

# ENGLISH STUDIES TODAY: APPROACHES AND APPLICATIONS

SELECTED PAPERS FROM THE FOURTH  
INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE  
ENGLISH LANGUAGE  
AND ANGLOPHONE LITERATURES TODAY  
(ELALT 4)



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## INTRODUCTION

This volume is a selection of papers presented at the *Fourth International Conference on English Language and Anglophone Literatures Today (ELALT 4)*, which was held at the University of Novi Sad on 25 March 2017. The papers published in this volume were selected following a rigorous reviewing procedure and are divided into two thematic parts, the first of which is dedicated to topics in English language and linguistics, while the second contains contributions to the field of Anglophone literatures.

Today more than ever English Studies are a prolific cross-disciplinary field whose extraordinary variety of research areas and approaches is steadily increasing. The present volume of *English Studies Today* best illustrates this variety through its widely differing themes and theoretical frameworks. From a comparative analysis of the generic middle construction in English and Slovenian to topicalization in Old English, from a cognitive exploration of phrasal verbs to a corpus-based approach to ICT terminology, and from a methodological study of blended language learning to an examination of EFL students' reflections on teaching, the language section testifies to the ever-expanding areas of research in linguistics and methodology. In a similar vein, the literary section exemplifies the innumerable approaches to literature with its readings of prose and poetry from different centuries, which examine Gothic elements, seventeenth-century literary wit from the semiotic perspective, archetypal figures in Romantic poetry, and a Baudrillardian approach to the body in contemporary American prose.

The first part of this volume contains six papers focusing on topics related to English language and linguistics.

Jakob Lenardič's paper entitled **THE GENERIC MIDDLE CONSTRUCTION AT THE SYNTAX-SEMANTICS INTERFACE IN ENGLISH AND SLOVENIAN** deals with the generic middle construction in the two languages in relation to the syntax-semantics interface, with a focus on determining which structural mechanism derives the non-eventive

property-based interpretation of the construction and how this mechanism is related to its underlying syntax. The author bases his claims on data from Slovenian, giving a proposal which follows the idea that generic middle sentences display syntactic variation, and predicting cross-linguistic differences and similarities attested in structures headed by causative predicates both in English and Slovenian.

Within a similar framework of theoretical linguistic research, Tanja Milićev's article *EMBEDDED TOPICALIZATION IN OLD ENGLISH* aims at establishing whether object fronting in embedded clauses in Old English constitutes an instance of the so-called embedded root phenomena (ERP) and at determining its licensing conditions. While, as stated in the paper, the availability of topicalization, as an ERP, seems to be related to pragmatic conditions, Milićev concludes that the fact that topicalization is blocked in embedded clauses whose derivation has been argued to involve operator extraction suggests that the difference between the two basic types of clauses she discusses could be captured in syntactic terms.

Ivan Milošević and Tijana Vesic Pavlović opt for a cognitive approach to their topic *SYNONYMOUS RELATIONS BETWEEN SOME PHRASAL VERBS CONTAINING PARTICLES AWAY, OUT AND OFF: A COGNITIVE-SEMANTIC ANALYSIS*. Conducting their research on a sample of almost eight hundred phrasal verbs, with a total of 1,620 different meanings, the authors show that a considerable number of the phrasal verbs they collected exhibit a high level of synonymy. This fact is ascribed to the closely comparable conceptual scenes motivating their semantic structure, which stem from different spatial configurations underlying the conceptual framework of the constituent particles.

Nikolche Mickoski conducts his research within the framework of corpus linguistics, in his contribution entitled *CORPUS-BASED APPROACH TO DEFINING ICT TERMINOLOGY*. The author sets out to determine the terms which should be covered in a special course on ICT-(information and communication technologies) related terminology, having compiled a corpus of 176,550 word types for the purpose of providing general information on ICT terms in Macedonian. Mickoski concludes that

the National ICT glossary contains almost all of the most frequent terms used in ICT-related websites, that all of them are covered in the special course on ICT-related terminology and, finally, that the Macedonian ICT terminology currently used in ICT-related media is harmonised with the National ICT Glossary to a certain extent, calling for further harmonisation so as to ensure that the same terms and translation equivalents are consistently used to denote the same concepts.

The first of the two methodologically oriented articles in this volume, the paper **BLENDED LANGUAGE LEARNING: STUDENTS' PERCEPTION OF EFL CLASSROOM READING PRACTICES AT UNIVERSITY EDUCATION LEVEL** by Milevica Bojović, deals with university students' perception of classroom reading practices in English as a foreign language in blended and face-to-face learning. Based on measures of internal consistency, descriptive statistics and a one-way analysis of variance, the study demonstrates that the respondents – undergraduate biotechnology engineering students – who were exposed to blended learning had a more positive perception of the English classroom reading activities than their peers undergoing face-to-face instruction.

Finally, the first part ends with another contribution from the field of EFL teaching methodology – Nina Lazarević's article **EFL STUDENTS' REFLECTION ON TEACHING DURING THE PRACTICUM**. The paper examines whether student-teachers, 3rd-year students, are able to successfully observe classroom management techniques during English language classes. A questionnaire was used related to the classes observed, with particular emphasis on seven elements. The most important conclusion is that student-teachers mostly reported rather than reflected on the mentors' classes, while the results also confirm that discipline issues are the greatest concern, and that most of the mentor practices observed were rather traditional.

The second part of this volume contains four papers focusing on topics related to Anglophone literatures.

In her paper *GOTHIC ELEMENTS IN LOUISE ERDRICH'S LOVE MEDICINE*, Jovana Petrović carefully explores postcolonial Native American identity through an analysis of Gothic elements in Erdrich's novel. Caught between two conflicting worlds, the novel's Native American protagonists are equally shaped by the white man's values and Native beliefs. As the conflict gives rise to the supernatural, the characters attempt to come to terms with their Native selves. The paper pays special attention to the ghostly presence of the past, which serves as a reminder of lost precolonial histories and identities, and examines the traumatic experience of colonization and its devastating consequences on Native Americans.

*LITERARY WIT AS A MEANS OF CREATIVE COMMUNICATION IN THE SELECTED SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY ENGLISH POETIC TRADITION* by Jadvyga Krūminienė and Jurgita Astrauskienė takes us back a few centuries and revisits John Donne's *Holy Sonnet XVIII* (1620) within Yuri Lotman's semiotic framework. Focusing on the socio-communicative functions of a literary text, the paper represents an interpretation of literary wit in Donne's poetry. Through a meticulous examination of Donne's double-coded poems, the authors present a strong argument for literary wit as a complex means of communication between the author and his readers, the reader and the text, or the reader and him/herself.

Ivana M. Krsmanović embarks on a psychoanalytical interpretation of Romantic poetry in the paper *JOHN KEATS'S "ISABELLA" AS A ROMANTIC DEMETER: INDIVIDUATION UNACHIEVED*. Applying the principles of archetypal criticism, Krsmanović reads Keats's poem as a paradigm of individuation. The poem's heroine is seen as a mother archetype on a transitional journey from an innocent child to a desperate mother who has lost her beloved. Isabella is ultimately interpreted as a Romantic Demeter, an archaic representation of the psyche, whose individuation remains unachieved. The author convincingly proves that Isabella's tragic end discredits the Romantic heroine as a lonely victim, while her story represents a woman's struggle for self-realisation and a celebration of the Goddess Within.



In her Baudrillardian reading of DeLillo in *THE BAUDRILLARDIAN BODY IN THE BODY ARTIST AND ZERO K BY DON DELILLO*, Slađana Stamenković closely examines representations of the body within the body-soul dichotomy. In her interpretation of the body in DeLillo's novels, Stamenković employs Baudrillard's simulacrum to show how the body operates as "a copy without an original". While also defined as a construct and explored as a piece of technology, the body is seen as essential to identity and inseparable from the Self. Stamenković analyses DeLillo's use of the body in discussions of life and death, or art and the contemporary society. Adopting a comparative approach, Stamenković highlights the role of the body in identity construction.

The organizing of the conference and the publication of this volume would not have been possible without the generous support of the Dean's Office of the Faculty of Philosophy in Novi Sad and of the Secretariat for Science and Technological Development of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina. We express our gratitude to all those who contributed to the completion of the edited volume – to Professor Ivana Đurić Paunović and Professor Maja Marković, present and former heads of the Department of English Studies, to the Editorial Board, the Organizing Committee, to our three main reviewers, as well as the reviewers of each separate paper, for their time, expertise and insightful comments. Last but not least, our gratitude goes to all our contributors for their fruitful and inspiring research that yielded important results in the field of English Studies, presented in the selected papers in this volume.

The Editors

Novi Sad, December 2018



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**TOPICS IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND  
LINGUISTICS**



JAKOB LENARDIČ

## **THE GENERIC MIDDLE CONSTRUCTION AT THE SYNTAX-SEMANTICS INTERFACE IN ENGLISH AND SLOVENIAN**

In this paper, I discuss the generic middle construction in English and Slovenian in relation to the syntax-semantics interface. I focus on determining which structural mechanism derives the non-eventive property-based interpretation of the construction and how this mechanism is related to its underlying syntax. On the basis of data from Slovenian, where the generic middle construction can surface with active syntax with the internal argument in the accusative case, I present an approach to capturing the interaction between the syntactic and semantic properties of middle sentences by proposing a modal operator that displaces the propositional denotation of the underlying structure to accessible worlds relative to a circumstantial modal base. Crucially, such a modal does not require that the internal argument appears as the grammatical subject. Since this proposal follows the idea that generic middle sentences display syntactic variation (for instance, not all examples project VoiceP, thus resulting in different propositional content in relation to the presence of the (implied) agent), it correctly predicts cross-linguistic differences and similarities attested in structures headed by causative predicates both in English and Slovenian.

Keywords: impersonal active *se*-construction, argument structure, generic operator, middle construction

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

A generic middle sentence, such as *This book reads well*, is an intransitive structure in which the logical object surfaces as the grammatical subject. Because of its idiosyncratic modal interpretation involving a property of the logical object as a key semantic component, the generic middle construction is especially difficult to formalize at the syntax-

semantics interface. For English, a well-known approach is by McConnell-Ginet (1994), who captures the interaction at the interface with an invisible modal operator that takes care of the idiosyncratic property-based semantics by operating on an unergative syntactic configuration where the internal argument occupies the specifier of VoiceP at some stage of the derivation. However, Slovenian data show that an approach that relies on the internal argument moving up the structure cannot be maintained cross-linguistically since the canonical generic middle in Slovenian is an active structure in which the external argument is covertly present and the internal argument bears accusative case:

- (1) To knjigo se bere zlahka.  
this book-ACC se read-3SG easily  
“This book reads easily.”

For this reason, I present a new approach to capturing the interaction between the syntactic and semantic properties of the generic middle construction by proposing a modal operator that is very high in the structure and displaces the propositional denotation of the underlying structure to accessible worlds relative to a circumstantial modal base, thus deriving the non-eventive property-based interpretation. Since this proposal is based on the idea that generic middle sentences display syntactic variation (i.e. not all examples project VoiceP, thus leading to different propositional content in relation to the presence of the (implied) agent), it correctly predicts cross-linguistic differences and similarities attested in structures headed by causative predicates both in English and Slovenian.

In Section 2, I present how generic middle sentences are treated in the literature in relation to assumptions about argument structure at the lexical-syntactic interface, their status as unergatives and finally conclude the section with one of the well-known semantic accounts that is based on such assumptions. In Section 3, I present Slovenian data and establish the active *se*-construction as the Slovenian structure that is equivalent to the



canonical English middle in interpretation. In Section 4, I present my proposal by focussing on the active construction; I discuss it in relation to the non-existential interpretation of the agent and pinpoint the source of its modal semantics. Section 5 applies the analysis to English and non-active Slovenian examples. Section 6 concludes the paper.

## 2. THE BACKGROUND – GENERIC MIDDLE SENTENCES IN THE LEXICON AND AT THE SYNTAX-SEMANTICS INTERFACE

In the lexical approach to deriving a generic middle sentence (2), it is assumed that the crucial step takes place before the predicate and its selected categories enter the syntax (e.g. Fagan 1992; Levin and Rappaport Hovav 1995; Steinbach 2002, 2004). For instance, Fagan (1992: 162 and 189) proposes the lexical rule in (3), which affects the argument grid.

- (2) This book reads easily.  
 (3)  $\text{READ}_{\text{transitive}} \langle x, y \rangle \rightarrow \text{READ}_{\text{middle}} \langle \text{any}^*, y \rangle$

According to (3), the rule that operates on a generic middle saturates its external argument into arbitrary *any*\*, which is interpreted as an implicit semantic agent that is not projected into syntax. Empirically, such a rule accounts for the following characteristics of the construction:

- (4) a. The book reads easily (\*by John).  
 b. The book was read by John.  
 c. The book reads easily  $\approx$  Anyone can read the book with ease.

Since the external argument does not enter the syntax, the *by*-phrase is inadmissible, as in (4a). In this sense, middles contrast with the prototypical passive construction (4b), which allows the *by*-phrase. Since the

self-same argument is saturated at the lexical-syntactic interface, a possible paraphrase of the middle construction is the sentence with the potential-agent subject *Anyone* (hence *any\** in the above lexical entry), as is shown by (4c).

In terms of the overt syntactic representation of argument structure, a generic middle thus only contains the logical object which surfaces as the grammatical subject. Related to this surface state of affairs is the question whether such a construction is unaccusative or unergative (Perlmutter 1978). If it is the former, then the sole argument originates as the complement of V and raises up the structure for case checking reasons, thereby attaining the surface position as the grammatical subject in the specifier of TP. A canonical example of a predicate heading such a structure is *die*, as is exemplified by the accompanying derivation in (5). If it is the latter, the sole argument originates outside of VP; under Kratzer’s approach to argument structure (1996), which I adopt, it is merged as the specifier of a Voice Phrase dominating VP, as in the case of the predicate *dance* in (6).

- (5) John died; [TP John [VP died ~~John~~]]  
 (6) John danced; [TP John[VoiceP ~~John~~ [VP danced]]]

In the literature it is assumed that a generic middle is either like a true unergative (for instance, Fagan 1992; McConnell-Ginet 1994; Ackema and Schoorlemmer 1994), in the sense that it involves movement of the internal argument from [Spec, VoiceP] to [Spec, TP], or that it at least displays some features of the structure in (6) – namely, the projection of VoiceP (Schäfer 2007, 2017).

Though analysing a generic middle as an unergative construction is mainly supported by cross-linguistic facts,<sup>1</sup> there is one crucial piece of

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<sup>1</sup> For instance, in periphrastic tense constructions in Dutch, generic middles select the auxiliary ‘have’ instead of ‘be’ (Ackema and Schoorlemmer’s example (1994: 61) is *Dit*

evidence from English that is also in favour of unergativity. In the case of the transitive *raise* vs. intransitive *rise* contrast, the English generic middle construction selects the former predicate (7) in contrast with the non-middle unaccusative in (8), which selects the latter.

- (7) Obedient daughters raise more easily than disobedient sons.
- (8) The sun rises in the East. (Schäfer 2007)

What example (7) also shows is that a generic middle sentence involves a property of the logical object as a crucial part of its interpretation; that is, a sentence like (7) implies something like an *in-virtue-of* clause (Lekakou 2004: 188); for instance, *Obedient daughters raise easily in virtue of their obedience*. For this reason, a sentence like *Cars park easily* sounds odder than *Small cars park easily* (ibid.), precisely because some property of the logical object must be semantically involved.

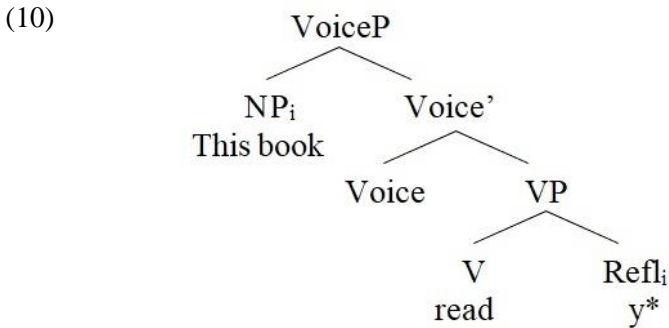
In order to figure in this property interpretation, researchers who have drafted a precise semantic and syntactic analysis of generic middle sentences have banked on their assumed unergativity. One such treatment of middles is that of McConnell-Ginet (1994: 241–246), who proposes that the crucial syntactic layer of the sentence *This book reads easily* be interpreted as follows:

- (9) Generic middle semantics
  - a.  $\lambda x.\lambda e.[\text{read}(e, y^*) \wedge \text{easy}(e) \wedge \text{causer}(x, e) \wedge x = y^*]$
  - b.  $x = \text{causer}(e) \text{ iff } \exists P[P(x) \wedge \text{cause}(e, P(x))]$

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*soort boeken heft/\*is altijd goed verkocht*; equivalent to the English generic middle *This sort of books has always sold well*, which is taken to be a diagnostic for unergativity.

Line (9a) is a function that maps an individual entity  $x$  onto the function that maps an eventuality  $e$  onto true iff the relevant truth conditions are met. Since line (9b) identifies  $x$  as the individual concept that carries the relevant causing property (i.e. Lekakou’s implicit in-virtue-of clause), then the appropriate semantic argument for  $x$  is the logical object *This book*, which is characterized by the in-virtue-of property – i.e. *this book reads easily* in virtue of a property that causes it to be such – that is, *easy to read*. As for term  $y^*$  in (9a), McConnell-Ginet (ibid.) assumes that it stands for a phonologically-null reflexive merged as the complement of V. Therefore, the semantics in (9a) is the interpretation of the node Voice’ in an unergative structure like the following:



The sisterhood of the nodes NP *This book* and Voice’ semantically corresponds to the functional application of their respective denotations.<sup>2</sup> Consequently, VoiceP in (10) is as follows in semantics:

$$\begin{aligned}
 (11) \quad \llbracket \text{VoiceP} \rrbracket &= \llbracket \text{Voice}' \rrbracket(\llbracket \text{NP} \rrbracket) \\
 &= \lambda x. \lambda e. [\text{read}(e, y^*) \wedge \text{easy}(e) \wedge \text{Causer}(x, e) \wedge x = y^*](\text{This book}) \\
 &= \lambda e. [\text{read}(e, y^*) \wedge \text{easy}(e) \wedge \text{Causer}(\text{This book}, e) \wedge \text{This book} = y^*]
 \end{aligned}$$

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<sup>2</sup> Functional application is defined as follows: “if  $\alpha$  is a branching node,  $\{\beta, \gamma\}$  the set of  $\alpha$ ’s daughters, and  $\llbracket \beta \rrbracket$  is a function whose domain contains  $\llbracket \gamma \rrbracket$ , then  $\llbracket \alpha \rrbracket = \llbracket \beta \rrbracket(\llbracket \gamma \rrbracket)$ ” (Heim and Kratzer 1998: 44).

What subsequently happens at the later stages of derivation (i.e. above VoiceP, at the merger of T) is that the generic operator GenOp binds the remaining lambda-bound expression (that is,  $e$ ), thus resulting in the fact that generic middles are interpreted as non-eventive eventualities in which “generalisation is over events of [reading] whatever it is to be added as the subject” (McConnell-Ginet 1994: 246).

As previously mentioned, a crucial assumption that allows McConnell-Ginet to derive the property interpretation of generic middles is the unergativity of the syntactic structure in (10). After the only phonologically-overt argument is merged in VoiceP as per unergativity, it is coindexed with the phonologically-null reflexive in the complement of V. That such an operation of argument identification takes place presumably follows from the positing of the generic operator GenOp, which, apart from imposing the non-eventive interpretation, works as a reflexivisation operator in the manner of Chierchia (1989: 37) that identifies the internal argument position with that of the external one, as shown by the  $x = y^*$  condition in the second line of the computation in (11). In short, the unergative syntactic structure conspires with the non-eventive and argument-reflexivisation operations of GenOp so as to bring about the canonical generic middle interpretation, which, in informal terms, means something like “A property of the book causes a generic state of affairs such that the book is read easily”.

### **3. THE SLOVENIAN ACTIVE SE-CONSTRUCTION AS A PROTOTYPICAL GENERIC MIDDLE**

In this section, I show that an unergative derivation like that in (10) and its corresponding semantics in (11) cannot be maintained cross-linguistically. To do this, I discuss the generic middle construction in Slovenian and contrast its most salient syntactic and semantic features with those of the English variant.

What is crucial for our purposes is the fact that the Slovenian equivalent of the English generic middle *This book reads easily* can appear in two syntactically-distinct constructions. In what follows, it will be shown that the construction in (13) is closest to the canonical generic construction in English in terms of meaning, as it invariably entails an agent.

- (12) Ta knjiga se bere zlahka.  
 this book-NOM se read-3SG easily  
 “This book reads easily.”
- (13) To knjigo se bere zlahka.  
 this book-ACC se read-3SG easily  
 “This book reads easily.”

In terms of overt syntax, sentence (12) is more or less equivalent to the English variant in the sense that its logical object also lands in [Spec, TP] to check nominative case, with the only difference being the additional presence of *se* in the Slovenian example. In sentence (13), however, the logical object does not undergo such A-movement into [Spec, TP]. Following Kratzer (1996: 123), I refer to sentences like (13) as the active *se*-construction since the internal argument NP checks accusative case.<sup>3</sup> Note that sentences (12) and (13) have the same generic middle interpretation (as shown by the English paraphrases) because the predicate *brati* (“read”), is not causative.

With causative verbs like *break* and *pop*, however, there exists a crucial difference in interpretation between an active *se*-construction like the two sentences in (16–17) and the non-active variants in (14–15) tied to the presence of the understood agent of the denoted eventuality.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> A terminological note: the active *se*-construction is also referred to as the impersonal *se*-construction (e.g. Grahek 2008, Schäfer 2017).

