in our data to suggest that Red Wall voters are particularly socially conservative or especially concerned about progressive policies or social movements. In the majority of cases, we found more support for socially liberal attitudes than conservative attitudes, and where we did find support for socially conservative positions, this was not particularly out of step with the British population as a whole. They are patriotic, but so are the majority of Brits. They are concerned with a perceived decline in “British values”, but no more so than the national average. The Red Wall, it seems, is much more typical of British politics and British social attitudes than an extreme (English 2023).

It seems, therefore, that suddenly seeking to strike a conspicuously patriotic and conservative note in the hope of attracting voters may deliver mixed results for Starmer. In a *Guardian* article, Nesrin Malik notes that “his effort to win back the red wall, pivot towards patriotism and generally move to the right on culture have left black and minority-ethnic party members angry, and some Labour MPs feeling despondent” (Malik 2020). It is apparent that Starmer’s traditionalist rebranding carries a risk of his appearing disingenuous and opportunistic, as well as alienating progressive voters and even prominent party members both inside and outside the Red Wall.

## **Embracing Brexit**

Despite being more diverse on various social issues than previously assumed, the Red Wall counties have been found to express greater support for Brexit than the national average. According to the YouGov survey of 2021, fifty per cent of Red Wall residents believed that Britain had made the right decision in voting to leave the EU, compared to thirty-seven per cent believing it was the wrong decision and thirteen per cent being undecided. Boris Johnson’s straightforward pledge to get Brexit done, as opposed to Corbyn’s lukewarm (and not entirely genuine) support of Remain, proved popular with the leave-voting Red Wallers, helping to secure Johnson’s victory.

In Jeremy Corbyn’s shadow cabinet, Starmer served as a Shadow Brexit Secretary, taking a strongly pro-Remain stance and supporting the second referendum. However, faced with the election loss of

2019, he decided to adjust his position in favour of Leave supporters, newly arguing that “We are no longer a member of the EU. We’ve got a deal, we’ve got to make that deal work. There’s no case for rejoining the EU and I’ve been very clear about that. The Remain-Leave debate is over” (Trapnell 2021).

As part of his Brexit U-turn, Starmer seized and re-interpreted the “take back control” vote-winning slogan of Boris Johnson. In his New Year’s Speech of 2023, he explained:

The control people want is control of their lives and their communities. So we will embrace the take back control message – but we will turn it from a slogan into a solution, from a catchphrase into change. Even in those turbulent years, 2016 to 2019, I was always making the argument that there was always something very important sitting behind that leave vote. That phrase ‘take back control’ was really powerful, it was like a Heineken phrasing, got into people (Morris 2023).

To give credibility to his new position, given his previous anti-Brexit views, Starmer has attempted to frame it as the support for greater autonomy of individuals and communities, rather than Britain’s reclamation of control from the institutions and structures of the European Union. If there is indeed a structure from which control needs to be regained, then it is Westminster, not Brussels. The re-focusing on the devolution of power from London to local communities helps Starmer utilize the popular catchphrase without looking completely inconsistent.

For all of Starmer’s attempts to downplay his former anti-Brexitism and pledges to help communities reclaim control, the gains from his U-turn on Brexit to woo Red Wall voters look uncertain. Will the voters trust his new Johnsonesque position, knowing that he was a staunch Remainer previously? And, more importantly, will his newfound embrace of Brexit not alienate Labour’s younger, more liberal supporters? A recent poll conducted by the Constitution Society shows that most British voters now think Brexit was a mistake; only forty-three per cent consider UK’s departure from the EU as a good decision, while fifty-seven per cent maintain it was a wrong choice. The poll concludes that there would be no electoral penalty for the Labour Party if it admitted that Brexit was a mistake; indeed, it could even gain votes in doing so (“Labour Could Win Increased Majority”). Also, it would put Starmer in a better position to criticize the execution of the referendum result. As argued by social commentator Luke Anderski, by accepting Brexit as a fait accompli, Starmer has undermined Labour’s ability to criticize Johnson’s “disastrous deal and its inept execution” (Anderski 2021). Thus, standing by his genuine Brexit position may actually have been a more productive strategy for Starmer in the long term.

## **Conclusion**

Keir Starmer was elected Labour leader on a mandate to reverse the party’s disastrous election result, partly resulting from a more effective strategy of the Johnson-led Conservatives towards Labour’s traditional working-class voter base. The analysis of Starmer’s speeches and media appearances revealed three main strategies by which he has sought to reclaim the lost voters. Firstly, he has attempted to strike an anti-establishment note to tap into the voters’ mainstream politics fatigue and demand for change. Secondly, he has chosen to emphasize patriotism and traditional values generally believed to be prioritized by working-class voters. And, finally, he has decided to modify his stance on Brexit in order to accommodate the leave sentiments prevalent within the Red Wall.

While the populist undertones in Starmer’s post-election rhetoric tone may help Labour regain some of the lost support, there is a non-negligible risk that they will alienate the other significant group of

Labour supporters, i.e. younger, metropolitan, and/or minority voters. There is also a possibility of Starmer's coming across as disingenuous given his previous record, especially as regards Brexit as well as his long-term high-profile role within the establishment he now chooses to criticize. The next general election will provide a definitive answer as to whether Starmer's calculated move to reclaim the Red Wall has delivered the desired outcome.

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## Hradec Králové Journal of Anglophone Studies

# CALL FOR PAPERS

SPECIAL ISSUE

Reimagining Utopias: Exploring the Philosophical, Creative, and Educational Nexus of AI

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This proposed journal issue seeks to bring together scholars and thinkers from various disciplines to explore the intersection of philosophical thought, utopian writing, ELT, and the transformative role of AI in contemporary society.

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John Cage



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