<sup>4</sup> A note on the agreement patterns: the active *se*-constructions (16) and (17) display default agreement on the lexical verb, which is 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular, whereas in the non-active *se*-constructions (14) and (15), the lexical verbs agree with their grammatical subject (that is, the internal argument), as shown by the plural inflection on the verb in (15).

- (14) Taka steklenica se zlahka razbije (sama od sebe).  
 such bottle-NOM se easily break-3SG (by itself)  
 “This kind of bottle easily breaks on its own.”  
 or (with omission of *sama od sebe*) “Anyone can break this kind of bottle.”
- (15) Taki baloni zlahka počijo (sami od sebe).  
 such balloons-NOM easily pop-3PL (by themselves)  
 ??\*“Anyone can easily pop such balloons.”  
 but: “Such balloons pop easily on their own.”
- (16) Tako steklenico se zlahka razbije (??\* samo od sebe).  
 such bottle-ACC se easily break-3SG (by itself)  
 “Anyone can break this kind of bottle.”  
 Impossible: “This kind of bottle easily breaks on its own.”
- (17) Take balone se zlahka poči (??\*same od sebe).  
 such balloons-ACC se easily pop-3SG (by themselves)  
 “Anyone can pop these kinds of balloons.”  
 Impossible: “These kinds of balloons easily pop on their own.”

As shown by the paraphrases, only sentences (16) and (17) – that is, the active variants – are necessarily associated with the potential-agent interpretation. Conversely, sentence (14), which is syntactically equivalent to the English sentence *This kind of bottle breaks easily* in the sense that the logical object surfaces as the grammatical subject, displays ambiguity between a non-agentive meaning that is roughly equivalent to something like “The bottle is such that it can easily become broken on its own” and the prototypical agentive meaning of middles associated with the *Anyone-can* paraphrase. Sentence (15), also with the non-active syntax, is unambiguously non-agentive in contrast with its active variant in (17), which necessarily implies a potential agent.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> The interpretation of generic sentences without *se* was corroborated by a judgement-elicitation task involving 10 native Slovenian speakers.

On the one hand, what the contrast between the non-active sentence (14) with the verb *razbiti* (“break”) and the non-active sentence (15) with the verb *počiti* (“pop”) shows is that the possible agentive interpretation of the former is directly due to *se*. Following Schäfer (2017), I claim that *se* in a non-active sentence like (14) indicates the presence of a VoiceP layer, even though such sentences do not contain a thematic external argument NP. In the semantics of (14), such a VoiceP either introduces an inherently-saturated agent variable in the case of the generic middle interpretation or is semantically inert in the case of the anticausative interpretation triggered by *sama od sebe*. By contrast, a generic anticausative sentence like (15), which lacks *se*, also lacks the VoiceP layer in its syntactic representation, which explains why this sentence is not interpreted as one that refers to a potential agent.<sup>6</sup> On the other hand, the invariable agentive entailment of the active *se*-sentences (16) and (17) will be later on, in Section 4, tied to an independent syntactic fact; that is, such active *se*-sentences – in contrast to non-active

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<sup>6</sup> The fact that *se* does not occur in the non-active construction (15) is an idiosyncratic selectional property of the verb *počiti* “pop”. There are only a handful of such verbs in Slovenian (see Grahek 2002: 69–70 for the full list) – for instance, *počrneti* (“blacken”) and *potoniti* (“sink”). All generic non-active constructions containing such verbs (e.g., *Taka ladja<sub>NOM</sub> zlahka potoni* = “This kind of ship easily sinks by itself”) interpretatively behave like (15); that is, they do not refer to agentive participation in semantics. Furthermore, such sentences without *se* resist PPs denoting instruments, such as *s škarpjami* (“with scissors”) in example (i), whereas the sentences with *se* (14) do allow it, such as *s kladivom* “with a hammer” in example (ii), which additionally shows that *se* is responsible for the agentive inference.

- (i) Taki baloni                      zlahka počijo    (\*s škarpjami).  
 such balloons-NOM        easily pop-3PL (with scissors)

Intended: “Anyone can pop such balloons with scissors.”

- (ii) Taka steklenica    se zlahka razbije    (s kladivom).  
 such bottle-NOM se easily break-3SG    (with hammer)

“Anyone can easily break such a bottle with a hammer.”



(14) and (15) – contain a thematic external argument NP in VoiceP that is phonologically null, making them 2-argument structures.

The English equivalents that are headed by causative predicates display the ambiguity of the Slovenian non-active in (14):

- (18) This kind of bottle breaks easily.  
“Anyone can break this kind of bottle easily” / “This kind of bottle breaks easily on its own.”
- (19) These kinds of balloons pop easily.  
“Anyone can pop these kinds of balloons.”/ “These kinds of balloons pop easily on their own.”
- (20) The balloon popped.  
“The balloon popped on its own.”

According to Schäfer (2007: 13), only the first reading (that is, with the implied agent) of (18) and (19) is taken to be the interpretation of the canonical generic middle. In this respect, notice that (18) and (19) also differ from the eventive anticausative in (20), since the latter is wholly unambiguous in that it can only denote an eventuality that comes about without direct external human participation (Fagan 1992; Steinbach 2004). For this reason, the fact that (18) and (19) can refer to a potential agent while (20) cannot supports the semantic and syntactic analysis of English generic middles as structures that project VoiceP (i.e. the locus of agentive features), which was the core characteristic of the syntactic-semantic derivation in (9)–(11).<sup>7</sup>

In sum, the key assumption is the idea that canonical generic middles are sentences that imply a potential agent. What is thus shown by the data in

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<sup>7</sup> In this sense, Schäfer (2007) claims that it is an idiosyncratic property of English middles that they project VoiceP even though they lack a constituent such as *se*.

(14)–(17) is the fact that it is the active construction – repeated in simplified form in (21) – that is the structurally closest to the prototypical generic middle in English in terms of meaning, since it necessarily entails an agent in contrast with the non-active variant in (22).<sup>8</sup>

- (21) Take balone<sub>ACC</sub> se zlahka počī.  
 “Anyone can pop these kinds of balloons”
- (22) Taki baloni<sub>NOM</sub> zlahka počījo (sami od sebe).  
 “These kinds of balloons easily become popped on their own.”

#### 4. THE PROPOSAL

The problem that we now face is the following: the canonical generic middle in Slovenian is the construction in which the sole argument is merged as the complement of V, where it checks accusative case, yet generic middles are traditionally formalized by means of a syntactic derivation in which the internal argument occupies the specifier of VoiceP, as was the assumption of McConnell-Ginet’s unergative semantics, repeated here in (23):

- (23)  $[[\text{Voice}]] = \lambda x. \lambda e. [\text{read}(e, y^*) \wedge \text{easy}(e) \wedge \text{causer}(x, e) \wedge x = y^*]$

Recall from the discussion in Section 2 that under this proposal Voice is interpreted as a property of individuals. This is so because a null reflexive occupies the complement of V with which the internal argument is

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<sup>8</sup> Following Lekakou (2004: 183), who claims that middles “are parasitic on independently existing structures”, I take it that middles are taxonomically defined by their interpretation rather than their structure – hence the syntactic variation between the examples in this section.

co-indexed. This proposal cannot be applied to the Slovenian generic middle in (21) since the complement of V is occupied by the internal argument bearing accusative case. Consequently, the generic property interpretation must come about via a different mechanism in Slovenian generic middles.

At this point one might wonder how sentences like (21) are derived, especially since they seem to lack an overt grammatical subject even though they appear to contain VoiceP on account of the agentive entailment. To account for this, I follow Rivero and Milojević Sheppard (2003: 120–130), who claim that all active *se*-structures merge an XP in the specifier of VoiceP. This XP, which is phonologically null and corresponds to the external thematic argument, is the bolded NP in the following bracketed structure:

- (24) [CIP *se*<sub>[uH][iNOM]</sub> [TP[-Φ] [VoiceP **NP**<sub>[iH][uNOM]</sub> [Voice' [+agent]] [VP [v brati] [NP knjigo<sub>ACC</sub>]]]]]]

In (24), there is a functional projection labelled CIP (the Clitic Phrase) above TP. Rivero and Milojević Sheppard (ibid.) posit that the head of this projection – that is, the clitic *se* – is a probe made up of an uninterpretable human feature and an interpretable nominative case feature, so a copy of NP, which has matching features, is internally-merged in [Spec, CIP] to eliminate the uninterpretable features on both nodes, thus giving us the final derivation in (25):

- (25) [CIP **NP**<sub>[iH][uNOM]</sub> [*se*<sub>[uH][iNOM]</sub> [TP[-Φ] [VoiceP **NP** [Voice' [+agentive]] [VP [v brati] [NP knjigo<sub>ACC</sub>]]]]]]

In relation to semantics, however, Rivero and Milojević Sheppard (ibid.) do not discuss our *se*-sentences interpreted as generic middles (such as example (13), *To knjigo<sub>ACC</sub> se bere zlahka*), but, rather, focus on those

that refer to non-generic events (26), as shown by the paraphrase, which involves the existential quantifier *some* modifying *people*.

- (26) Včeraj se je bralo knjige.  
 yesterday se aux read-3SG books-ACC

“Yesterday, some people were reading books.”

To tie the existential interpretation of (26) to the syntactic derivation in (25), Rivero and Milojević Sheppard (2003) assume that the remerger of NP in [Spec, CIP] corresponds to quantifier raising of the null NP, which they take to be an intrinsic existential pronoun. In this respect, the head of the chain in (25) represents the existential quantifier and the deleted copy in [Spec, VoiceP] the bound variable in the corresponding LF formula in (27):

- (27)  $\exists x_{[\text{hum}]}[\text{read}(x_{[\text{hum}]}, \text{book})]$

As for the active generic middle *se*-structure *To knjigo<sub>ACC</sub> se zlahka bere*, I claim that it is – apart from its generic property interpretation which differs from the existentially-interpreted LF in (27) – the same construction in terms of syntactic constituency as the active eventive *se*-structure (26); that is, it contains two syntactically-realised arguments (24). To see that this is so, consider the following contrast between both Slovenian variants of *This book reads easily* with an added anaphor, where the first is active (28) and the second non-active (29) in terms of case-marking on the internal argument.

- (28) Svojo knjigo<sub>ACC</sub> se zlahka bere.  
 “Anyone<sub>i</sub> can read a book of their<sub>i</sub> own.”

- (29) ?\*Svoja knjiga<sub>NOM</sub> se zlahka bere.  
 Intended: “Anyone<sub>i</sub> can read a book of their<sub>i</sub> own.”

In both cases, the logical object is modified by the possessive *svoja*, which is an anaphor that must be bound in its CP by a syntactically-realised antecedent. That only the active variant (28) is grammatically licit shows that an external argument, which can act as such a local syntactic binder, is indeed merged in (28). In other words, this is the NP in structure (24), which is coindexed with the anaphor *svoja* in (28).<sup>9</sup>

Syntactically, then, the active *se*-sentence with the middle interpretation (28) does not differ from the variant with the eventive interpretation (26), both being structures with a phonologically-null external argument. Rather, the distinction between the two structures is wholly semantic in nature; that is, the active generic middle *se*-sentence – in contrast with the LF in (27) – does not involve an existentially-interpreted agent, but rather an arbitrary one, as predicted by Fagan’s rule of pre-syntactic argument saturation in (3).

To account for this, I suggest that the non-existential generic interpretation is the result of two additional operations that take place within the semantic component and that operate on the semantic structure of a two-argument construction like (24).<sup>10</sup> The first operation hinges on Rivero and Milojević Sheppard’s observation (2003: 126) that the quantificational force of the phonologically-null NP in *se*-structures varies in habitually-interpreted sentences:

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<sup>9</sup> This distinction in terms of binding holds for all the verbs that can appear either in the active or non-active construction, such as *počiti* “pop” and *razbiti* “break”, which were discussed in Section 3.

<sup>10</sup> Since active middle *se*-sentences and active eventive *se*-sentences are thus syntactically equivalent, sentence (13), *To knjigo<sub>ACC</sub> se bere zlahka*, should, in addition to the generic middle interpretation (i.e. “Anyone can easily read this book”), also allow for an eventive “right now” interpretation (“Someone is reading the book now”), as observed by an anonymous reviewer. This is indeed the case, as the latter eventive interpretation can be made apparent if a temporal AdvP like *zdaj* (“now”) is present in the structure; for instance *To knjigo<sub>ACC</sub> se zdaj bere zlahka*, meaning “People are reading this book with ease now”.

- (30) Starše se je včasih **kdaj pa kdaj** ubogalo.  
 parents-ACC se aux in-past sometimes obey-3SG  
 “Some people sometimes obeyed their parents in the past.”
- (31) Starše se je včasih **vedno** ubogalo.  
 parents-ACC se aux in-past always obey-3SG  
 “Everyone always obeyed their parents in the past.”

In (30) and (31), the AdvPs *kdaj pa kdaj* and *vedno* are quantificational adverbs in the manner of Lewis (1975) and Heim (1982: 81–90). These adverbs function as unrestrictive quantifiers that semantically bind indefinite pronouns (e.g. our phonologically-null NP), which are free variables in Heim’s and Lewis’s systems, and thereby equip them with their own quantificational force, which is universal in the case of *vedno/always* and existential in the case of *kdaj pa kdaj/sometimes*. Note, at this point, that in Rivero and Milojević Sheppard’s system, which I have adopted, the phonologically-null NP is not a free variable but rather has inherent existential force in semantics, so an adverb like *always* first deletes the existential quantifier by means of a rule which Rivero and Milojević Sheppard (2003: 126) call existential disclosure before supplementing it with its own universal force. In any case, the idea that quantificational force is affected equally holds in both approaches.

The second operation results in the modal interpretation, which is tied to the property reading. According to Lekakou (2004: 188–189), this property-based reading in generic middles is the result of an operator “which assigns to any-world individual pair, {w,d} [...] the set of all those (relevant) [...] properties that d [i.e. the logical object] has in w”. She also posits a syntactic condition requiring the logical object to surface as the grammatical subject so that the operator can relate it to the relevant properties; in her words, “if [the logical object] is to be ascribed a dispositional property, it needs to appear in subject position” (2003: 192). The problem, as we have shown, is that the logical object stays put in the active Slovenian middle, so the generic operator cannot be formalized in such a way.

What instead seems to be the core contributor to the property interpretation is a variant of the generic operator that is not sensitive to the underlying syntax of the construction. I propose that such an operator is one that is similar to a circumstantial modal which operates on a whole proposition and through the characteristics of its modal base takes care of the property interpretation. Thus, GenOp has the following semantics, partially based on Hackl (1998):

- (32)  $[[\text{GenOp}]]^g = \lambda R. \lambda q. \forall w' [R(w)(w') = 1 \rightarrow q(w') = 1]$ , where  $g$  is a contextually-supplied assignment function and  $[[R]]^g = g(R) = \lambda w'. \lambda w.$  the relevant circumstances of  $w$  are also the case in  $w'$

In (32),  $[[\text{GenOp}]]$  is a function that maps the accessibility relation  $R$  to the function that maps a proposition  $q$  to the set of all accessible worlds in which  $q$  holds.

With this said, let's see how the modal operator works in the case of sentence (13), *To knjigo<sub>ACC</sub> se zlahka bere*, which is semantically equivalent to English *This book reads easily*. What is crucial is that such a sentence has the syntactic skeleton of (24) above, repeated here in simplified form (33). Recall also that the external argument NP has inherent existential force in Rivero and Milojević Sheppard's system.

- (33)  $[_{CP} [_{TP} [_{\text{VoiceP}} \text{NP} [_{VP} [_{V'} [_{V} \text{brati}] [_{NP} \text{knjigo}_{\text{ACC}}]]]]]]]]]$

Given such a structure, the salient interpretation of the generic middle is brought about by the following two-step process. First, a quantificational operation akin to the one that yields the contrast between our habitual sentences in (30) and (31) takes place in this case as well. By means of such an operation, the existential quantifier introduced by the external argument NP in (33) is eliminated; in its stead we are given a variant of the

construction where the external argument is interpreted with universal force, which accounts for Steinbach's observation that the arbitrary interpretation of the logical subject in generic middle sentences "covers all human beings [who are potential readers] in the universe of discourse" (2004: 188). Afterwards, this propositional variant is fed into the modal in (32).<sup>11</sup> As the final result, we get the following interpretation of the generic middle *To knjigo*<sub>ACC</sub> *se zlahka bere* (=“This book reads easily”) in (34), on the assumption that we are dealing with a book that is, for instance, a pulp novel and thus does not represent a challenging read (these being our relevant circumstances in the actual world *w*).

- (34)  $\forall w'$  [if the circumstances, which are such that the book is a pulp novel and is therefore an easy read in the actual world *w*, are also the case in *w'*, then everyone reads this book easily in *w'*]

Before concluding this section, I would like to draw a parallel between the universal quantification in (34) and the discussion of free-choice *any\** in Kadmon and Landman (1993). They observe that *any\** in a generic sentence like *Any lawyer can tell you that* differs from the universal quantifier *every* in the related sentence *Every lawyer can tell you that* in that it allows for exceptions. Consequently, it is with good reason that the generic middle sentence *This book reads well* is often paraphrased as “Anyone can

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<sup>11</sup> The fact that the middle reading is triggered by present verbal morphology has to do with Chierchia's (1995) idea that generic operators are associated with temporally-unbounded eventualities, and the present temporal domain is such that it has no temporal boundaries by default. With this said, a sentence with past-tense morphology like *In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, these kinds of books read easily* should be possible on the middle reading (i.e., “These kinds of books were such that anyone could read them in the 19<sup>th</sup> century”) if it refers to a generic state of affairs (i.e., possible worlds) in which anyone could in general easily read such books in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, where these events of reading are unbounded insofar as the sentence makes no reference to their temporal end-points save for generically locating them in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.



read this book well”, as it expresses a generalization that is not falsified by someone who utters, for instance, “They tell me that this book reads well, but it sure didn’t read well for me.”

However, in our approach, we do not have to assume that the Slovenian active generic middle sentence *To knjigo<sub>ACC</sub> se zlahka bere* actually contains a covert variant of *any\** (in the sense of Kadmon and Landman) as the external argument that is necessarily merged as the specifier of VoiceP (that is, NP in (33)). Rather, exceptions can simply be accounted for by our modal operator in (32) if we assume that there is an ordering source (Kratzer 1991) at work which ensures that the set of all accessible worlds in which the proposition *q* holds are those worlds which are as close as possible to the ideal set up by our circumstantial modal base (i.e. the characteristics of the book pointing to the fact that it is an easy read). On the basis of such an ordering source, exceptional worlds in which not everyone reads the book easily will simply be filtered out as less ideal than those worlds in which they do read it with ease (Krifka et al. 1995: 51–53).

## **5. SUMMARY AND EXTENDING THE PROPOSAL TO OTHER ENGLISH AND SLOVENIAN EXAMPLES**

The crucial point in the proposal developed in the previous section is that the generic operator is located very high in the structure (in comparison with Lekakou (2004) and McConnell-Ginet (1994), where it is between VP and TP), coming into play after the proposition has been compiled by the underlying syntax. Since the operator is thus not sensitive to potential intra-linguistic as well as cross-linguistic differences in the underlying syntactic derivation, this proposal is extendable to English and non-active Slovenian examples.

To exemplify, recall that a Slovenian active *se*-structure under the generic middle reading differs in interpretation from the non-active one if the

predicate is a causative verb, as shown by the contrast between active (35) on the one hand and non-active (36) on the other, repeated from Section 3:

- (35) Take balone<sub>ACC</sub> se zlahka počī.  
 “Anyone can pop these kinds of balloons.”
- (36) Taki baloni<sub>NOM</sub> zlahka počījo.  
 “Such balloons can easily become popped on their own.”

Again, what is crucial in our approach is the idea that the generic meaning originates in a modal operator that takes a fully-fledged proposition as its argument. Thus, the distinction between (35) and (36) is the result of GenOp operating on two distinct propositions, where the associated syntax of (36) simply lacks VoiceP, which would otherwise bring about the potential-agent interpretation, as is the typical assumption of anticausative formation.

The English sentence in (37), however, can imply a potential agent:

- (37) These kinds of balloons pop easily.  
 “Anyone can pop these balloons.”

What our analysis thus highlights is that the difference between English (37) and Slovenian (36) is simply due to syntax – that is, (37) on the interpretation captured by the paraphrase projects VoiceP, as discussed in Schäfer (2007). Since our proposed modal operator takes a whole proposition as its argument, the nuances in interpretation related to the agent inference simply follow from differences in the underlying syntax that are then reflected in the proposition (i.e. non-merger of VoiceP in the case of (36) vs. its merger in (37)). Put differently, the non-eventive property interpretation, which holds in all these examples, is not tied to syntactic constraints placed on the arguments as in McConnell-Ginet’s (1994) and

Lekakou's (2004) systems; rather, it originates in our proposed GenOp, which does not really care as to how the syntactic component manipulates argument structure.

## 6. CONCLUSION

By focussing on the Slovenian active *se*-construction *To knjigo<sub>ACC</sub> se zlahka bere*, this paper has presented an analysis of generic middle sentences in which the property-based interpretation comes about via a modal operator that operates on a fully-fledged proposition and relates it to a circumstantial modal base. Such an account has been argued to be favourable from a conceptual standpoint in understanding the interaction between the syntactic and semantic characteristics of generic middle sentences, since it highlights that cross linguistic differences between Slovenian and English boil down to how the underlying syntax builds the proposition; that is, in a Slovenian active *se*-construction, agentive involvement will be entailed because such a structure necessarily merges VoiceP, and the arbitrary interpretation on the agent follows from the external argument being an indefinite NP which displays quantificational variability; a non-active construction like *Taki baloni<sub>NOM</sub> zlahka počijo sami od sebe* simply will not contain a VoiceP and hence no potential agent in its propositional content. Likewise, such an approach also captures the standard proposal that the generic English middle sentence also merges VoiceP as the locus of agentive features, since these are then reflected in the proposition that is fed as an argument into the modal operator.

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## EMBEDDED TOPICALIZATION IN OLD ENGLISH

This paper deals with the cases of embedded topicalization in Old English (OE). It aims to establish whether object fronting in embedded clauses in OE constitutes an instance of the so-called embedded root phenomena (ERP) and determine its licensing conditions. Even though it has been shown that object fronting in OE is never accompanied by verb movement ('subject-finite verb inversion'), we will argue that movement of non-nominative phrases across pronominal subjects could be taken as instances of the root clause-type of topicalization. When this diagnostics is applied, a split into two types of embedded complements arises: Type 1 clauses, which rather freely allow any type of phrasal preposing across the pronominal subject, and Type 2, which allows it only under very strict conditions. Only Type 1 clauses are assumed to allow topicalization, while the exceptional cases of preposing in Type 2 clauses resemble a type of scrambling. While it seems that the availability of topicalization, as an ERP, is related to pragmatic conditions, the fact that topicalization is blocked in embedded clauses whose derivation has been argued to involve operator extraction, suggests that the difference between Type 1 and Type 2 clauses could be captured in syntactic terms.

Keywords: embedded topicalization, embedded root phenomena, operator movement

### 1. INTRODUCTION

(West) Germanic languages are well-known to exhibit a sharp asymmetry between root and embedded clauses, in that certain syntactic operations are available only in main clauses. This asymmetry is sometimes broken by the so-called embedded root phenomena.

Even though the inventory of ERP is well-known, there, however, still remains the puzzle of what regulates the availability of ERP, as some embedded clause types allow them, while others are resilient to them. Old English (OE) further complicates the picture, as the availability of verb

movement (manifested as ‘high position of the finite verb’), as one of the key main clause properties, seems to be divorced from other ERP.

In this paper I will show that the cases of embedded topicalization in Old English (taken from the York-Helsinki Corpus of Old English Prose), offer evidence for the need to distinguish two types of embedded topicalization: one that resembles topicalization in main clause, and one that resembles scrambling. What ultimately regulates the availability of one or the other type of topicalization is pragmatic assertion/presupposition.

All of the data used in the analysis have been extracted from the York-Helsinki-Toronto Parsed Corpus of Old English Prose (henceforth the YCOE), an annotated corpus of about 1.5 million words of Old English prose (Taylor et al. 2003).

## **2. EMBEDDED ROOT PHENOMENA**

The idea that certain syntactic operations are allowed only in main clauses (‘root transformations’) goes back to Emonds (1970). Topicalization, for instance, would be a typical example of a root transformation, as it (generally) occurs in main/root clauses.

(1) This book, you should read.

In addition to topicalization, root phenomena roughly comprise structural phenomena such as subject-auxiliary inversion, verb movement (either V2 or short verb fronting), left-dislocation, and other kinds of fronting/preposing operations. Also, certain lexical items such as modal particles, interjections and speaker-oriented adverbials are also taken as



root clause properties (cf. Green 1976, Haegeman 2003, 2006, 2007, 2010 and an overview in Heycock 2006).<sup>1</sup>

Emonds' characterization of these phenomena as root transformation has been challenged by Hooper and Thompson (1973). They show that certain embedded clauses also allow root transformations (topicalization in (2a)), while others reject them (2b).

- (2) a. John believes that this book, Mary read  
b. \*John regrets that this book, Mary read

Based on the possibility of licensing embedded root phenomena (ERP), Hooper and Thompson divide verbs with sentential complements into five classes. What allows a complement clause to exhibit root transformations, according to Hooper and Thompson, is assertion. ERP are possible only in asserted environments. For instance, it is possible in the complements of verbs of saying and thinking such as *say*, or *suppose*, because such embedded statements have the characteristics of (direct or indirect) assertions. In example (3) from Hooper and Thompson (1973: 474), the predicate *explain* selects a complement that expresses reported discourse. Moreover, such embedded clauses even express the main assertion in the utterance.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> In English root phenomena comprise Left Dislocation, VP Preposing, Negative Constituent Preposing, Directional Adverb Preposing, Participle Preposing, PP Substitution, Subject Replacement, Direct Quote Preposing, Complement Preposing, Adverb Dislocation, Right Dislocation, Tag Question Formation, and Topicalization.

<sup>2</sup> Hooper and Thomson (1973) distinguish the following five classes: (i) Class A: Strongly assertive predicates: *say, report, exclaim* (ii) Class B: Weakly assertive predicates: *suppose, believe, expect* (iii) Class C: Non-assertive predicates: *doubt, deny, be (im)possible* (iv) Class D: Factive predicates: *regret, be sorry, bother* (v) Class E: Semi-factive predicates: *realize, find out, discover*. Complements of class C and D predicates do not allow ERP.

(3) The inspector explained that each part he had examined very carefully  
In contrast, factive predicates such as *regret* or *be strange* select a sentential complement which is presupposed and therefore cannot undergo root transformations (4).

(4) \*It's strange that this book, it has all the recipes in it  
(Hooper and Thompson 1973: 479)

Besides the complements of factive and non-factive predicates, the analysis also applies to relative and adverbial clauses. According to Hooper and Thompson (1973), non-restrictive relative clauses are not presupposed and, consequently, admit ERP. In contrast, restrictive relative clauses with definite antecedents express presupposed content which blocks ERP.

Interestingly, Hooper and Thompson do not provide an absolute definition of assertion. They state that the assertion of a sentence is “its core meaning or main proposition,” and that it “may be identified as that part which can be negated [and] questioned by the usual application of the processes of negation and interrogation” (Hooper and Thompson 1973: 473). Sentences may contain more than one assertion. This is most obvious in coordination, but also extends to cases of syntactic subordination. Crucially, some subordinate clauses are asserted, and this is what allows them to exhibit root phenomena.

Green (1976) provides evidence that disputes Hooper and Thompson's claim that root phenomena can occur in all and only asserted clauses. First she points that their claim about assertion of a particular clause is based on a circular argument, as (some) assertive clauses are identified as such only on the basis of the grammaticality of root transformations occurring in them (root transformations occur in assertive clauses, assertive clauses are those that allow root transformations). Also, she notes that some root phenomena are possible in the complements of the counterfactive verb ‘pretend’ and performatives, such as ‘bet’, ‘promise’,

and ‘predict’ (5), which, semantically, should be presupposed (Green 1976: 390–391).

- (5) a. I bet that win he will  
b. I promise that not a bite I will eat  
(Green 1976: 391, ex. 58)

Green’s solution to these issues is in terms of a pragmatic hypothesis. Embedded root phenomena are licensed “just in case the proposition they affect, and therefore emphasize, is one which the speaker supports” (1976: 386). She further argues that this is only one constraint out of many which may affect the acceptability of ERP.

Most of the more recent work also translates the semantic concept of assertion and presupposition into more pragmatic terms, by claiming that only embedded clauses which have their own illocutionary force potential allow root transforms. In part, the approaches establish a connection between syntax and semantics by assuming that illocutionary force is encoded in a syntactic head Force (Haegeman 2003, 2006).

### 3. EMBEDDED TOPICALIZATION IN OLD ENGLISH

#### 3.1. Embedded topicalization and verb movement (V2)

OE is standardly assumed to allow topicalization only in root clauses, where it is accompanied by a (kind of) verb-second effect (cf. van Kemenade 1987, a.o). Pintzuk (1991, 1993), however, argues that OE is a symmetric V2 language, allowing the V2 effect in both main and embedded clauses. Her main argument comes from the cases where a topicalized phrase is immediately followed by a fronted finite verb in embedded clauses (6).

- (6) complementizer - XP<sub>TOPICALIZED</sub> - V<sub>FINITE</sub>

However, unlike main clauses, where the verb targets the most left-peripheral position,  $C^\circ$  (7a), and the topicalized element in SpecCP, in embedded clauses, the finite verb is in a lower position,  $T^\circ$  (or  $I^\circ$ ), while the topicalized, non-nominative argument is in SpecTP/IP (7b and c). Hence, embedded clauses exhibit the IP-V2 effect, whereas main clauses show the standard CP-V2 effect. In that respect, OE behaves like Yiddish (cf. Diesing 1990), which also exhibits two types of V2.

(7)

a.

**þas word**        *spræc* God        þurh        þone witegan Ezechihel *root clause*  
 these words.ACC spoke God.NOM through the wiseman Ezechiel  
 ‘These words God spoke through the wiseman Ezechiel’  
 (cocathom1,ÆCHom\_I\_17:315.69.3144)

b.

þæt **hyre**        *wæron* forgyfene        manega        synna *embedded clause*  
 that her.DAT were forgiven        many.NOM        sins  
 ‘that she was forgiven many sins’  
 (coaelhom, ÆCHom\_6:311.1022)

c.

oðþæt        **mannum**        *becymð*        ren        ofer        eorðan  
 until        men.DAT        came        rain.NOM        over        earth  
 ‘until rain came to men over the earth’  
 (coaelive,ÆLS\_[Book\_of\_Kings]:56.3696)

Van Kemenade (1997), however, shows that Pintzuk’s (and other) examples of embedded topicalized phrases immediately preceding a fronted finite verb actually involve an unaccusative verb (passive, impersonal and ergative (‘come’, ‘go’, ‘burst’, etc.)). Rather than assuming that such cases involve a main clause type of topicalization (topicalization coupled with verb movement), only to a lower position, it is more likely

that such ordering arises due to the peculiar syntax of unaccusative verbs, specifically the fact that the nominative argument receives its theta role in the VP-internal position, where, crucially, it is allowed to stay. As the nominative (theme) argument of unaccusative verbs is merged lower than the non-nominative argument (Perlmutter 1978), dative and accusative NPs are likely to move to SpecTP not because they are topicalized ('object topicalization'), but for independent reasons. The absence of object fronting coupled with verb movement clearly shows that the topicalization as ERP (of the main clause type) is unavailable in OE:

(8) \*complementizer XP V<sub>unergative</sub>

### 3.2. Embedded topicalization without V2

Even though OE lacks true cases of embedded topicalization (topic-V2), nominal objects do front across the subject in embedded clauses, as illustrated in (9). The question is what type of process the object fronting involves, as well as what position objects target in these cases.

(9)

a.

forþon þe **manega tintrega** hie þe on bringað  
 because many many punishments.ACC they you on bring  
 'because they bring many punishments on you'

(coblick,LS\_1.2\_[AndrewMor[BiHom\_19]]:237.140.3041)

b.

Gif þa mon ne mæge eaþe geredian  
 if those.ACC one not might easily discover  
 'If one cannot easily find those...'

(colaece,Lch\_II\_[2]:22.3.5.2477)

I will take that that examples such as (9a) represent instances of embedded topicalization in OE. As the main diagnostic tool for the identification of object fronting as topicalization, I will use pronominal subjects. The main reason why pronominal subjects can be used as a reliable diagnostic is the

fact that they have been shown to categorically occupy the highest subject position in the clause: FP (Fischer et al. 2000) or SigmaP (van Kemenade and Milićev 2012), immediately below the complementizer (10). The asymmetry between pronominal and nominal subject has been established based on their relative distribution with the negative adverb and ‘high’/discourse adverbs such as *þa/þonne* ‘then’. Whereas pronominal subjects (including the impersonal subject *man* ‘one’) always precede negative and high adverbs, nominal subjects can occur in a lower position (Spec,TP), following the diagnostic material.<sup>3</sup>

(10) [<sub>CP</sub> complementizer [<sub>SigmaP</sub> Spro/Opro/*man* ‘one’ (*þa/þonne/neg adv*)  
[<sub>TP</sub> NP<sub>subject</sub>...]]]

The patterns are illustrated in (11). (11a and b) show the high subject position, whereas (11c and d) demonstrate nominal subjects in the lower subject position.

(11)

a.

Gif **he** hy þonne etan nelle, ðonne nim ðu oþre corn  
if he them then eat not-will then take you other corn  
'if it then does not want to eat it, take another corn'

(coherbar,Lch\_I\_[Herb]:4.9.312)

b.

Þa	<b>þæt</b>	<b>folc</b>	<i>þa</i>	þæt	gehyrde...
when	the	people	then	that	heard

<sup>3</sup>The distribution of nominal subjects between two subject positions is regulated by discourse and information-structural factors, as first shown in van Kemenade, Milićev and Baayen 2008 and van Kemenade and Milićev 2012.

'when the people then heard that'

(coblick,LS\_20\_[AssumptMor[BiHom\_13]]:149.213.1856)

c.

Gif *þonne* **se** **cristena** **man** þe ðin broðer is. þe ahwar geyfelode...  
if then the Christian man who your brother is you anywhere wronged

'If a Christian, then, who is your brother, did you wrong in any way...'

(cocathom1,ÆCHom\_I,\_3:204.163.602)

d.

Gif	hit	þonne	se	<b>abbod</b>	underfon	hate...
if	it	then	the	abbot	received	had

'If the abbot had then received it...'

(cobenrul,BenR:54.87.15.980)

Based on (10), an object fronted across a pronominal subject will be treated as topicalized (in the sense that in those cases it occupies the highest possible position below CP/complementizer).

(12) [<sub>CP</sub> complementizer [<sub>XP</sub> **XP**<sub>topic</sub> [<sub>SigmaP</sub> Spro [<sub>TP</sub> NP<sub>subject</sub>...]]]

Even though topicalization in structures like (12) is divorced from verb movement, in the sense that there is no inversion effect with the subject, I will assume that such cases resemble topicalization in root clauses, which have been long proved to show an exceptional behavior with pronominal subjects. Namely, topicalized clauses with subject pronouns never allow the V2 effect; rather, the fronted verb shows up in the position following the subject, yielding the so-called V3 effect (13a). Nominal subjects, on the other hand, follow the fronted verb (13b), (cf. van Kemenade 1987).

(13)

a.

Fela	Godes	wundra	<b>we</b>	<i>habbað</i>	gehyred	&	eac	gesewene	<i>V3 effect</i>
many	God's	wonders	we	have	heard	and	also	seen	

'We have seen and heard many of God's wonders'

(cocathom1,ÆCHom\_I,\_38:508.47.7575)

b.

Eallum	ðam	<i>forgifð</i>	<b>Crist</b>	ece	lif...	<i>V2 effect</i>
all	them	gives	Christ	eternal	life	

‘To all those Christ gives eternal life...’

(cocathom2,ÆCHom\_II,\_25:208.65.4597)

Separated from verb movement, embedded topicalization will be treated as movement to the highest available position below the complementizer.

#### 4. TWO TYPES OF OBJECT FRONTING IN OE

When the diagnostic given in (10) is applied, embedded clauses sharply split into two types with respect to the (un)availability of topicalization. Type 1 embedded clauses which allow fronted topics, and Type 2, which, generally disallow topicalization.

Type 1 embedded clauses comprise complements of bridge verbs (*cwæðan* ‘say’, *tiðian* ‘grant’, etc.), comparative *swa*-clauses, extent clauses, licensed by *swa* ‘so’ or *swylc* ‘such’, *to ðan* ‘to such an extent’ and a degree phrase, as well as in clauses introduced by *forðæm/for þan þe* ‘because’ (similar observation for the special behavior *forðæm/for þan þe* clauses have also been noted in Koopman 1992 and Kroch and Taylor 1997).

(14)

a.

&	he	þæt	<u>swa</u>	gelæste,	<u>þæt</u>	<b>þone</b>	<b>dæl</b>	<i>he</i>	Wilferðe
and	he	that	so	arranged	that	the	part	he	Wilferth
biscope	for	Gode	gesealde...						
bishop	for	God	gave						

‘and he so arranged that he gave that part to the bishop Wilferth for God (to use)’



(cobede,Bede\_4:18.306.25.3110)

b.

forþon        **swa**        **ealdne**        **monan**        *he*        hæfð  
 because        so        old        moon        he        has  
 ‘because he has such an old moon’

(cobyrhtf,ByrM\_1\_ [Baker-Lapidge]:1.4.43.559)

c.

þæt        he hogie        hu **manegra manna saula**        *he*        mage Gode  
 that        he considers        how many        men’s souls        he        may to-God  
 gestrynan  
 direct

‘that he considers how he may direct many men’s souls to God’

(cocathom2,ÆCHom\_II\_41:307.77.6970)

d.

he        bebead        his þegnum...        þæt **þæt þe**        **hi**        **gesawon,**        *hi*  
 he        ordered        his servants        that that which they saw        they  
 nanum men        ne sædon  
 to-no men        not said

‘He ordered his servants... that what they saw they didn’t say to no one’

(cogregdC,GD\_1\_ [C]:9.59.31.668)

e.

Nu        ge        secgað        þæt        **þæt**        ge        geseon  
 now        you        say        that        that        you        saw  
 ‘now you say that you saw that’

(cowsgosp,Jn\_[WSCp]:9.41.6592)

Type 1 complements also allow left-dislocation. The examples in (15) illustrate how complex the left-periphery of such clauses can be, as it can host a left-dislocated element (subject left-dislocation, (15a), and object left-dislocation (15b)), a left-peripheral adverbial, and a topicalized object. For Type 1, it is clear that an elaborate CP-area is required to accommodate all the material preceding the high subject pronoun.

(15)

a.

forðæm ðe [we ealle]<sub>LFD</sub>, [ðe hwile ðe we libbað on  
 because we all while we live on  
 ðissum deadlican flæsce]<sub>ADV</sub>, [ðære tidernesne & ðære hnesnesne ures flæsces]<sub>TOP</sub>  
 this deadly flesh to-the frailty and to-the weakness of-our flesh  
 we.RP beoð underðiedde  
 we are subjugated

‘because we all, as long as we live in this deadly flesh, we are subjugated to the frailty and tenderness of our flesh’

(cocura,CP:21.159.2.1079)

b.

we magon ongytan, þæt [þa helle witu]<sub>LFD</sub>, [þonne hi beoð  
 we may understand that the hell’s tortures when they are  
 geywde]<sub>ADV</sub>, [sumum]<sub>TOP</sub> hi. RP weorðað to fultume & to helpe...  
 revealed to-some they are to assistance and to help

‘we may understand that the hell’s tortures, when they are revealed, to some they are help...’

(cogregdC,GDPref\_and\_4\_[C]:37.321.3.4815)

OE embedded topicalization seems to be found in typical environments for ERP in other (Germanic) languages. It most often occurs in complements of non-factive verbs and causal (*because-*) clauses. Degree clauses have also been noted to allow ERP (cf. de Haan 2001 for Frisian).

Type 2 complements most notably comprise temporal and conditional clauses, where object preposing is disallowed. The resistance of temporal clauses (at least, of some types) to ERP has been shown to hold for other languages as well (cf. Haegeman 2003, 2007; Sawada and Larson 2004). Relative clauses also disallow topicalization. While in English, non-restrictive relatives and relatives with an indefinite antecedent allow topicalization, in German and Scandinavian languages, embedded topicalization in relative clauses is impossible. It is commonly assumed that topicalization in these contexts is blocked by (wh- or null) operator

movement (cf. Chomsky 1977).<sup>4</sup> We will return to the question of licensing conditions of ERP in Section 5.

#### 4.1. Type 2 complements and man-subjects

Even though embedded topicalization is unattested with pronominal subjects, van Bergen (2000: 97–98) notes that NP objects can be found preceding the high indefinite/impersonal *man* in conditional (*gif* ‘if-clauses’).

(16)

a.

gif **hire bearn** *mon* ofslea, gielde cyninge þara medrenmæga dæl  
 if her child one slay pay to-king the maternal-kinsmen’s part  
 ‘if her child is killed, the king should be paid the maternal kinsmen’s part’  
 (colawaf, LawAf\_1:8.3.45)

b.

Gif **monnes eage** **him** *mon* ofaslea  
 if man’s eye him one slay  
 ‘If a man’s eye is struck off...’  
 (LawAf 1, 71; van Bergen 2000:97, ex.19d)

As *man*-subjects have been shown to occupy the same high subject position as pronominal subjects (FP/SigmaP), examples such as those in (16) seem to constitute a problem for the analysis proposed here. If an object can be fronted across a *man*-subject in SigmaP, we need to assume the presence of a complex CP structure in such cases as well.

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<sup>4</sup> Relative clauses show an asymmetry with respect to topicalization and verb movement. In German, for example, V2 can be found in relatives with an indefinite antecedent (cf. Antomo 2011 and the references there). The same holds for OE. This further suggests that verb movement and topicalization as ERP should be treated differently.

(17) [<sub>CP</sub> gif [<sub>?P</sub> mones eage [<sub>SigmaP</sub> *man* [...ofslea]]]]

I will argue, however, that *man* is exceptional, and that it should be treated differently from pronominal subjects. While both *man* and subject pronouns precede the diagnostic adverbs (cf. (10)), they show different ordering patterns relative to object pronouns. Unlike subject pronouns, which always precede object pronouns, *man* regularly follows high object pronouns.

- (18) a. **Spro** - Opro.ACC-Opro.DAT  
b. Opro.ACC-Opro.DAT-**man**

Assuming that object pronouns are clitic-like in this position, head-adjoined to Sigma<sup>o</sup>, I will argue that *man* is merged in Sigma<sup>o</sup>. This is supported by the fact that phrasal indefinites *ænig man* ‘anyone’ or *nænig man* ‘no one’ are never found in the position following object pronouns. Unlike indefinites, *man* is an impersonal pronoun. I follow Cardinaletti and Starke (1999), who argue that unlike generic sentences which are possible only if “some property/range (other than that contained in the predicate) is associated with its subject” (1999: 157), impersonal subjects do not have such a range restriction; in fact they must always be rangeless. Therefore, I hypothesize that the special position of *man* is the result of the condition that impersonal subject pronouns must be generated outside the scope of any element that can assign it a range or property other than the feature [+human]. Crucially, it has to be merged outside the TP domain.

Unlike object pronouns and impersonal *man*, subject pronouns target SpecSigmaP. Their obligatory movement to this position is conditioned by their high D-linked/discourse prominence status (cf. van Kemenade and Milićev 2012). If pronominal subjects block embedded topicalization, the most straightforward explanation is that they compete for the same position: SpecSigmaP. Object fronting is thus banned due to minimality effects (cf.

Rizzi 1990). In root and Type 1 clauses, on the other hand, topicalization targets a position above SigmaP, and this allows topicalized elements to co-occur with pronominal subjects, without violating minimality.

#### 4.2. Topicalized adverbials in Type 2 complements

Unlike NP objects, van Bergen (2000) notes that, occasionally, other XPs (adverbials) seem to be topicalized across pronominal subjects (19).<sup>5</sup>

(19)

a.

Gif þonne **þissum steorum** he nelle þonne gyt geriht beon  
 if then these punishments he not-will then yet corrected be  
 'If then he will not be corrected by these punishments...'  
 (cochdrul,ChrodR\_1:50.42.653)

b.

Gif ðonne **on geberoscipe** they hie geciden  
 if then on feast they chide  
 'if then on feast they chide'  
 (LawIne 6.5; Bergen 2000:92 (13b) citing Haeberli 1998)

c.

op þæt ða **aet nehstan** he becom to þam ofne  
 until that then at next he came to the oven  
 'until he then at last came to the oven'  
 (GDPref and 3 (C) 37.251.24; van Bergen 2000:92 (13c))

Orderings such as (19) seem to present a problem for the analysis assumed here. Upon close inspection, however, it turns out that these cases are

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<sup>5</sup> Van Bergen (2000) uses these examples to question the categorical high subject position of pronominal subjects, as both the fronted PP and the subject pronoun precede the diagnostic adverbs *ða/ðonne*.

‘exceptional’ for a different reason. Namely, the subject pronouns above are arguments of unaccusative verbs. In (19a), *he* is the subject of a passive verb *beon geriht* ‘be corrected’, while in (8b), *hie* ‘they’ is the subject of the verb *gecidan* ‘chide/quarrel’, which is a reciprocal verb, and reciprocal verbs tend to show unaccusative syntax. It is plausible that with such predicates, subjects are allowed to stay in a lower position.

While the behavior of nominative arguments of unaccusative verbs is far from being clear, the fact is that they show exceptional patterns often enough to be legitimately treated in ways different than other nominative arguments/subjects. Crucially, if the fronted adverbials do involve movement, it resembles clause-internal scrambling, rather than any type of fronting outside TP.<sup>6</sup>

## 5. TYPE 1 VS. TYPE 2: LICENSING CONDITIONS

In this section we address the issue of licensing conditions for embedded topicalization in OE. Recall that originally ERP was linked to assertion (Hooper and Thompson 1973). Studies of ERP in Germanic languages, however, have repeatedly shown that Hooper and Thompson’s assumption that assertion licenses ERP does not hold, and that other, more pragmatic factors, condition ERP.

Bentzen (2009), in her study of the ERP in Scandinavian, shows that the first problem Hooper and Thompson’s proposal runs into is the availability of topicalization (together with V2) in complements of semi-factive predicates. As such complements are presupposed, they should not

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<sup>6</sup> Adverbials have been shown to be able to front in the type of clauses otherwise blocking object topicalization (cf. Haegeman’s (2010) discussion of the asymmetry observed in various work). This can then independently rule out such orders as exceptional. What seems to be important here is that the absence of adverbial fronting across pronominal subjects should be contributed to the properties of SigmaP.

allow topicalization. This author therefore proposes that the distinction between presupposition/assertion is not the governing factor in the availability of ERP. Rather, she follows Wiklund et al (2009), that it is the potential independent communicative contribution of the clause which determines whether it allows root phenomena or not.

She further investigates the correlation between the availability of ERP and assertion in adverbial clauses, starting from Haegeman's (2003, 2006, 2007, 2010) influential proposal that ERP are allowed in the so-called 'peripheral' adverbial clauses. Namely, Haegeman argues that adverbial clauses split into central and peripheral clauses. Central clauses modify the propositional content of the main clause, whereas peripheral clauses are interpreted with respect to discourse structure (they express propositions which can be processed as part of the discourse, and thus are in a way independent of the main clause proposition). The two types are assumed to have different internal and external syntax. Haegeman (2007, 2010) proposes that central adverbial clauses are derived by movement of a subordinating operator to the left periphery (from  $\text{Fin}^\circ$  to  $\text{C}^\circ$ ). As topicalization is also viewed as involving  $\text{A}'$ -movement of an operator, moving a topicalized element to the left-periphery (TopicP) creates an intervention effect (interfering with the binding relation created by the subordinating operator). As for their external syntax, central clauses merge lower in the structure than peripheral clauses, and this captures their interpretational differences.

While the distinction between central and peripheral clauses captures ERP in English, it is less successful when applied to other Germanic languages. Using the (a) non-subject topicalization (topicalization of arguments/adjuncts, which is accompanied by S-V inversion in Norwegian), (b) V-Neg word order, (c) epistemic expressions, and (d) evidential markers as root phenomena diagnostics in Norwegian, she shows that the differences between English and Norwegian ERP are with respect to conditional clause and concessive clauses. While English ERP shows sensitivity to whether conditional clauses are peripheral or not, Norwegian ERP is impossible in either type. While Norwegian ERP is sensitive to whether a concessive

clause is adversative or not, in English, all types of concessive clauses disallow ERP.

Bentzen further shows that while most clauses allowing ERP are indeed assertive, again there is no one-to-one correspondence between ERP and assertion, as some assertive complements disallow ERP, while those allowing it are neither presupposed nor assertive (e.g. *while*-clauses and *because*-clauses). Bentzen argues that clauses allowing ERP generally constitute the so-called Main Point of Utterance, conveying the pragmatically relevant content of the sentence (cf. Abbot 2008, Simons 2007; for the role of MPU for ERP in Scandinavian cf. also Franco 2010, Wiklund et al. 2009, a.o.).<sup>7</sup> The availability of an MPU reading appears relevant for the availability of syntactic root phenomena in adverbial clauses. Interestingly, an MPU reading is not a consequence of ERP – clauses featuring embedded topicalization and/or V2 do not obligatorily constitute the MPU. Bentzen then concludes that, if MPU is related to illocutionary force, then V2 and other root phenomena do not in themselves have or lead to, nor are they driven by illocutionary force.

The licensing conditions of OE ERP are no less puzzling. The embedded topicalization facts in OE also show that the difference between central and peripheral clauses does not play a role. Neither central nor peripheral conditional and temporal clauses allow topicalization. Their internal syntax seems to be the same. The ‘exceptional’ cases of non-subject topicalizations in Type 2 clauses shows that, unlike Type 1 clauses which have a full-fledged CP area, they allow ‘topical’ elements to move to a position specialized for elements of high discourse prominence, SigmaP. Topicalization-type of movement of a non-subject in Type 2 clauses is

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<sup>7</sup> Simons (2007: 1035) characterizes the main point of utterance (MPU) in the following way: “The main point of an utterance U of a declarative sentence S is the proposition p, communicated by U, which renders U relevant”.



possible only in the presence of elements of lower (or no) referentiality (impersonal *man*) or lower structural position (nominative arguments of unaccusative verbs). The ban on object fronting across subject pronouns is a syntactic effect, but it is also related to the IS/discourse properties of SigmaP in embedded clauses.

The question that immediately arises is how topicalization in Type 1 clauses is different from movement to SigmaP in Type 2 clauses, or how to discern the differences between fronted topics and ‘D-linked, discourse-prominent’ material in SigmaP. No convincing answer is possible before the properties of embedded topics have been fully investigated, and I will have to leave it for subsequent research.<sup>8</sup> The same applies to the issue of licensing conditions. It remains to be seen if and how one can test assertion/presupposition, at-issueness or MPU on the basis of positive evidence only, or if/how the usual tests can be adapted to be applicable to OE.

The fact that embedded topicalization is missing in OE relative clauses, as predicted on the account that topicalization too involves operator movement, suggests that Haegeman’s (2007, 2010) operator movement analysis of embedded temporal and conditional clauses correctly captures the OE facts. That OE temporal clauses could be analyzed on a par with relative clauses is supported by the fact that temporal clauses are typically introduced by adverbs *þa/þonne*, which in main clauses exhibit operator-like properties, in that they trigger V2, just like *wh*- and negative elements.<sup>9</sup> However, if topicalization creates an intervention effect in conditional and temporal

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<sup>8</sup> Traugott and Pintzuk (2005) offer some preliminary insight into the information-structural properties of object topics in main clauses. They, however, do not make a distinction between nominal and pronominal objects in this position. Pronominal elements have repeatedly been shown to exhibit different syntactic behavior when compared to nominal elements, and it seems reasonable to doubt that the differences would not also show up in this context.

<sup>9</sup> In OE the ‘true’ V2 effect is diagnosed only with pronominal subject, and occurs in questions, negative clauses and clauses introduced by ‘short adverbs’, most often, the temporal adverbs *þa/þonne* ‘then’ and, *nu* ‘now’ (cf. van Kemenade 1987, a.o.).

clauses, the question remains why no such effects arise with movements to SigmaP. I leave this for future research.

Finally, OE topicalization and verb movement in OE embedded clauses constitute two different phenomena. Verb movement occurs in all types of embedded clauses (cf. Miličev 2016), and differs from verb movement in root clauses in that it never targets the highest position in the left-periphery below the complementizer, and never triggers the inversion effect with pronominal subjects. OE, thus, offers more evidence that topicalization and verb movement should not be treated as the same type of ERP, as each seem to have their own, separate licensing conditions.

## 6. CONCLUSION AND FINAL REMARKS

In this paper it has been shown that object fronting in embedded clauses can be analyzed as embedded topicalization, despite the lack of the inversion effect with the finite verb. As the main diagnostic tool, I have used subject pronouns. Since they obligatorily move to the highest subject position (SpecSigma), all objects preceding them are taken to be topicalized. As embedded topicalization typically occurs in what is commonly recognized as assertive environments (Type 1 clauses), it can be treated as a root phenomenon. Comparative data from other Germanic languages strongly suggest that assertion is not the crucial condition for ERP, and we believe that this is also the case in OE, but leave it for further research to establish what exact discourse/pragmatic effect(s) condition (or arise with) embedded topicalization.

In ‘non-assertive’ clauses (Type 2), object fronting is limited only to the cases when the subject is the impersonal pronoun *man*, which is merged in Sigma<sup>o</sup>, due to its lack of referentiality. SpecSigmaP being available for fronted object, no minimality effects arise. This type of object fronting resembles scrambling (albeit with different conditions than TP-internal

scrambling), and such cases are not considered to be instances of embedded topicalization.

Finally, we suggest that the incompatibility of Type 2 clauses with embedded topicalization in Type 2 clauses could be accounted for in syntactic terms. If the derivation of these clauses involves operator extraction (of the subordinating element), as proposed by Haegeman (2007, 2010), further operator movements, such as topicalization, will create the intervention effect, i.e. minimality violation.

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IVAN MILOŠEVIĆ – TIJANA VESIĆ PAVLOVIĆ

**SYNONYMOUS RELATIONS BETWEEN SOME  
PHRASAL VERBS CONTAINING PARTICLES AWAY,  
OUT AND OFF:  
A COGNITIVE-SEMANTIC ANALYSIS**

The paper focuses on the synonymous relations established between a certain number of English phrasal verbs containing the same constituent verb and the particles *away*, *out* and *off*. The research is carried out within the theoretical framework of cognitive linguistics, which enables us to view the semantic motivation of the linguistic units under examination in the light of their conceptual structure. This semantic analysis includes 124 phrasal verbs with the particle *away*, 406 phrasal verbs with the particle *out* and 260 phrasal verbs with the particle *off*, with the total of 1,620 different meanings. It is shown that a considerable number of the investigated phrasal verbs exhibit a high level of synonymous relations. We argue that such a semantic phenomenon is a result of the closely comparable conceptual scenes motivating their semantic structure, which stem from different spatial configurations underlying the conceptual framework of the constituent particles. The final part discusses the obtained findings and their possible implications for enhancing the understanding of the nature of phrasal verbs in general, as well as for further investigations of the semantic relations established among English phrasal verbs.

Keywords: phrasal verbs, synonymy, *away*, *out*, *off*, cognitive semantics, spatial configurations/scenes.

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

The present paper explores the synonymous relations established between a certain number of English phrasal verbs containing the same constituent verb and the particles *away*, *out* and *off*. The analysis included 124 phrasal verbs with the particle *away* (with 180 meanings), 406 phrasal

verbs with the particle *out* (with 899 meanings) and 260 phrasal verbs with the particle *off* (with 561 meanings), yielding a total of 1,620 different meanings. They were excerpted from a dictionary of phrasal verbs, *Oxford Phrasal Verbs, Dictionary for Learners of English*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (OXD 2006). The research is carried out within the theoretical framework of cognitive linguistics (Talmy 1983, 2000, Langacker 1987, Lakoff 1987, Johnson 1987, Hampe 2002, Rudzka-Ostyn 2003, etc.), which enables us to view the semantic motivation of the examined phrasal verbs in the light of their conceptual structure. The cognitive-linguistic approach to phrasal verbs provides a fertile ground for explaining the systematicity of phrasal verb meaning and accounting for their multiple meanings, both concrete and abstract. Hence, in the next section, we will briefly reflect on the tenets of this approach when it comes to the exploration of the semantics of phrasal verbs and mention some of the relevant previous studies in the field. In Section 3, we will say something about the semantic relations established between phrasal verbs, focusing on synonymy in particular. Section 4 contains the results of a detailed analysis of specific cases of meaning overlap. The final, fifth section of the paper discusses the obtained findings and puts forth some recommendations for future studies.

## **2. PHRASAL VERBS THROUGH THE LENS OF COGNITIVE LINGUISTICS**

One of the key descriptive tools or means used in the process of meaning analysis of phrasal verbs in the theoretical and methodological framework of cognitive linguistics is *spatial schematisation* (Talmy 1983, 2000) or *profiling* (Langacker 1987, 1999, 2013). These two similar notions are based on the idea of the organisation of spatial relations in terms of their schematisation, which forms the basis for an interpretation of certain conceptual-linguistic relations in terms of different *spatial scenes* or *configurations* underlying the semantics of lexical units. Accordingly, one portion within the spatial scene is singled out for the primary focus (typically



designated as the *trajector*) with a view to describing its disposition in terms of a second portion (typically designated as the *landmark*) (Talmy 2000: 182). As opposed to the so-called traditional approach in studying phrasal verbs (e.g. Live 1965, Fraser 1976), the cognitive-semantic approach enables us to analyse phrasal verb meaning depending on the relations established between the constituent verb and the particle.

So far, several small-scale and large-scale studies, either exclusively or partially, have been aimed at exploring the semantic structure of phrasal verbs containing the particles *away*, *out* and *off*, based on the theoretical tenets of cognitive linguistics. Originally, Lindner (1981) conducted a comprehensive study on the key schematic structures that motivate the meaning of the particle *out*, which was complemented by the findings of Morgan's (1997) research on the various meanings of the verb *figure out*. Yeagle (1983) determined the key schematic concepts which underlie different polysemous meanings of the particle *off*. Rudzka-Ostyn (2003)<sup>1</sup> investigated, among others, the semantic motivation behind all three particles explored in the current paper (*away*, *out* and *off*) through the prism of their potentially more efficient acquisition by language learners, while Hampe (2002) discussed some similarities in the meaning of the particles *away*, *out* and *off*, in the phrasal verbs with the constituent verb *to fade*. A number of other studies investigated the meanings of the particles examined in this paper, such as *out* and *off* (Tyler and Evans 2003), phrasal verbs in medical and computer English containing the particles *in* and *out* (Porto Requejo and Pena Díaz 2008), verbs with the constituent particles *up* and *out* (Mahpeykar and Tyler 2014) etc. Finally, Milošević (2016a, 2016b) carried out a thorough analysis of the conceptual-semantic structures of the particles *out* and *off* in comparison to their opposites *in* and *on*, as well as of the numerous semantic relations established between phrasal verbs containing the two pairs of opposite particles (*in-out* and *on-off*). The findings of these

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<sup>1</sup> Rudzka-Ostyn investigated the conceptual-semantic framework of a total of 17 particles, including the three particles investigated in this paper.

studies further testify to the fruitfulness of the cognitive-semantic method in analysing the semantics of phrasal verbs.

### 3. SYNONYMY OF PHRASAL VERBS

Semantic relations established among phrasal verbs are more than complex. First of all, there are different cases of synonymous relations among phrasal verbs, for instance, in verb pairs with the different constituent verb and the same particle (e.g. *Shall I put/turn/switch the light on?* (OXD)). On the other hand, a pair of phrasal verbs containing the same constituent verb and different particles can form a synonymous semantic relation and these are the kinds of synonymous relations discussed in the current research. This, for example, is the case with the synonymous pair *tap in* ≈ *tap out*, meaning ‘to put information, etc. into a machine by pressing buttons/keys’ (e.g. *He tapped in the code, then waited, knowing the signal was being scrambled through as many as dozen sub-routes before it got to its destination. ≈ He knocked quickly, tapping out the code Madam Lundy had given him.* (OXD)). Furthermore, the pairs of phrasal verbs containing the same constituent verb and opposite meaning particles can form an antonymous semantic relation as well (e.g. *He ran to the car, got in and drove off. ≠ The car door opened and a tall man got out*).

The first author who pointed to the phenomenon of meaning overlap between phrasal verbs containing the same constituent verb and different particle was Susan Lindner (1982), citing examples such as *to fill in/out an application form*, or *to live off bread and cheese/to live on fruit and raw vegetables* (Lindner 1982: 305). She argued that the overlap of meaning in these cases is a result of a profoundly complex and intricate semantic structure of phrasal verbs as highly polysemous lexical units. The phenomenon was further discussed by Milošević (2016a, 2016b) who has shown that, owing to different types of semantic motivation stemming from different underlying conceptual structures and spatial configurations/scenes,

the same pairs of particles (even opposite particles, such as e.g. *in* and *out*) can exhibit different semantic relations.

In this paper, we focus on the semantic relation of synonymy, which is perceived through its subcategory of *cognitive synonymy* (Cruse 1986, 2004). This means that synonymy is observed as truth-preserving interchangeability (Rasulić 2016: 133). Cognitive synonyms, according to Cruse (1986), are defined in terms of truth-conditional relations:

X is a cognitive synonym of Y if (i) X and Y are syntactically identical, and (ii) a grammatical declarative sentence S containing X has equivalent truth conditions to another sentence S1, which is identical to S except that X is replaced by Y. (Cruse 1986: 88)

Furthermore, in relation to the previously presented view of phrasal verb meaning stemming from different conceptual schemes underlying the semantics of the constituent verb and the particle, it is important to emphasize that the observed and elaborated synonymy among the investigated phrasal verbs is not arbitrary, but comes from the overlapping of the conceptual structures underlying the particles under examination, which is perfectly in line with the fundamental tenets of cognitive semantics.

#### 4. RESEARCH RESULTS

Upon a detailed analysis of the collected examples, it has been established that the majority of meanings of phrasal verbs consisting of the same constituent verb and one of the three examined particles (*away*, *out* and *off*) do not overlap. For instance, this is the case with the phrasal verbs *go away*, *go out* and *go off*, as shown by the examples: *Go away and think about it a bit*, *Shall we go out for a meal tonight?* and *When are you going off on your trip?* (*AWAY* ≠ *OUT* ≠ *OFF*). Still, there is a considerable number of examples in which the investigated phrasal verbs exhibit a high level of synonymous relations. This can be corroborated by the following examples: *The mountains stretched out in the distance* vs. *Banana plantations stretch*

*away as far as the eye could see (out ≈ away); Put the light out before you come to bed vs. Could you put the lights off before you leave? (out ≈ off), or It was hard work stripping the old wallpaper off vs. Strip away the paint to reveal the wood underneath (off ≈ away).*

When we focus more closely on the cases of meaning overlap between the phrasal verbs under examination, we obtain the following results:

- In the first case, the meanings of all three particles, *away*, *out* and *off*, overlap and this is exemplified by the set of phrasal verbs *chase away ≈ chase out ≈ chase off*.
- The second case refers to the meanings of the particles *off* and *away* overlapping (e.g. *chip away ≈ chip off*).
- The third case includes instances where there is an overlap in the meaning of phrasal verbs containing the particles *off* and *out* (e.g. *cut off ≈ cut out*).
- The final, fourth case refers to the meanings of the particles *away* and *out* overlapping (e.g. *smooth away ≈ smooth out*).

In the following subsections, we will focus more closely on each of these four cases, and the specific instances of meaning overlap occurring within them. Taking into account a considerable number of examples recorded in the corpus, only the most representative ones for every case or instance will be provided.

#### **4.1. Overlapping of the meanings of all three particles: *away ≈ out ≈ off***

Our investigation has yielded only one instance of all three particles' conceptual-semantic structure overlapping, in the case of the phrasal verbs *chase away ≈ chase off ≈ chase out*, meaning 'to force sb/sth to run away by running after them or threatening them' (OXD), as illustrated by example 1.

(1) *He chased the attackers away/off/out by firing shots into the air.* (OXD)

Spatial configurations underlying the particles' conceptual structure and thus resulting in meaning overlap are the following: PUSHING THE TR<sup>2</sup> AWAY FROM THE LM, in the case of the particle *away* (Figure 4.1), TR BOUNCING OFF THE LM, in the case of the particle *off* (Figure 4.2), and PUSHING THE TR OUT OF THE LM in the case of the particle *out* (Figure 4.3). As a result, we may argue that the following joint features of these spatial scenes motivate the overlap in meaning: TRAJECTOR and LANDMARK are two separate entities, and a certain external force is exerted on the TRAJECTOR with a view to removing/pushing it from the LANDMARK.

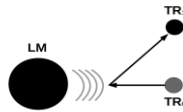


Figure 4.1: PUSHING THE TR AWAY FROM THE LM (particle *away*)

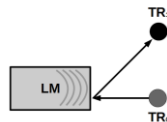


Figure 4.2: TR BOUNCING OFF THE LM (particle *off*)

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<sup>2</sup> TR stands for the trajector, and LM for the landmark.

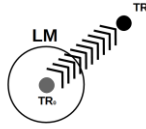


Figure 4.3: PUSHING THE TR OUT OF THE LM (particle *out*)

#### 4.2. Overlapping of the meanings of the particles *off* and *away*

In the light of the observed particles' conceptual and semantic framework, we have identified five distinct instances of meaning overlap between phrasal verbs containing the particles *off* and *away*. These instances come from different spatial configurations/scenes which underlie the conceptual-semantic structure of the respective particles, i.e. *off* and *away*.

Instance 1 refers to the cases of synonymy recorded in the corpus for the verb pairs *split off/away*, *chip off/away*, *pare off/away* and *trim off/away* (illustrated by examples 2 and 3).

(2) *The branch had split off/away from the tree.* (OXD)

(3) *She used a hammer to chip off/away the stone.* (OXD)

The established meaning overlap stems from the underlying spatial scene SEPARATION OF AN INTEGRAL PART (TR) FROM THE WHOLE (LM), inherent in the corresponding particles' semantic structure: the particle *off* (Figure 4.4) and the particle *away* (Figure 4.5). It can be argued that the overlap in meaning in this instance stems from the following joint feature of the two conceptual scenes: the TRAJECTOR is an integral part which is in some manner (depending on the semantics of the constituent verb) separated from the LANDMARK, which represents the whole.



Figure 4.4: SEPARATION OF AN INTEGRAL PART (TR) FROM THE WHOLE (LM)  
(particle *off*)

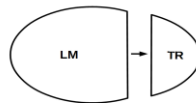


Figure 4.5: SEPARATION OF AN INTEGRAL PART (TR) FROM THE WHOLE (LM)  
(particle *away*)

The second instance includes synonymy in the two subcategories of phrasal verbs with the particles *off* and *away*: *dash off/away*, *drive off/away*, *speed off/away*, *walk off/away*, *wander off/away* and *slip off/away*, indicating the self-propelled movement of the trajector (illustrated by example 4), and *carry off/away*, *cart off/away*, *spirit off/away* and *whisk off/away*, indicating an external force exerted on the TRAJECTOR, forcing it to move away from the LANDMARK (example 5).

(4) *He dashes off/away every day at four o'clock.* (OXD)

(5) *A strong current carried the dinghy off/away.* (OXD)

In both subcategories of verbs, the observed overlap of meaning stems from the comparable conceptual scenes, namely, SEPARATION AND MOVING/ORIENTING OF THE TR in the case of the particle *off* (Figure 4.6), and TR MOVING AWAY FROM THE LM in the case of the particle *away* (Figure 4.7).

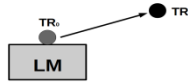


Figure 4.6: SEPARATION AND MOVING/ORIENTING OF THE TR (particle *off*)

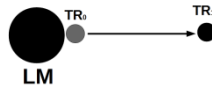


Figure 4.7: TR MOVING AWAY FROM THE LM (particle *away*)

The third separate instance of meaning overlap between phrasal verbs containing the particles *off* and *away* was recorded in our corpus for one pair of verbs, *drain off/away* (shown by example 6).

(6) *I drained the water off/away and hung up the blouse to dry.* (OXD)

The spatial configuration REMOVAL OF THE TR FROM THE SURFACE (LM) is responsible for the occurrence of meaning overlap in this pair of verbs, as it is illustrated in Figure 4.8 for the particle *off*, and Figure 4.9 for the particle *away*.

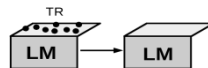


Figure 4.8: REMOVAL OF THE TR FROM THE SURFACE (LM) (particle *off*)



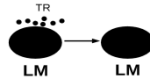


Figure 4.9: REMOVAL OF THE TR FROM THE SURFACE (LM) (particle *away*)

The fourth instance of the synonymy of phrasal verbs with the particles *off* and *away* refers to the following synonymous pairs recorded in the corpus: *frighten off/away* and *scare off/away* (illustrated by examples 7 and 8, respectively).

(7) *The noise frightened the birds off/away.* (OXD)

(8) *She used a whistle to scare off/away her attacker.* (OXD)

In this instance, the overlap in meaning is an immediate result of the possible comparison of the semantic structure of the spatial configurations TR BOUNCING OFF THE LM (Figure 4.10), which underlies the particle *off*, and PUSHING THE TR AWAY FROM THE LM (Figure 4.11), which underlies the particle *away*. The abstract meanings of these two pairs of verbs, ACCESS DENIAL and ATTACK REPULSION, also directly stem from the above-stated spatial scenes.

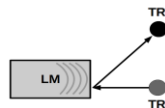


Figure 4.10: TR BOUNCING OFF THE LM (particle *off*)

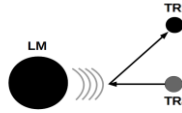


Figure 4.11: PUSHING THE TR AWAY FROM THE LM (particle *away*)

Finally, the fifth instance of the observed synonymy between phrasal verbs with the particles *off* and *away* comprises the following pairs: *veer off/away* and *sheer off/away* (illustrated by example 9), as well as *trail off/away* and *tail off/away* (example 10), the latter with the abstract meaning of MITIGATION OF THE CURRENT/USUAL EFFECT OR ACTIVITY.

(9) *The car sheered wildly off/away, just missing the truck.* (OXD)

(10) *The number of tourists starts to tail off/away in the summer.* (OXD)

These instances of meaning overlap between phrasal verbs with the particles *off* and *away* can be assigned to the underlying spatial scene DEVIATION OF THE TR FROM THE LM, illustrated by Figure 4.12 in the case of the particle *off*, and by Figure 4.13 when it comes to the particle *away*.

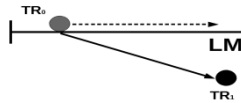


Figure 4.12: DEVIATION OF THE TR FROM THE LM (particle *off*)



Figure 4.13: DEVIATION OF THE TR FROM THE LM (particle *away*)

### 4.3. Overlapping of the meanings of the particles *off* and *out*

From the conceptual-semantic point of view, we have ascertained five different instances of meaning overlap between phrasal verbs with the particles *off* and *out*. Analogous to the previous cases, these instances also stem from various comparable spatial scenes underlying the conceptual-semantic framework of the above-mentioned particles.

The first instance has been detected in our corpus for the synonymous pairs *set off/out*, *strike off/out* and *ship off/out* (illustrative examples 11 and 12).

(11) *Check your oil before setting off on a long journey.* (OXD)

(12) *They set out on the last stage of their journey.* (OXD)

The observed synonymy stems from the following spatial configurations underlying the particles' conceptual structure: SEPARATION (FROM THE LM) AND ORIENTATION OF THE TR (Figure 4.14) in the case of the particle *off*, and TR MOVING AWAY FROM THE STARTING POINT/ORIGIN (LM) (Figure 4.15) when it comes to the particle *out*. These comparable scenes exhibit the following joint features responsible for the occurrence of synonymy: the TRAJECTOR moves away from the LANDMARK and is oriented towards the final destination/goal.



Figure 4.14: SEPARATION (FROM THE LM) AND ORIENTATION OF THE TR  
(particle *off*)

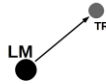


Figure 4.15: TR MOVING AWAY FROM THE STARTING POINT/ORIGIN (LM)  
(particle *out*)

The second instance of meaning overlap of phrasal verbs containing the particles *off* and *out* can be illustrated with the following verb pairs recorded in the corpus: *cut off/out*, *mark off/out* and *vote off/out* (examples 13–16).

- (13) *He cut his son off without a penny.* (OXD)
- (14) *She cut me out of her will.* (OXD)
- (15) *What will he do if he gets voted out?* (OXD)
- (16) *Parsons was voted off the Board.* (OXD)

The abstract meanings of EXCLUSION or DIFFERENTIATION featured in these verb pairs are the result of the comparable spatial scenes REMOVAL OF THE TR FROM THE LM in the case of the particle *off* (Figure 4.16), and SEPARATION OF AN INTEGRAL PART (TR) FROM THE WHOLE (LM) when it

comes to the particle *out* (Figure 4.17), which underlie their semantic structures respectively, the joint feature of both scenes referring to the disintegration of the LANDMARK in a certain way, either by removal or separation of the TRAJECTOR.



Figure 4.16: REMOVAL OF THE TR FROM THE LM (particle *off*)

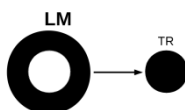


Figure 4.17: SEPARATION OF AN INTEGRAL PART (TR) FROM THE WHOLE (LM) (particle *out*)

The third instance of meaning overlap comprises phrasal verb pairs *put off/out*, *turn off/out* and *knock off/out*. These synonymous pairs exhibit the following abstract meanings modelled on the two ascertained spatial configurations: NON-FUNCTIONING, illustrated by the verbs *put off/out* and *turn off/out* (examples 17 and 18) and DEFEAT, exemplified by the phrasal verbs *knock off/out* (examples 19 and 20).

(17) *Could you put the lights off before you leave?* (OXD)

(18) *Put the light out before you come to bed.* (OXD)

(19) *She easily knocked off her Republican opponent in the last election.* (OXD)

(20) *France knocked Belgium out of the European Cup.* (OXD)

Spatial configurations LOSS OF THE TR'S PHYSICAL SUPPORT (LM) (Figure 4.18) and THROWING THE TR OUT OF THE LM (Figure 4.19), motivating the conceptual structure of the particles *off* and *out* respectively, are responsible for the synonymy between the above-mentioned phrasal verb pairs.

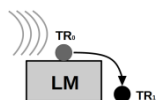


Figure 4.18: LOSS OF THE TR'S PHYSICAL SUPPORT (LM) (particle *off*)

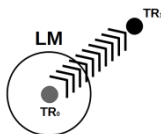


Figure 4.19: THROWING THE TR OUT OF THE LM (particle *out*)

The fourth instance of meaning overlap between phrasal verbs containing the particles *off* and *out* has been corroborated in the corpus for the synonymous pair *round off/out*.

(21) *I rounded off/out the corners with sandpaper.* (OXD)

The observed synonymy in this particular verb pair stems from the following comparable spatial scenes constituting the above-stated particles' conceptual framework: REMOVAL OF THE TR FROM THE LM SURFACE (Figure

4.20), in the case of the particle *off*, and DISAPPEARANCE OF THE TR (CONTAINED WITHIN THE LM) (Figure 4.21), in the case of the particle *out*.

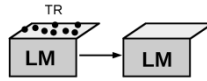


Figure 4.20: REMOVAL OF THE TR FROM THE LM SURFACE (particle *off*)

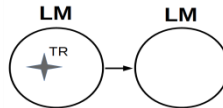


Figure 4.21: DISAPPEARANCE OF THE TR (CONTAINED WITHIN THE LM) (particle *out*)

The final instance within the synonymous relations established between the observed phrasal verbs with the particles *off* and *out* refers to the pair *level off/out* (examples 22 and 23).

(22) *The plane levelled off at 20 000 feet. (OXD)*

(23) *The road began to level out as we approached the coast. (OXD)*

The meaning overlap in this particular phrasal verb pair is an immediate result of the spatial configuration LEVELLING OF THE TR RELATIVE TO THE HORIZONTAL PLANE (LM), underlying both the semantic structure of the particle *off* (Figure 4.22), and the particle *out* (Figure 4.23).

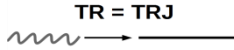


Figure 4.22: LEVELLING OF THE TR RELATIVE TO THE HORIZONTAL PLANE (LM) (particle *off*)

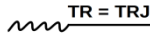


Figure 4.23: LEVELLING OF THE TR RELATIVE TO THE HORIZONTAL PLANE (LM) (particle *out*)

**4.4. Overlapping of the meanings of the particles *away* and *out***

As regards the synonymous relations between phrasal verbs containing the particles *away* and *out*, two distinct instances have been identified in the examples from the corpus.

The first instance is supported by the synonymous pair *smooth away/out*, which carries the abstract meaning of PROBLEM/DIFFICULTY-SOLVING, illustrated by the following example.

- (24) *We are here to smooth away/out any practical problem for you.*  
(OXD)

The meaning overlap in this specific instance comes directly from the comparable conceptual-semantic framework underlying the constituent particles – *away* and *out*. In particular, the following spatial configurations motivate such overlapping: FADING OF THE TR (AWAY FROM THE LM) in the



case of the particle *away* (Figure 4.24), and DISAPPEARANCE OF THE TR (CONTAINED WITHIN THE LM) when it comes to the particle *out* (Figure 4.25).

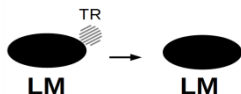


Figure 4.24: FADING OF THE TR (AWAY FROM THE LM) (particle *away*)

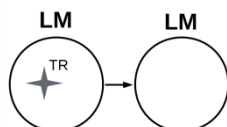


Figure 4.25: DISAPPEARANCE OF THE TR (CONTAINED WITHIN THE LM) (particle *out*)

Regarding the second instance of meaning overlap between phrasal verbs containing the particles *away* and *out*, there is also one verb pair recorded in the corpus, *stretch away/out*, and the synonymy can be observed in the following examples:

- (25) *The mountains stretched away into the distance.* (OXD)
- (26) *Banana plantations stretched out as far as the eye could see.* (OXD)

The overlap of meaning stems from the conceptual scene TR SPREADING TO ITS MAXIMAL BOUNDARIES, underlying the conceptual structure of the verb with the particle *away* (Figure 4.26), as well as the verb with the particle *out* (Figure 4.27). In this instance, the TRAJECTOR and LANDMARK embody different locations of the same entity<sup>3</sup> and keep spreading or moving towards the outer boundary.

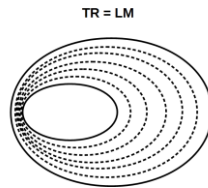


Figure 4.26: TR SPREADING TO ITS MAXIMAL BOUNDARIES (particle *away*)

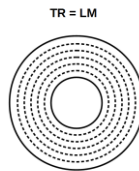


Figure 4.27: TR SPREADING TO ITS MAXIMAL BOUNDARIES (particle *out*)

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<sup>3</sup> This phenomenon was first noticed and labelled as the *reflexive trajectory* by Lindner (1981). It was later acknowledged by Lakoff (1987), and further elaborated as one of the most frequent image-schematic transformations.

## 5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUDING REMARKS

Based on the analysis of the examples collected from the corpus, it can be argued that the synonymous relations between or among the investigated phrasal verbs in the established cases are not arbitrary, but are a result of the closely comparable conceptual scenes motivating their semantic structure. The comparable conceptual scenes stem from different spatial configurations underlying the conceptual framework of their constituent particles (*away*, *out* and *off*). Moreover, these different configurations form a part of the broader concepts of PATH (in the case of the particle *away*), CONTAINMENT (*out*) and SUPPORT (*off*), which code this particular lexical-semantic segment of the English language. In some cases, the overlapping of certain segments of the conceptual-semantic structures of the observed particles is practically identical, which is corroborated by the existence of identical spatial configurations underlying the given particles' meaning (e.g. Case 4, Instance 2, the spatial scene TR SPREADING TO ITS MAXIMAL BOUNDARIES as a joint feature inherent in the semantics of both the particle *away* and *out*). On the other hand, in certain instances, meaning overlap comes as a result of the occurrence of highly similar and comparable underlying spatial configurations (e.g. Case 3, Instance 2, the spatial configuration REMOVAL OF THE TR FROM THE LM in the case of the particle *off*, and SEPARATION OF AN INTEGRAL PART (TR) FROM THE WHOLE (LM) in the case of the particle *out*). Furthermore, the pairs of phrasal verb synonyms including the particles *away* and *off* and *off* and *out* appear to be more productive than the pairs of synonyms featuring the particles *away* and *out*. This might be due to a higher degree of overlap between the conceptual structures which motivate the semantics of the examined particles.

As a conclusion, it may be argued that the results of our study further confirm the tenets of cognitive linguistics pertaining to the analysis of phrasal verb semantics, since both their meaning and meaning overlap with other phrasal verbs are explained in terms of the underlying spatial

configurations. Hence, this research may serve as a basis for further lexical and semantic investigations in the subfield of synonymous semantic relations established between/among phrasal verbs, as well as a framework for a more comprehensive description of the diverse and complex semantic relations between phrasal verbs containing other particles, where similar relations might be revealed and explained.

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NIKOLCHE MICKOSKI

## **CORPUS-BASED APPROACH TO DEFINING ICT TERMINOLOGY**

This paper explores the corpus-based approach to determine the terms which should be covered in a special course on ICT- (information and communication technologies) related terminology. In addition, it will provide an insight into whether the currently used Macedonian ICT terminology should be harmonised and whether the National ICT glossary should be updated. For the purpose of providing general information on ICT terms used in the Macedonian language, a corpus containing 176,550 word types was compiled from six relevant websites (www.it.mk, www.smartportal.mk, www.telefoni.mk, www.metamorphosis.mk, www.aec.mk, www.finki.ukim.mk) so as to be representative of ICT terminology. Findings of the corpus analysis showed that the National ICT glossary contains almost all of the most frequent terms used in ICT-related websites. In addition, all of the most frequent terms used in ICT-related websites are covered in the special course on ICT-related terminology. Moreover, the Macedonian ICT terminology which is currently used in ICT-related media is harmonised with the National ICT Glossary to a certain extent, but further harmonisation is required in order to ensure that the same terms and translation equivalents will be used to denote the same concepts.

Keywords: corpus, Macedonian ICT terminology, frequency analysis, trending terms

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

Terminology related to information and communication technologies (ICT) comes from the English language and ICT-related terms are initially introduced into a target language predominately through books (school books for primary and secondary education, as well as university books), the media (specialised ICT-related web portals), and, in some cases, by competent state institutions (Agency for Electronic Communications, Ministry of Information Society and Administration). When it comes to introducing ICT terminology into the Macedonian language, the situation is the same. ICT-related terms are

usually randomly translated into Macedonian or simply transcribed and transliterated, and are not properly localized.

In order to address the need for a national ICT terminology, in 2008, the Macedonian Ministry of Information Society established a working group consisting of representatives of relevant stakeholders in information and communication technologies. Participants in the working group were 19 representatives of the Institute of Macedonian Language “Krstе Misirkov”, Faculty of Philology “Blazhe Koneski”, Faculty of Electrical Engineering and Information Technologies at Ss. Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje, European University, Macedonian Academy of Arts and Sciences, Macedonian ICT Chamber, Association of Economic Chambers, Microsoft Macedonia, Ministry of Information Society, Ministry of Culture and Agency for Electronic Communications. The working group worked on a list of terms provided by the Ministry of Information Society. The list was a collection of terms which were frequently used in ICT-related texts at that time. In 2009, after one year of work, the Ministry of Information Society published the National ICT Glossary containing about 1,500 ICT-related terms and acronyms (Mickoski 2009: 367).

In the academic year 2010–2011, a special course on ICT terminology was introduced as an elective in the third semester at the Department for Translation and Interpreting at the Faculty of Philology “Blazhe Koneski”, Ss. Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje. The aim of this special course is to present the most frequent ICT-related terms to future translators and interpreters in order to be able to use them in their work. During the course, the students are taught about the importance of terminology for their future professions, the basics of glossary creation, how to come up with appropriate translation equivalents for a given term, etc. Some of the terms which are elaborated in this course are taken from the National ICT Glossary, and some are ICT-related terms which are frequently used in everyday life. The course covers about 300 ICT-related terms and they are updated each year, taking into account emerging new terms and their growing use in everyday life.



## 2. GOAL AND SUBJECT OF THE ANALYSIS

The goals of this analysis are to determine whether the special course on ICT terminology should be updated with new terms, whether the currently used Macedonian ICT terminology should be harmonised and whether the National ICT glossary should be updated. In addition, the analysis of the corpus will show whether different terms are used to denote the same concepts. A comparison of the trending terms and the National ICT glossary will indicate whether the National ICT glossary needs to be updated with new terms.

The current approach to defining Macedonian ICT terminology is a traditional one and terminologists write dictionaries based on attested usage. They work on a set of terms which are chosen arbitrarily, based on personal preference. They do not provide additional justification as to why a term was included in a glossary or dictionary. Terminologists do not create corpora in order to obtain lexical frequency data in ICT-related texts to verify the term selection. They provide translation equivalents of the terms, but are not able to explore other translation equivalents already in use and are unable to support the relevance of the proposed translation equivalents with lexical frequency data about their usage in professional life.

On the other hand, the corpus-based approach is neglected. However, before we delve deeper into this approach, we must define the term ‘corpus’. There is an increasing consensus, that a corpus is a collection of (1) *machine-readable* (2) *authentic* texts (including transcripts of spoken data) which is (3) *sampled* to be (4) *representative* of a particular language or language variety (McEnery et al. 2006: 5). This approach should be taken into consideration, because it can help reduce researcher bias. Corpus linguistics software offers both quantitative and qualitative perspectives on textual data, computing lexical frequencies and measures of statistical significance, as well as presenting data extracts in such a way that the researcher can assess individual occurrences of search words, qualitatively examine their collocational environments, describe salient semantic patterns and identify discourse

functions (Mautner 2009: 123). Biber et al. (1998) describe corpus linguistics as having four main features: 1) it is an empirical (experiment-based) approach in which patterns of language use that are observed in real language texts (spoken and written) are analysed, 2) it uses a representative sample of the target language stored as an electronic database (a corpus) as the basis for the analysis, 3) it relies on computer software to count linguistics patterns as part of the analysis, and 4) it depends on both quantitative and qualitative analytical techniques to interpret the findings.

### 3. ANALYSIS

In the twenty-first century, all good dictionaries take corpus data as their starting point (Atkins and Rundell: 16), although the practice can be traced back to Dr. Johnson's dictionary from 1755. The importance of our findings from a corpus, whether quantitative or qualitative, depends on another general factor which applies to all types of corpus linguistics: the corpus data we select to explore a research question must be well matched to that research question (McEnery and Hardie: 2). In order to provide general information on ICT terms which are frequently used in the Macedonian language, a corpus containing 176,550 word types was compiled from relevant websites with ICT-related content. The corpus was created on December 12, 2016. It consists of six subcorpora compiled from ICT-related media websites<sup>1</sup>. ICT-related media websites were selected according to the number of articles and ICT-related topics. The website of the Metamorphosis Foundation was selected due to the fact that it contains ICT-related content in civil society

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<sup>1</sup> Media websites ([www.it.mk](http://www.it.mk), [www.smartportal.mk](http://www.smartportal.mk), [www.telefoni.mk](http://www.telefoni.mk)), Metamorphosis Foundation website [www.metamorphosis.mk](http://www.metamorphosis.mk), website of the Agency for Electronic Communications of the Republic of Macedonia ([www.aec.mk](http://www.aec.mk)), and website of the Faculty of Computer Science and Engineering at Ss. Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje ([www.finki.ukim.mk](http://www.finki.ukim.mk))

context. The website of the Agency for Electronic Communications (AEC) was selected because AEC is the only independent regulatory body for electronic communications in the Republic of Macedonia, and the website of the Faculty of Computer Science and Engineering (FINKI) at Ss. Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje was chosen because FINKI curricula are ICT-oriented and the content on the website reflects the terminology used in the teaching process.

The corpus analysis was performed by using a freeware corpus analysis toolkit for concordancing and text analysis, AntConc ver. 3.4.4w for Windows (Laurence 2012). The Word list feature of AntConc provided the word frequency data, while the Concordance feature showed how the words are used in different contexts (Key Word in Context – KWIC). The raw corpus has a total of 176,550 word types and it contains ICT-related terms.

For the purpose of this analysis, the top 25 ICT-related terms with the highest lexical frequency are analysed and the results of the analysis are provided in Table 3.1. In order to obtain more relevant results relating to the frequency of the terms, all occurrences of the different forms of the terms (ex. singular, plural, postpositive articles, misspellings...) were taken into consideration.

Macedonian term	English term	Lexical frequency	Included in the special course on ICT terminology	Included in the National ICT Glossary	The same translation as in the National ICT Glossary
мрежа	network	13302	Yes	Yes	Yes
мобилни	mobile	11796	Yes	Yes	Yes
интернет	Internet	9584	Yes	Yes	Yes
апликација	application	9526	Yes	Yes	Yes
софтвер	software	8702	Yes	Yes	Yes
приватност	privacy	7429	Yes	Yes	Yes

податоци	data	7365	Yes	Yes	Yes
технологија	technology	7170	Yes	No	No
телефон	phone	6940	Yes	Yes	Yes
веб	web	6737	Yes	Yes	Yes
хардвер	hardware	6272	Yes	Yes	Yes
корисник	user	5712	Yes	Yes	Yes
десктоп	desktop	5054	Yes	Yes	No
оперативен	operating	4042	Yes	Yes	Yes
инсталира	install	3952	Yes	Yes	Yes
лаптоп	laptop	3615	Yes	Yes	Yes
друштвени	social	3752	Yes	No	No
таблет	tablet	3608	Yes	Yes	No
wifi	wifi	3186	Yes	Yes	No
верзија	version	3155	Yes	Yes	Yes
безбедност	security	3145	Yes	Yes	Yes
сајт	site	3099	Yes	Yes	No
паметен	smart	2856	Yes	No	No
блог	blog	2712	Yes	Yes	Yes
линк	link	2088	Yes	Yes	No

Table 3.1. Top 25 ICT-related terms with highest lexical frequency

#### 4. FINDINGS

The analysis shows that out of the top 25 most frequent ICT-related terms in the corpus, only three are not included in the National ICT Glossary. The first, “технологија” (translation equivalent of the English term “technology”), has a lexical frequency of 7170 occurrences. However, this is a more general term which is frequently used in everyday life, and since it is part of the general vocabulary, there is no need to add it to the glossary.

The second and the third term appeared in the ICT-related terminology and that is the reason why they are not included in the National ICT Glossary. The second term, “друштвени” (translation equivalent of the English term “social”), is a term which is frequently used, especially with the popularity of social networks and the social media. The term “друштвени” in Macedonian can collocate only with the term “мрежи”, forming the collocation “друштвени мрежи”. The term “социјални” (also a translation equivalent of “social”) can collocate with both “мрежи” and “медиуми” (Figure 4.1.). A combined lexical frequency of 4906 occurrences indicates that the translation equivalent of the English term “social” should be included in the National ICT Glossary. But, when adding the translation equivalent term to the glossary, both possible translation equivalents should be taken into account: “друштвени”, with a lexical frequency of 3752 occurrences, and the other possible translation equivalent, “социјални”, with a lexical frequency of 1154 occurrences.

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 :ата се фокусира на употребата на **социјални** медиуми за социјална интеракција и д-  
 ттимедија Квиз: Онлајн-граблицы **Социјални** мрежи Активност во рамки на проект  
 идео туторијали за мултимедија и **социјални** медиуми наменети за новинари Тутори-  
 л и промоција на содржини преку **социјални** медиуми. Обуката започна со сесијата  
 : видеосодржини, авторски права, **социјални** медиуми и локални сервиси за промол-

Figure 4.1. Concordance results for the term “социјални”

The third term, “паметни” (translation equivalent of the English term “smart”), is a term borrowed from general vocabulary. The definition of “smart” in *Oxford Dictionaries Online* is: “(a device) programmed so as to be capable of some independent action” (*Oxford Dictionaries Online* 2017). With the rapid expansion of devices that can be classified as “smart”, the use

of the term is increasing. That is the reason why the term “паметни” collocates with many different terms such as “нараквица” (translation equivalent of “band”), “телефон” (translation equivalent of “phone”), “уред” (translation equivalent of “device”), “шише” (translation equivalent of “bottle”) and more (Figure 4.2.). The lexical frequency of the term “паметни” of 2856 occurrences is sufficient justification for adding it to the National ICT Glossary.

ла портфолио и на... Polar A360 **Паметна** нараквица за професионални спортисти |  
а за професионални спортисти **Паметна** или „паметна“, технологијата полека навл  
нални спортисти **Паметна** или „паметна“, технологијата полека навлегува во секој;  
„опаметува“ домашните уреди **Паметни** телефони, таблети, сензори, асистенти, ча  
влегување во категоријата на „паметни“ Влегувањето на одредени автомобили в  
автомобили во категоријата на **паметни** уреди/производи, значи... HidrateMe Пам  
/производи, значи... HidrateMe **Паметно** шише кое ќе ве потсетува да се  
дравје со преносен ЕКГ уред за **паметните** телефони ЕКГ, односно Електрокардио  
греба да овозможи... Камера за **паметни** уреди што ја открива хемиската структур  
. Li Ning и Xiaomi ќе претстават **паметни** спортски патики Li Ning е компанија која

Figure 4.2. Concordance results for the term “паметни”

There are several differences between the concepts denoted by the most frequent terms in the corpus and translation equivalents provided in the National ICT Glossary. The first difference is in the term “десктоп” (English term “desktop”), due to the concepts that the English term “desktop” refers to. The definitions of “desktop” in *Oxford Dictionaries Online* are: “1. A computer suitable for use at an ordinary desk” and “2. The working area of a computer screen regarded as a representation of a notional desktop and containing icons representing items such as files” (*Oxford Dictionaries Online* 2017). The translation equivalent provided in the National ICT Glossary refers to the second definition and there is no translation equivalent for the first definition. As we can see from the concordance analysis shown below, in Figure 4.3., some of the occurrences in the corpus refer to the first definition, and some refer to the second one,

but there is only one translation equivalent for both concepts – the transliterated term “десктоп”.

орисниците испраќање на пораки преку десктоп... Skype преведувачот достапен за Windows Center Windows Key + D - покажува Десктоп Windows Key + E - го покренува Explore + Ctrl + D - создавање на нов виртуелен десктоп Windows Key + Ctrl + F4 - затворање на Ctrl + F4 - затворање на новиот виртуелен десктоп Windows Key + Ctrl + лево или десно - лево или десно - промена на виртуелниот десктоп Windows 10 Desktop Shortcuts Windows се активира на сајтовите кои имаат само десктоп верзии при што со тапкање на страната збија, но доколку сакате да ја пристапите десктоп верзијата текстот ќе се прикаже според зето на мобилните уреди во споредба со десктоп компјутерите. Важното во овој случај е у соодветна апликација за смартфон или десктоп. Ако е надвор од дометот тогаш на секоја платформа. Програмата отсега кај десктоп верзиите ќе... Google Pixel, iPhone 7 и Sa

Figure 4.3. Concordance results for the term “десктоп”

The second difference between the compiled corpus and the National ICT glossary is in the term “таблет”. The definition of tablet in *Oxford Dictionaries Online* is: “A small portable computer that accepts input directly on to its screen rather than via a keyboard or mouse” (*Oxford Dictionaries Online* 2017). A collocation analysis of the term “таблет” shows that it usually collocates with “компјутер”, forming the collocation “таблет компјутер” (Figure 4.4.), while the term in the National ICT Glossary is “таблет-компјутер”. Hence, the difference between the term in the corpus and the term in the National ICT Glossary is in the hyphen. This means that awareness should be raised among ICT-related media that they should use the correct, hyphenated form of the term. According to Macedonian spelling rules, a hyphen is used when a compound term consists of stems which are partially independent (Cvetkovski et al. 2015: 62).

На Google Nexus Nougat Веќе со години, **таблет** компјутерите и паметните телефони кои д Сопствениците на Nexus телефоните и **таблет** компјутери (Nexus 6, Nexus 5X, Nexus 6P, и Синескиот производител Vtech продава **таблет** компјутери, телефони за деца и монитори те од календарот, поштата на телефон, **таблет** или десктоп компјутер. Покрај [...] Прочита зните тастатури за паметни телефони и **таблет** компјутери. Апликацијата е користи на 30 тем дел, 73.8 од сите испитаници имаат **таблет**, десктоп или лаптоп компјутер поврзан на телефоните кои имаат поголеми екрани и **таблет** компјутерите кои ги заменуваат лаптопите од него многу е поблиску до графички **таблет** отколку до стандарден десктоп. Екранот м тивен систем за сите Android телефони, **таблет** компјутери, па дури и за автомобили и тај повеќе Lenovo Yoga Book е одличен **таблет**-лаптоп хибрид, кој за жал е неприлагоден

Figure 4.4. Concordance results for the term “таблет”

The third different term is “Wi-Fi”. The definition of Wi-Fi in *Oxford Dictionaries Online* is: “A facility allowing computers, smartphones, or other devices to connect to the Internet or communicate with one another wirelessly within a particular area” (*Oxford Dictionaries Online* 2017) and there is a note that the term is a trademark, which means that it should not be translated. In ICT-related media, the term “Wi-Fi” is not translated (Figure 4.5.), while in the National ICT glossary the translation equivalent “безжичен” is given as part of the phrase “безжичен заштитен пристап”, as a translation equivalent of “Wi-Fi Protected Access”. This means that the National ICT Glossary should be updated with the corrected term.

на пример вграден модем за целуларна мрежа, **Wi-Fi** и Bluetooth. Сега, Microsoft ни покажа вграден модем за целуларна мрежа (LTE), за **Wi-Fi** и за Bluetooth. На демото, Microsoft ова ќе мора да го направите на **Wi-Fi** мрежа. Надградбата ќе ве донесе до те. Отворете ја апликацијата, поврзете се преку **Wi-Fi**, изберете модел, изберете боја, притиснет реку поставката за исклучување/вклучување на **Wi-Fi** не можете да се поврзете на -Fi не можете да се поврзете на **Wi-Fi** мрежа – за тоа мора да ја мрежа – за тоа мора да ја притиснете **Wi-Fi** командата на таскбарот. Ова е лошо спојат во едно, како и некои ситници – **Wi-Fi** поврзувањето има две команди, додека и ги прават надградбите најчесто кога се на **Wi-Fi** мрежа, меѓутоа за тие кои ја даваат преку „вендинг машини“ Google Home е **Wi-Fi** звучник со вграден Google Assistant Pilot

Figure 4.5. Concordance results for the term “Wi-Fi”



The fourth different term is “cajt” (English term “site”). The definition of “site” in *Oxford Dictionaries Online* is: “A website” (*Oxford Dictionaries Online* 2017), while the definition for “website” is: “A set of related web pages located under a single domain name” (*Oxford Dictionaries Online* 2017). The translation equivalent of the term “site” provided in the National ICT Glossary is “веб-локација”, but in ICT-related media, the transliterated term “cajt” (and “вебcajt”) is most frequently used. Just to illustrate, the correct translation equivalent “веб-локација” and the alternative term without a hyphen, “веб локација”, have 0 occurrences, which means they are not used at all (Figure 4.6.). Considering the fact that the term used in ICT-related media, “cajt”, has no meaning in Macedonian, ICT-related media should be more aware that the terms they are using should have a certain meaning in Macedonian and should comply with Macedonian word-formation rules.

\* Вебcajt ← ИТ настан: Седмо издание на [Cajт](#) на годината Обновено: Британија го донесе на ет Nikon CoolPix 995 [...] Прочитај повеќе [Cajт](#) на денот: Instagramy.tk е веб ризницата изираат посетеноста и активноста на овој [cajt](#) и да објавуваат подобри содржини. Во некои Америка.”, објаснуваат на официјалниот [cajt](#) и додаваат: Огромниот свет на играта ќе р фејсбук Дали мислите дека Google е #1 [cajt](#) по посетеност? Дали сте се запрашале колку % Ко-основачот на контроверзниот торент [cajt](#) Pirate Bay, Петер Сунде започна кампања со Webstriar им овозможува бесплатен веб [cajt](#) на новите стартапи T-mobile 8 декември 2016 иполнително дозволуваат до 20 обиди по [cajt](#). Веб сајтовите не се конзистентни во проверки најголемите поети, Т. С. Елиот, доби нов [cajt](#) Facebook, Microsoft, Twitter и Google почнува Sites алатка Алатки веб дизајн дизајн на [cajt](#) Од Дејан Соколки 23 ноември 2016 во Веб, (

Figure 4.6. Concordance results for the term “cajt”

The last different term which will be analysed in this paper is the term “линк” (English term “link”). The definition of the term “link” in *Oxford Dictionaries Online* is: “A code or instruction which connects one part of a program or an element in a list to another” (*Oxford Dictionaries Online* 2017). The term “link” is also a general term and the translation equivalent is “врпка”, which is provided in the National ICT Glossary, but in

ICT-related media, the transliterated term “линк” is used most frequently (Figure 4.7.). Just to illustrate the prevalence of “линк”, which has 2088 occurrences, the correct translation equivalent “врска” has a lexical frequency of 492 occurrences.

иум (USB, DVD), Избегнувајте кликување на [линкови](#) и прикачени фајлови кои доаѓаат во форма на шпекулации, теории на заговор и clickbait [линкови](#). Речиси секој медиум кој ја третира темата да ве заштити од последици од кликување [линкови](#) или иницијализирање програми од сомнителен . Quick Access е област каде имате директни [линкови](#) до најчесто користени [...] Прочитај повеќе Конф. од 200 до 250 евра, за Броусинг/Скајп [Линкови](#) BBC The city getting rich from fake интернетот во соодветен формат и секција за [линкови](#) од други сајтови кои мислиме дека секој читателно постоеле и планови за напади преку [линкови](#) за Google и Samsung продавниците, јави нац , блог или форум пост сега ќе најдете [линкови](#) до релевантна содржина многу побргу откако social plugin друштвени плагини индексирање [линкови](#) лични податоци персонализирање профил фејс

Figure 4.7. Concordance results for the term “линкови”

## 5. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Before discussing the presented findings, we must take into consideration that the analysis was conducted on a relatively small-scale corpus of six ICT-related websites and that this was a more general exploration intended to outline the possible adoption of the corpus-based approach to defining ICT-related terminology.

This paper discusses how a corpus-based approach can help in selecting the most relevant ICT-related terms which should be explained in the National ICT Glossary and ICT-related dictionaries. First, the current situation with ICT-related terminology in Macedonian was presented. Next, explanations were provided on how the corpus was created and clarifications were given on why the six websites were taken into consideration when creating the corpus.

The results of the analysis showed that the special course on ICT terminology should not be updated with new terms because it already covers

all frequently used ICT-related terms. However, the National ICT Glossary should be updated with new terms, especially with terms which came into use after the publishing of the Glossary. In addition, the analysis showed that Macedonian ICT terminology which is currently used in ICT-related media is harmonised with the National ICT Glossary to a certain extent, but further harmonisation is required in order to ensure that the same terms and translation equivalents will be used to denote the same corresponding concepts.

A corpus-based approach to defining ICT-related terminology can be beneficial to Macedonian terminologists and dictionary-makers. If they can compile a representative corpus, they can identify which terms are frequent among the users and which are not. It will be easier for the users to adopt a defined term if they are already using it. This approach provides sufficient justification for the inclusion of specific terms in a glossary or dictionary, as well as almost all of the contexts in which a given term is used. Therefore, the sooner this approach is adopted in Macedonian terminology, the better ICT-related glossaries and dictionaries will be.

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MILEVICA BOJOVIĆ

## **BLENDED LANGUAGE LEARNING: STUDENTS' PERCEPTION OF EFL CLASSROOM READING PRACTICES AT UNIVERSITY EDUCATION LEVEL**

The study explores university students' perception of classroom reading practices in English as a foreign language in blended and face-to-face learning. Blended learning refers to a foreign language course which combines a face-to-face classroom component with the appropriate use of technology covering a wide range of recent technologies including the Internet, CD-ROMs, interactive whiteboards. Reading is the process of constructing meaning through the dynamic interaction between the readers' existing knowledge, the information suggested by the text, and the context of the reading situation. Reading activities in the English language classroom are evaluated. The participants are undergraduate biotechnology engineering students, learning English as a foreign language at the University of Kragujevac, Serbia. Two instruments are used in the study: the Background Information Questionnaire and the Students Foreign Language Reading Activities Evaluation Scale. Based on measures of internal consistency, descriptive statistics and a one-way analysis of variance, the study demonstrates that students exposed to blended learning had a more positive perception of the English classroom reading activities than their peers exposed to face-to-face instruction.

Keywords: academic context, blended learning, classroom reading practices, English as a foreign language, students' evaluation

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

Foreign language instruction may refer to various learning environments such as traditional face-to-face (F2F) instruction in the classroom, computer-mediated instruction, and blended learning environment.

Widespread access to information and communication technologies (ICTs) has facilitated the rapid growth of blended learning approaches in the higher education context, in which blended learning has the potential to increase student learning outcomes while lowering attrition rates in comparison with equivalent, fully online courses (Dziuban et al. 2004). Blended learning retains the face-to-face element, making it the best of both worlds. Blended courses may result in improving student literacy, providing students with new abilities that they benefit from throughout their academic and employment careers (Dziuban et al. 2004).

This study explores the concepts of blended learning and blended language learning, and reading in a foreign language and examines the undergraduate biotechnology engineering students' perception of classroom reading practices in English as a foreign language (EFL) in blended and face-to-face learning environments.

## **2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND**

### **2.1. Blended language learning**

The term *blended learning* is relatively new – the terms *hybrid* and *blended* are used interchangeably (Graham and Dziuban 2008: 270). It appeared around 2000 for the first time, when it was often connected with supplementing classroom learning with self-study e-learning tasks (Marsh 2012: 3). The term *blended learning* originated in the corporate training context (Sharma and Barrett 2007), then it was used in the higher education setting (Macdonald 2008), and, finally, it came to be used in foreign language teaching and learning (Whittaker 2013). It is not easy to say when the term became common in English language teaching (ELT); it probably coincides with the publication of the above-mentioned Sharma and Barrett's book *Blended Learning* in 2007 (Whittaker 2013: 11). Despite its widespread use in the corporate training sector, higher education context and ELT, an ongoing

discussion has ensued on the precise meaning of the term (Driscoll 2002; Oliver and Trigwell 2005; Sharma and Barrett 2007).

The difficulty to define the term arises from the inability to reach a consensus on one optimum definition. From a corporate standpoint, the term *blended learning* is described as a learning program where more than one delivery mode is being used with the objective of optimizing the learning outcome and costs of program delivery (Singh and Reed 2001: 1). These two authors do not explain the nature of these delivery modes; yet another, more explicit, definition (Valiathan 2002: 1) suggests they may include F2F classrooms, live e-learning, and self-paced learning and may range from classroom sessions to mentoring arrangements or the support of a subject matter expert in the same office or area (Reid-Young, n.d.). With regard to higher education, blended learning is commonly associated with the introduction of online media into a course or program, while, at the same time, recognizing that there is some merit in retaining face-to-face contact and other traditional approaches to supporting students (Macdonald 2008: 2). The term is defined as

a combination of technology and classroom instruction in a flexible approach to learning that recognizes the benefits of delivering some training and assessment online but also uses the other modes to make up a complete training program which can improve learning outcomes and/or save costs. (Bañados 2006: 534)

This definition identifies the lead modes as technology and classroom instruction, although “other modes” are not specified. The blended learning environments combine F2F instruction with technology-mediated instruction (Graham 2006).

The definitions of the term *blended learning* provided in relation to foreign language (FL) teaching and learning seem precise with regard to the mode of delivery. Neumeier (2005: 164) defines blended learning as being a combination of F2F and computer assisted learning (CAL) in a single teaching and learning environment. Similar definitions were provided by Sharma and

Barrett (2007: 7), as well as Dudeney and Hockly (2007: 137), with the only slight difference considering the reference to the CAL mode. It was substituted with either the term “technology” (Sharma and Barrett 2007: 7), covering a wide range of technologies such as Internet, CD ROMs and interactive boards, or the term “online delivery” (Dudeney and Hockly 2007: 137).

Three primary reasons for adopting blended learning in FL instruction include (Graham 2006: 8; Sharma and Barrett 2007): (1) improved pedagogy, as blended learning approaches increase the level of active learning strategies and peer-to-peer learning strategies; (2) increased access and flexibility – blended learning provides a balance between flexible learning options characteristic of online learning and the high-touch human interaction characteristic of some aspects of traditional face-to-face contact; and (3) greater cost-effectiveness, as blended learning systems provide an opportunity for reaching a large, globally dispersed audience in a short period of time with consistent semi-personal content delivery both in virtual and classroom environments. Cost-effectiveness as a reason for employing blended learning in FL learning and teaching may be questioned because the initial financial outlay for hardware and software is expensive. The costs depend on the design and the context – if students are to use their own computers, these costs are remarkably lowered. According to Hockly (2011, cited in Whittaker 2013: 14–15), additional reasons for using blended learning in FL teaching and learning are: learners’ expectations – learners expect technology to be integrated into their language classes; flexibility – learners expect to be able to fit learning into their busy lives, especially employed university students; finally, directives issued by the Ministry of Education (or similar institutions) – on certain occasions, teachers are expected to deliver blended learning courses.

Face-to-face (F2F) foreign language instruction and online language instruction may be blended at different levels (Graham 2006: 11–13): a) at the activity level, when a learning activity contains both F2F and online learning elements; b) at the course level, which is the most common way to blend, where learners are engaged in different online and F2F activities (during the semester, school year) that overlap in time or are sequenced chronologically;



c) at the program level (often occurring in higher education), where students are offered F2F courses and online courses or all the courses prescribed by the program are blended courses; and d) at the institutional level, where students have F2F classes at the beginning and at the end of the course, with online activities in between, or where all courses are realized in an online environment during one semester.

The effectiveness of blended language learning can be noticed in a remarkable improvement of writing skills and in the decrease in the levels of students' language anxiety (Adair-Hauck et al. 2000), in the improvement of students' FL speaking skills in addition to important improvements in all other skills, especially in listening, pronunciation, vocabulary and grammar (Bañados 2006: 542-543) as well as in the improvement of EFL reading skills (Bojović 2015: 31; Bojović 2017).

## **2.2. Reading and reading practices in the EFL classroom**

In the higher education setting reading is a key skill in FL learning and, beside writing, mathematics, communication, analytical and critical thinking, and computer skills, a basic academic competency for most FL students. Reading is a complex activity and process which is not easy to define. Various definitions are produced in the fields of mother tongue acquisition and foreign language learning/second language acquisition. According to Goodman (1981: 477–478), reading is the process of constructing meaning in response to the text and requires an interactive use of graphophonic, syntactic, and semantic cues to construct meaning. It is a complex skill requiring the coordination of a number of interrelated sources of information such as the information suggested by the text, the context of the reading situation, as well as the readers' existing knowledge (Wixson et al. 1987). It can also be defined as a complex process of understanding the meaning of a written text employing various cognitive skills such as letter and word recognition, knowledge of syntax, and recognition of text types and text structure (Richards and Schmidt 2010: 483).

The purpose of reading is the identification of the intended meaning of the written text (Richards and Schmidt 2010: 108). The reader's interaction with the text in order to gain information and reduce uncertainty includes the tasks the FL readers should perform and their reading strategies. The reading tasks and activities direct the point in instruction to language, rhetorical structures, vocabulary, or reading skills and strategies, so that the instruction could be more attentive to the processes the students should learn than to the mastery of individual language structure (Hudson 1989: 145). Earlier studies revealed that the frequency of using reading comprehension tests in the EFL classroom can affect the level of the students' reading comprehension: the higher the frequency of testing, the higher the students' scores on the final EFL reading comprehension test (Bojović 2010; Bojović 2015: 31).

EFL classroom reading activities refer to (Dubin and Bycina 1991; Urquhart and Weir 1998: 184–188): (1) preparatory pre-reading activities taken in order to activate the students' knowledge of the subject, to provide language preparation necessary for coping with the text, and to awaken the students' interests (e.g. previewing, introducing key vocabulary, word association, predicting, text surveys); (2) while-reading activities taken in order to understand the specific content and text structure, to promote active participation in reading and develop reading skills (e.g. reading for the main ideas, reading for details, clarifying, questioning, work on text structure and organization); and (3) post-reading activities usually taken in order to review the content (e.g. exercises are focused on grammar points, new vocabulary in context, word roots, discourse markers) and to consolidate what has been read by relating the new information to the students' knowledge and interests (e.g. role-plays, discussions, project work, expressing opinions through a writing assignment).

### **2.3. The role of students' perception in the foreign language educational framework**

Perception is the process of receiving information about and making sense of the world around us (McShane and Glinow 2005: 76). In this process the person will receive information from their surroundings and give meaning on the information received. Thus, the process of perception allows us to interpret and understand the information as people give their responses to the stimuli from their surroundings. The resulting perceptions affect our emotions and behaviour toward the objects, people, and events (McShane and Glinow 2005: 77), as well as the way they respond to something.

Although reading activities are important in authentic EFL reading, EFL reading activities are not always conducted in an efficient manner. Also, it does not mean that the students are improving their reading skills. The evaluation of the teaching techniques implemented by an EFL teacher is important as the students' affirmative perception means that foreign language instruction satisfies the students' needs (Ekaningrum and Prabandari 2015). Students' evaluation can contribute to improving FL teaching practices and programs (Norris 2009). Evaluative studies in the field of FL teaching and learning were focused on FL teacher education programs (Peacock 2009) and FL learning and teaching programs (Llosa and Slayton 2009; Norris 2009). On the other hand, a number of studies are focused on reading skills (Gibson and Levin 1975; Goodman 1973; Rumelhart 1980) and foreign language reading (Block 1992; Carrell and Eisterhold 1983; Grabe 1991), while few studies concern students' evaluation of FL classroom activities (Ekaningrum and Prabandari 2015). A recent study (Bojović 2016) suggests that students' perception of EFL classroom reading activities in the higher education context may be affected by the frequency of applying EFL reading comprehension tests and, to some extent, by the students' gender. In other words, more frequent testing raises the students' self-confidence in performing EFL reading tasks in an adequate manner and gives rise to students' affirmative perception of classroom reading practices. Also, female students perceived that they experienced

more frequent EFL reading activities and testing EFL reading than their male peers.

The research of students' perception and evaluation of EFL reading activities is important for getting to know their perception and evaluation of the language instructions implemented by the EFL teacher. A positive perception and evaluation of teaching EFL reading practices used by the teacher will make the students perceive teaching EFL reading practices as helpful and important for their reading performance; on the other hand, a negative response to EFL classroom reading instruction will decrease students' motivation for EFL reading activities (Ekaningrum and Prabandari 2015).

This study aims to emphasize the importance of students' perception of EFL reading activities in a higher education instructional setting and to identify the impact of blended language learning environment on their perception of EFL classroom reading activities. With respect to this aim, two questions framed this research: (1) What are the students' perceptions of EFL classroom reading activities?, and (2) Are there any significant differences between blended language learners and face-to-face language learners with regard to their perceptions of EFL classroom reading activities? The focus is on the following: how often students have the opportunity to practice EFL reading activities and testing reading in an academic education setting and in primary/secondary school, how difficult these tasks/activities are, the perceived effect of EFL reading activities and testing reading comprehension in the classroom context on the students' EFL reading skills, and the level of students' self-confidence in performing EFL reading tasks in an academic instructional context.

In the next section two foreign language teaching and learning environments are described in more detail, as well as the organization of two types of EFL classrooms, the students' EFL reading activities and contributions, and the nature of the blend.

### **3. TEACHING/LEARNING ENVIRONMENT**

The foreign language classroom activities were organized with two groups of undergraduate biotechnology students, based on the learning environment the students experienced at the level of university education: F2F foreign language instruction and blended language learning.

F2F instruction in EFL was the traditional education setting with the students and their teacher in the classroom. These 15-week sessions included the development of EFL reading skills for academic and specific purposes as the fundamental competence for successful university education and future professional career within the integrated skill education scheme (reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills). The development of reading skills involved pre-reading, while-reading and post-reading activities: pre-reading activities included predicting, word association, previewing, introducing key vocabulary; while-reading activities involved scanning and skimming, work on grammar, work on text organization, working out the meaning of unfamiliar words; finally, post-reading activities included review of the content, work on grammar, work on vocabulary in context, discourse features, discussions and debates, project work. The texts the students were given to read were authentic English passages in the field of fruit growing (e.g. growing raspberry and plum) and food technology processes (e.g. preservation methods, different methods of low-temperature storage, wine making). These texts were not written for the language classroom; they retained the original vocabulary and grammar and were not adapted or simplified. These passages in English were excerpted from printed monographs, as well as relevant scientific and vocational journals in the field of biotechnology, available online. In an EFL classroom, adopting a range of reading activities and styles is necessary for successful interaction with authentic texts.

There were two kinds of blends: the blend of interaction, involving the F2F component and online component, and the blend of tools, including available and free tools and applications such as e-mails, Skype, Dropbox,

YouTube, Google Hangouts, Adobe PDF, MS Office etc., for collaborative work, assignments, corrections, feedback and discussions. Due to the limited technology resources and non-existent Learning Management System in the classroom and on the faculty premises, the blended language classes were organized in such a way that the students learned mostly through weekly F2F sessions with their language teacher. During these 15-week sessions, the students read and discussed a variety of materials selected on the basis of their interests and taking into account their learning needs and future profession. The students were offered a wide range of activities and exercises (pre-reading, while-reading, and post-reading activities), as in the F2F language classroom, to help them develop and improve their reading skills and language knowledge. Their work continued in an online environment as individual work and homework. The students used different tools (e.g. the Internet, e-mails, Skype, Dropbox, Google+) to complete reading assignments and submit their completed work to the teacher. Also, the students were encouraged to develop their English vocabulary using online dictionaries or mobile application dictionaries. In addition, the students used these tools to communicate with the teacher and peers, to comment on their colleagues' project work, mostly through asynchronous communication. This communication unfolded as mostly asynchronous and sometimes synchronous.

#### **4. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY AND RESEARCH METHODS**

##### **4.1. Aim and hypothesis**

The study examines the undergraduate biotechnology engineering students' perception of the classroom reading activities in English as a foreign language (EFL) in two language learning environments, blended learning and face-to-face instruction. The aim of the study is to determine the effects of blended learning on the students' perception of EFL classroom reading activities. The hypothesis is that the students' perception of EFL

classroom reading activities is affected by the language learning environment.

#### **4.2. Participants**

The sample involved 91 undergraduate students (59 females and 32 males) in the field of biotechnical sciences. They were junior and senior students in the four-year Biotechnology Bachelor Program at the University of Kragujevac, Serbia, learning EFL, in two language learning environments – blended learning (46 students) and F2F instruction (45 students).

According to the results obtained by the EFL placement test, which was applied at the beginning of the semester, the students' EFL proficiency was at an intermediate level. The results obtained by the additional t-test indicate that there were no statistically significant differences in the EFL proficiency level between the students exposed to blended learning and their peers exposed to F2F language instruction.

#### **4.3. Variables**

The following variables are used in the study:

- 1) two language learning environments the students were exposed to: blended learning and F2F instruction; and
- 2) the students' perception of the EFL classroom reading practices: the frequency of EFL reading activities at different education levels – higher education, and primary and secondary education; whether EFL reading exercises help students better understand the English-medium materials; whether testing reading comprehension helps students better understand the English-medium materials; the difficulty of EFL reading exercises; the difficulty of EFL reading comprehension test tasks; the frequency of testing EFL reading in primary and secondary schools; and the degree of students' self-confidence in their own successful reading performance.

#### **4.4. Instruments**

Two research instruments were used in the collection of data: the Background Information Questionnaire (BIQ), and the Students' Foreign Language Reading Activities Evaluation Scale (SFLRAES), a tool created for measuring students' evaluation of reading practices in an EFL classroom (Bojović 2016). The BIQ was used to gather information about the students' demographic characteristics.

The SFLRAES was used to measure the students' perception of the EFL classroom reading activities. This self-report scale consists of eight items which measure the following: the frequency of reading activities in the university education context; whether reading exercises help students understand the texts better; whether testing reading comprehension help students understand the texts better; the difficulty of reading exercises; the difficulty of reading comprehension test tasks; the frequency of reading activities at the levels of primary and secondary education; the frequency of testing reading at the levels of primary and secondary education; and the degree of students' self-confidence in their own successful reading performance. It is a five-point Likert scale with item choices ranging from "never or almost never true of me" (1) to "always or almost always true of me" (5). The low end indicates a low frequency of reading activities and testing reading comprehension in the EFL classroom, the negative effects of EFL reading activities and testing on students' reading comprehension, and a low level of students' self-confidence in reading comprehension and vice versa. The exceptions are two items regarding the difficulty of reading exercises and the difficulty of reading comprehension test tasks; the response options for these two items range from "very difficult" (1) to "very easy" (5). The items were written in the participants' mother tongue (Serbian) to avoid unnecessary miscomprehension. After some revisions in wording, a pilot study was conducted among 59 undergraduate biotechnology engineering students; the instrument's overall internal reliability was established (Cronbach's alpha  $\alpha = 0.70$ ) indicating an adequate degree of internal



consistency and reliability (Deković et al. 1991; Holden et al. 1991) in measuring students' perception of EFL classroom reading practices.

#### **4.5. Procedures**

The instruments, the BIQ and SFLRAES, were administered to the participants during their regular EFL classes in F2F and blended language learning. The EFL classes were focused on developing the students' foreign language reading skills for academic and specific purposes involving a range of pre-reading (e.g. previewing, predicting, word association, work on key vocabulary), while-reading (e.g. reading to find the main idea in the text, reading for details, work on text structure and organization), and post-reading activities (e.g. grammar exercises, finding synonyms and antonyms, meaning of words in context, finding our word roots, as well as discussions and debates, role-plays, project work, or expressing opinions through a writing assignment); they also included the development of other aspects of EFL knowledge and skills (speaking, listening, and writing).

The test of internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha) showed that in this research the SFLRAES instrument, which was applied to measure the students' perception of EFL classroom reading practices, was found to be an internally consistent and reliable instrument based on a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of  $\alpha=0.72$  (Deković et al. 1991; Holden et al. 1991).

The measures of descriptive statistics (frequency analysis, mean values and standard deviation) and one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) were used for data processing. The obtained data were analyzed using *SPSS 20.00 Package for Windows*.

For the Likert-scaled items of the SFLRAES, the following key may help to interpret the means: mean values from 3.51 to 5.0 indicate a high frequency of EFL reading activities or testing reading comprehension, high degree of effectiveness of reading activities and testing reading comprehension on the development of students' EFL reading skills, low levels of difficulty of EFL reading tasks or high level of students' self-

confidence in EFL reading skills; mean values from 2.51 to 3.5 indicate all these factors being at medium level; finally, mean values from 1.0 to 2.5 indicate high levels of difficulty of EFL reading/testing tasks and low levels of other previously mentioned factors. The interpretation key is based on the interpretation of means of the Likert-type scales such as Oxford's instrument *The Strategy Inventory for Language Learning* (SILL), Version 7.0 (ESL/EFL), for measuring the frequency of the use of EFL learning strategies (Oxford 1989; Oxford 1990).

## 5. RESULTS

The results obtained by measures of frequency analysis revealed that less than half of the participants (41.8%) had a highly positive perception of the EFL classroom reading activities in the higher education context, while 8.8% of the students disagreed with such a perception. The rest of the students (49.4%, almost a half of the respondents) had a moderately positive perception of the EFL classroom reading activities in the higher education setting.

The results obtained by measures of descriptive statistics (mean values and standard deviations) indicate that the students had a generally positive perception of EFL classroom reading activities since the mean value for the overall perceived EFL reading activities was  $M=3.42$  (Table 5.1). A more detailed overview of the results is also given in Table 5.1. Also, the results of descriptive statistics show that there were no negative perceptions of any of the studied parameters among the participants in the research, since all the mean values were higher than 2.50 (the lowest mean value is 2.99) (Table 5.1).

The results obtained by the t-test indicate, as shown in Table 5.2, that the students who were exposed to blended language learning had a more positive perception of overall EFL classroom reading activities ( $M=3.62$ )

than those students exposed to F2F language instruction ( $M=3.23$ ), the mean difference being significant at 0.01 level ( $t=-3.31$ ,  $p=0.001$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ).

<b>EFL classroom reading activities – SFLRAES items</b>	Possible scores	M	SD
Frequency of EFL reading activities	1-5	3.71	1.17
How helpful classroom reading practice is for better text understanding	1-5	3.96	1.06
Difficulty of EFL reading exercises	1-5	3.05	0.58
Frequency of EFL reading practice – former experience	1-5	3.43	1.24
How helpful testing reading comprehension is for better text understanding	1-5	3.92	1.05
Difficulty of reading comprehension test tasks	1-5	3.04	0.54
Frequency of testing EFL reading – former experience	1-5	2.99	1.26
Self-confidence in successful EFL reading performance	1-5	3.27	0.98
Overall EFL classroom reading activities	1-5	3.42	0.59
<b>N = 91</b>			

Table 5.1 Students' evaluation of EFL classroom reading activities – SFLRAES items

Regarding the students' perception of the frequency of EFL reading practice in a university education context, the students who were exposed to blended learning perceived the reading activities to be more frequent compared to their peers exposed to F2F instruction, the mean difference being significant at 0.01 level ( $t=-4.29$ ,  $p=0.000$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) (Table 5.2). Students in the blended learning environment perceived EFL classroom reading activities as frequent ( $M=4.20$ ), while those in the F2F environment perceived them as moderately frequent ( $M=3.24$ ) (Table 5.2, Figure 5.3).

<b>EFL classroom reading activities</b>	Blended learning (M)	F2F learning (M)	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference
Frequency of EFL reading activities	4.20	3.24	-4.29	89	<b>0.000*</b>	-0.96
How helpful classroom reading practice is for better text understanding	4.27	3.65	-2.86	89	<b>0.005*</b>	-0.61
Difficulty of EFL reading exercises	3.07	3.04	-0.19	89	0.851	-0.02
Frequency of EFL reading practice – former experience	3.62	3.24	-1.48	89	0.141	-0.38
How helpful testing reading comprehension is for better text understanding	4.09	3.76	-1.51	89	0.136	-0.33
Difficulty of reading comprehension test tasks	3.07	3.02	-0.40	89	0.691	-0.05
Frequency of testing EFL reading – former experience	3.20	2.78	-1.59	89	0.115	-0.42
Self-confidence in successful EFL reading performance	3.44	3.11	-1.65	89	0.102	-0.34
Overall EFL classroom reading activities	3.62	3.23	-3.31	89	<b>0.001*</b>	-0.39

**N = 91 \*p < 0.01**

Table 5.2 Students' evaluation of EFL classroom reading activities in blended and F2F instruction

With regard to the perceived usefulness of the EFL classroom reading practice for better text understanding, the students exposed to blended learning considered the practice of EFL reading having highly positive effects on their EFL reading comprehension (M=4.27) compared to

their peers exposed to F2F language instruction who perceived the practice of EFL reading as significantly less effective ( $M=3.65$ ) (Table 5.2.) on students' text understanding ( $t=-2.86$ ,  $p=0.005$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). This is also illustrated in Figure 5.3.

No other significant differences were recorded between these two groups of students. Also, low mean values were not recorded among the students either in blended learning or in F2F instruction.

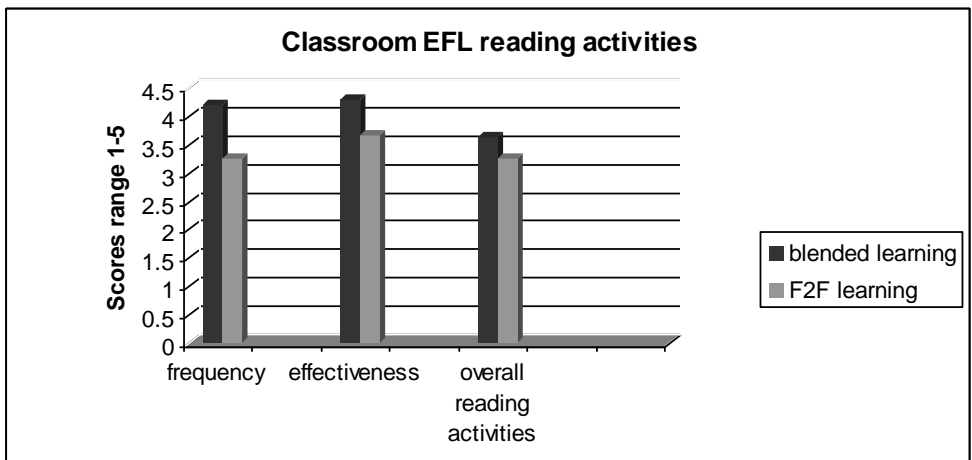


Figure 5.3 Differences in the students' perception of EFL reading activities in blended and F2F instruction

## 6. DISCUSSION

The results obtained by employing this instrument indicate that the biotechnology engineering students had a moderately positive overall perception of EFL classroom reading activities in a higher education setting. In the students' opinion, the EFL classroom reading activities and exercises and reading comprehension testing in the educational context are highly effective when it comes to their own EFL reading skills. Students'

opportunities to actively engage in instructional tasks and apply newly learned skills in practice are relevant factors in learning (Greenwood et al. 1992). Moreover, reading activities are seen as more frequent in the academic learning context than in primary or secondary education. The frequency of reading tasks is important since it is during the reading that reading techniques and strategies are activated, and they may lead to acquiring and developing EFL reading skills. If we have in mind that the reading tasks in the academic EFL classroom are more demanding than the ones in primary and secondary schools, that the selected texts are longer, their structures more complex and vocabulary less familiar, usually presenting multimodal concepts and requiring students to synthesize a range of information, it seems wise to increase both the frequency of reading activities and the length of instructional sessions in the academic setting; thus, the increased intensity of EFL reading activities may help students receive targeted instruction and increased opportunities to practice reading skills (Vaughn et al. 2012). Moreover, EFL teacher requirements usually involve reading tasks, generally done outside the classroom (e.g. for homework), which can demand deep reading due to the texts' complexity and length, in a specific discipline domain, as part of the preparation for a debate, writing assignments, role-play or project. Such reading tasks may enhance language competence, help improve writing, create and sustain motivation to read more (Nation 1997) and facilitate the development of general world knowledge and the acquisition of new vocabulary in context (Welch 1997). When reading exercises and tests are regularly practiced, students may become more self-confident in their reading skills; an earlier study (Bojović 2016) carried out with 59 learners of English as a foreign language suggested that the frequency of testing EFL reading skills can affect students' self-confidence in their own successful reading performance – the students who were tested three times perceived themselves to be considerably more self-confident in their EFL reading skills than their peers who were tested twice. Also, the students think that reading exercises and reading test tasks were not particularly difficult.

Students' evaluation of EFL classroom reading practices may be a very valuable post-reading activity as it is an attempt to ensure quality assurance and enhancement and creates a dialogue within programs for ongoing improvement of learning opportunities (Kiely 2009: 99). It gives students the opportunity to become aware of EFL classroom reading practices, of the chances to practice reading in the classroom, as well as of their levels of EFL reading comprehension (Nuttall 1996: 167, 188–189). This process of students' evaluation is important since it gives the teacher valuable feedback on classroom reading practices and helps the teacher develop potentially useful remedial practices and introduce changes in existing classroom reading practices.

The obtained results showed that the students exposed to blended language learning had a significantly more affirmative perception of the overall EFL classroom reading activities than their peers exposed to F2F language instruction. Additionally, the students exposed to a blended language environment claimed that they experienced EFL reading activities more frequently than their colleagues exposed to an F2F learning environment. This result can be ascribed to the longer exposure to reading English texts due to the online component of homework reading assignments given by the EFL teacher. The students in the blended learning environment also considered that EFL reading activities had a more significant influence on their levels of EFL reading comprehension compared to their peers exposed to F2F instruction. It seems that both learning environments, blended learning and F2F learning, facilitated an affirmative attitude to EFL reading practices in an academic setting; however, it is obvious from the findings that blended language learning was a more facilitative learning environment. The online component of blended learning provides the readers/learners with constantly updated materials with real-life vocabulary making the process of reading in an FL more motivating and valuable. Reading in such an environment has one additional advantage – it is rich in multimedia which provides learners with more varied stimuli, and learning and reading styles (Szymańska and Kaczmarek 2011: 40). In this way students are also exposed to foreign language countries related to the English

language using the Internet and other ICT (Information and Communication Technology) resources, which is important since students need to learn a language in the context of the culture (Zinan and Sai 2017: 72). Some studies report greater students' satisfaction with blended learning, compared to F2F instruction (Albrecht 2006: 6), as well as greater benefits from blended learning (Hitch et al. 2013).

The ICT component in blended language learning enables students to obtain reading materials they are interested in, to find help when they encounter reading or learning problems, and to navigate and monitor their learning process in order to meet their learning needs. Thus, students develop the ability to take charge of their own English language reading skills which may lead to higher achievement in reading (Ablard and Lipschultz 1998). Self-learning capability is related to the characteristics of successful readers and students' positive attitude toward reading (Zinan and Sai 2017: 72).

## **7. CONCLUSION**

The aim of the study was to investigate the undergraduate biotechnology students' perception of reading activities in the EFL classroom at the university education level, as well as the effects of blended language learning on the university students' perceptions of EFL classroom reading activities.

The obtained results revealed that the undergraduate biotechnology engineering students' attitude toward EFL classroom reading activities was generally positive. They considered EFL classroom reading activities and reading comprehension testing as remarkably effective practices in developing foreign language reading skills. Moreover, the students' self-confidence in their own reading performance was at a moderate level. The main conclusion drawn from these findings is that the students' attitude toward EFL classroom reading practices is positive in both language learning



environments. However, it seems that, according to the students' opinion, blended language learning was a more effective basis for developing EFL reading skills.

The findings suggest some implications for the EFL classroom. EFL teachers can offer various reading tasks in both F2F language instruction and blended language learning so that it could be made easier for students to put the foreign language into actual use. An online component can be also added in the usual EFL reading tasks as a useful segment which is to help students be exposed to updated authentic texts and versatile materials in order to keep them motivated to read, thus helping them improve their reading and language skills. Moreover, blended language learning provides a positive and pleasant atmosphere with a learner-centered classroom which enables students to learn independently. For students, blended learning is also a new learning experience both linguistically and technologically: this kind of learning is a new option for students to continue their preparation to compete in the current global world and to have access to diverse and updated information (Flórez et al. 2012). On the other hand, teacher support in blended learning is not minimized as the teacher answered the messages, graded exercises and homework, sent feedback to the students, and posted messages in order to promote students' interaction and participation. Therefore, it is highly important for EFL teachers to be well prepared to play the role of constant advisors, to promote Web 2.0 tools and answer students' doubts, to decrease students' misconceptions about reading in a blended learning environment.

This study has certain limitations. The results consider the perception of EFL academic classroom reading practices of a limited number of students in a very specific engineering domain. Thus, these results cannot be generalized to cover the whole student population in the biotechnology engineering domain and particularly not to the engineering profession in general. Moreover, the SFLRAES instrument is a self-report scale, which means that the participants' responses depend on their sincerity and

willingness to cooperate in the research, as well as on their awareness of the reading practices in which they participate.

It would be advisable to use the SFLRAES instrument with larger samples and with students learning EFL in different academic domains (other engineering domains, fundamental sciences, social sciences, arts and humanities). Earlier research results (Bojović 2016) established the participants' gender as a factor affecting the students' perception of EFL university classroom reading activities: namely, female students perceived themselves as being exposed to EFL reading practice and testing EFL reading comprehension in primary and secondary education considerably more frequently than their male peers. Also, the same research revealed that a higher frequency of testing raises the students' self-confidence in performing reading tasks in an adequate manner and gives rise to students' affirmative perception of EFL classroom reading practices. This study is a further step in validating students' evaluation practices considering reading activities in EFL instruction. Future research could further investigate how the studied parameters correlate with the students' levels of reading comprehension and their reading strategies use and search for other potential factors which can affect students' evaluation of foreign language reading activities in instructional settings.

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## **EFL STUDENTS' REFLECTION ON TEACHING DURING THE PRACTICUM**

Student-teachers are expected to go through enough training in a relatively short period of time to prepare themselves to cope with the real classroom. It is important for them to be able to recognize and understand different teaching practices so that they can successfully apply them in the classroom. To improve education and their experience, it is important to observe student-teachers' practicum not only from the 'outside', how they perform in the classroom, but also from the 'inside': the way they think and feel during the process.

After a semester-long BA Methodology of Teaching English as a Foreign Language course, students do their teaching practice. Once in school, they have to keep a journal of the classes observed, as their initial part of the teaching practice. This paper examines whether the student-teachers, 3<sup>rd</sup>-year students, were able to successfully observe the classroom management techniques during English language classes. Over a period of three years, from 2014 to 2016, each year student-teachers filled in the Reflection on teaching questionnaires that contained 22 open-ended questions related to the classes observed. The qualitative analysis of 196 questionnaires was done for common themes and the frequency of responses, particularly those that show students' understanding of the elements of teaching. For the purposes of this paper, seven elements in particular were analyzed, and showed that student-teachers mostly reported rather than reflected on the mentors' classes. The results confirmed that discipline issues were the greatest concern, and that usual mentor practices observed were rather traditional.

Keywords: pre-service teacher training, student-teachers, TEFL, practicum (teaching practice), self-reflection

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

The whole process of one's education forms and influences one's beliefs about education. Therefore, student-teachers too, before their

teaching practice, have formed attitudes about the teaching and learning process (Meyer 2003). Many researchers comment on a gap that exists between teacher education courses and actual experiences, and the competing messages students get from these two contexts continues to be a problem (Willgems et al. 2017: 231). Even when the practices they have witnessed during their own schooling do not benefit learning, student-teachers tend to copy them. Even when they venture into new approaches, their position of a trainee renders it hard to work against a particular school's overall teaching approaches.

It has been shown that student-teachers do not easily change their beliefs through their training and courses (Harrington and Hertel 2000, Borg 2003). They have witnessed different methods and practices, and are usually set in their expectations and ideas as to what a teacher's approach and role should be. Even though it has been shown that these beliefs are difficult to change and sometimes remain completely the same, even several years into the profession (Borg 2005, Peacock 2001, Urmston 2003, Pennington and Urmston 1998, as cited in Borg 2011), the teaching practice is still important.

The value of student-teacher training is therefore invaluable as it might show the instances of good practice and make student-teachers re-evaluate their beliefs and teaching philosophy. Since beliefs have been identified as pivotal to the task of achieving change in teachers (Sercu and St. John 2007: 51), they need to receive some attention if we want to see effective teaching in the classroom. While student-teachers usually have micro- and macro-teaching classes and go through the lesson planning process during their coursework, the practicum raises their awareness of those elements that cannot be seen in micro-teaching: responsiveness of learners, interaction, or technicalities of the classroom management. Still, it has been shown that gaining experience is "insufficient as a basis for development" (Richards and Lockhart 1996: 4). Therefore, awareness-raising activities should be part of the education process.

## **2. CHALLENGES TO PRE-SERVICE ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHER EDUCATION**

In the last 30 years the field of teacher education has become much more researched, though still relatively inadequately, compared to other issues of applied linguistics (Richards and Nunan 1990, Freeman 2001). As a complex field, there have been discussions about how to study the process of teacher education, its content and appropriate methodologies (Freeman 2001). Also, the tools for assessing the impact of pre-service language teacher education have not been widely researched (Borg et al. 2014), making the analysis of the existing practices difficult. Many stakeholders are involved in the educational process and these different participants and settings influence teacher education, thus giving room for new considerations. Recently, the exploration into non-native teachers of English in various settings has offered new insights into teacher education (Al-Hazimi 2003, Mattheoudakis 2007, Abedinia 2012). Finally, for the past twenty years there have been concerns that pre-service education does not make a significant difference to trainees as it is always between “previous life history... and classroom experience as a student teacher and a teacher” (Richardson 1996: 113, as cited in Borg et al. 2014: 3). However, today we can say that education and experiential learning do have an impact on future teachers.

Research has shown that student-teachers see classroom management as the most troubling element of teaching (Richards 2003), and, in particular, discipline issues. Numrich (1996) also finds that teachers either use or avoid specific instructional strategies on the basis of their positive or negative experiences of these respective strategies as learners. As real feedback from students is something student-teachers cannot see during their coursework, the preparation is mostly roleplayed and might leave them not completely confident.

The practicum experience student-teachers get is the first opportunity to question and test self-perceptions of their “developing

identity as a teacher” (Pittard 2003). In order to become familiar with classroom practices and have a better insight into them, student-teachers have different tools at their disposal. Usually, they are advised to keep journals, write lesson reports, make video and/or audio recordings and do surveys (Richards and Lockhart 1996), but it is during the practicum that they are actually used. All these tools enable them to become “familiar with students, their backgrounds, their perspectives on learning, and their culturally-based expectations” (Yee 1990, as cited in Richards 2003: 42).

### **2.1. English language teacher education in the local context**

The educational processes and, consequently, the profile of English language teachers they create are very similar at the four public universities in Serbia. At all English departments, students do not specialize in language teaching, but have coursework in linguistic, literature and teaching areas. They do not specialize in working with a particular age group – there are no modules for teaching English to young learners or adults, for example; however, there are courses dedicated to this at some universities. The comparison of the Methodology of TEFL courses syllabi shows that the courses are based on almost the same material (Harmer 2005, Larsen-Freeman 2000, Scrivener 2005, Thornbury 2006, Ur 2002). The courses on teaching are mostly in the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> semesters – the exception being the University of Belgrade, where applied linguistic courses start in the third semester, with the practicum either in the 6<sup>th</sup> or the 8<sup>th</sup> semester. The teaching practice is a requirement in all programs, though it is realized differently at different departments – in terms of the number of classes, the length of time students are required to be in schools, the particular semester in which it is done, the form of the final exam. However, all the relevant elements for teaching practice are included: observation of mentor classes, lesson planning and micro-teaching.

Unlike IATEFL or TESOL teachers, local student-teachers usually have very little experience with teaching to fall back on prior to their coursework, which renders reflective teaching rather difficult. Reflective

teaching, in turn, should be one of the salient points of their education, because it is the philosophy of teaching that guides decisions made and actions taken in the classroom. It is, therefore, important for student-teachers to analyze the classroom practices and reflect on both what they observe and what they themselves do in the classroom.

### **3. METHODOLOGY**

The research was done with the aim of ascertaining whether student-teachers could pinpoint the 'critical points' in the classroom after a semester-long course and mentor observation. The main focus was on classroom management practices, and whether student-teachers were able to recognize troublesome behaviour and what preemptive actions would be taken for it.

In order to get an insight into the classroom practices, out of many tools student-teachers might use, we have decided on a survey, that is, an open-ended questionnaire, for several reasons. Firstly, it provided consistency in terms of the areas covered. While journal entries might have been more insightful, there was a potential danger that different students would invest a different amount of effort and time into them, focusing on different things, therefore rendering any analysis impractical and random. Secondly, student-teachers were given the questions before they even started their observation period in schools – therefore, they were prepared as to what in particular to pay attention to.

The questionnaire was completed after the student-teachers had observed the required number of mentor classes (at least seven with different grades). The observation period lasted around three to four weeks, during which all students were required to keep notes on the teaching practices and then summarize those observations in the Reflection on teaching questionnaire.

The reason behind structuring student-teachers' observation period in this way was three-fold. Firstly, it was believed that rethinking and reflecting on some of the points in the questionnaire would help student-teachers better prepare for the classroom. Once they practiced observing these elements in their mentor's classes, they might be better prepared to include some of these into their own teaching. Secondly, the answers would be a useful guide as to potential topics for mentor-teacher development, in case that it had transpired that certain routines were not observed over the course of years. Finally, thinking about the teaching practices might be a first step towards the creation of the philosophy of teaching and teacher identity, since these concepts are of greater importance for teacher trainees, and due to the lack of time, they are not discussed thoroughly with student-teachers. However, these are still important ideas that future teachers should consider during their practicum. It was hoped that the answers might provide some insight into how to include the concepts into teacher education, since, despite the obvious importance, there are not any particular suggestions as to what actions to take (Beauchamp and Thomas 2009).

### **3.1. Instrument**

The data collection tool was a Reflection on teaching questionnaire that consisted of 22 open-ended questions. The questions were roughly divided into classroom practices and classroom management and control, given that the students mostly worried about the discipline and the cohesion of their classes during their practicum. The questions were based for the most part on the author's teaching practice experience with student-teachers, focusing on the points that were not easy to recreate in the micro-teaching environment. Therefore, the questions were the ones that students could only speculate about during the coursework, but did not have first-hand experience, such as rapport with students, teaching styles, routines, system of reward and punishment, and the like. Furthermore, these points of interests were the ones dealt with in the required reading for students

(namely, Scrivener (2005) and Harmer (2005)). The students handed in their questionnaires once they had finished observing their mentors, either in the electronic form or in paper.

In order to complete the questionnaire, all student-teachers were required to keep observation lists for the mentor classes. These, in turn, contained all the usual elements for classroom observation – lesson structure, the teacher's attitude and behaviour, learners' involvement and interaction, material choice and appropriateness of material and methods for the student age and level and the lesson/unit. These elements were then summarized in the answers.

As Richards and Lockhart (1996) notice, teaching is usually explained through “actions and behaviours which teachers carry out in the classroom” (p. 29). Also, regardless of the teaching context, some basic concerns are universal, such as “selecting learning activities, preparing students for new learning, presenting learning activities, asking questions, conducting drills, checking students' understanding, providing opportunities for practice of new items, monitoring students' learning, giving feedback on student learning” (ibid). It was, therefore, these activities that student-teachers had to focus on.

### **3.2. Participants**

Over the course of three years, starting from the academic year 2013/2014 to 2015/2016, third-year students from the English Language Department at the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Niš, took part in the study. The prerequisites for doing the teaching practice were that they had attended the Methodology of TEFL 1 course and successfully completed their language courses from the previous academic year. The students did their teaching practice in groups, with up to four students assigned to one mentor.

There were 196 third-year students, 61 male and 135 female (Table 3.1.). This apparent disproportion is not surprising as it has been the usual make-up of the student body at the English Language Department.

Year \ Gender	2014	2015	2016	Total
female	55	34	46	<b>135</b>
male	18	19	24	<b>61</b>
Total	<b>73</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>196</b>

Table 3.1 Participants

### 3.3. Procedure

Once the student-teachers filled in the questionnaire, the answers were coded for similar topics. Even though some of the answers might have been predicted, the categories were not set in advance but emergent categories through open coding were used. The answers were not divided into separate academic years, except where there were obvious reasons from the data to do so. Finally, as there were many answers that did not fit any particular category, the focus was on the most numerous answers and strongest codes, which were given in numbers and percentages.

For the purposes of this paper, seven questions in particular were analyzed:

1. Do the students do any specific exercises, activities during the class?
2. How do the lessons start and finish? Are these ‘critical points’ different for different levels (classes), and how?
3. When the mentor wants the attention of the class, what verbal/non-verbal signs does he/she use?



4. How does the mentor deal with multi-level classes? (Which techniques/procedures are applied?)
5. How does the mentor move students from one activity to the next? (What transitions does the mentor use?)
6. What does the mentor do if it looks like a student may misbehave?
7. I think the greatest challenge for me in the classroom will be:

## **4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **4.1. Particular activities**

In their preparation for the classroom, the student-teachers go through a number of textbooks and activity books, and are asked to prepare and realize different activities, from fillers and warm-ups, to activities based on a particular language area and content. By having the student-teachers observe the activities performed in class, it was hoped that they would find similarities or differences, and be able to comment on what they had seen.

The student-teachers reported that most mentors (n=79, 40.3%) used 'the usual activities' without specifying what they had in mind. Then, student-teachers said that textbooks and workbooks were the used activities (n=32, 16.3%). Finally, the smallest percentage (n=14, 7.1%) stated that the mentors followed the presentation-practice-production structure, but did not mention any of the particular activities used. The answers might suggest that student-teachers observed the activities that had already been known to them, so they did not report on any particular activities they found important or interesting. The results also showed that a small percentage still did not differentiate between the presentation models and individual activities.

### **4.2. How do the lessons start and finish?**

It has been shown that how a teacher starts and closes a lesson is an important intervention to learning (Richards 2003: 66). Young students like

the sense of stability and recognizable patterns, as they can follow and predict procedures. Even for older students, being familiar with the procedures might help their confidence. As it might be assumed, the mentors were reported to be starting their lessons with warm-ups and finishing up with homework reminders (n=48, 24.4%) or starting with games and songs and finishing with group work activities (n=28, 14.2%). In a much smaller number (between n=5 and n=8), the mentors opened with ‘hello songs’ and wrapped up with ‘goodbye songs’, or started and finished with homework check and assignment. There was one mentor who was said to distribute language passports (Council of Europe) at the beginning of the lessons and to collect them at the end.

Only one group of student-teachers reported that their mentor used a particular activity and props each time new material was presented. This might lead us to believe that either student-teachers were not able to pinpoint the routinized ways of instruction, or that other mentors did not have particularly routinized activities. What was obvious from the student-teachers reports was that all the mentors had structurally firm lessons, with different activities, but these did not stand out as tailored for a particular usage, or they did not transpire as such to student-teachers. They did not comment on whether the openings to lessons were different between different levels, so we might assume that they mostly observed one level, or that they did not see the differences between different grades.

#### **4.3. When the mentor wants the attention of the class, what verbal and non-verbal signs does he/she use?**

The non-verbal behaviour in the classroom can make teaching more effective if students are familiar with the gestures and are used to their teacher using them. As it has been discussed here, novice teachers and teacher-trainees see classroom management issues as the main concern and the results of this study confirmed the previous findings.

The mentors used all the traditional attention signals: raised voice (n=93, 47.4%), hand-claps (n=59, 30.1%), saying 'silence' or 'pay attention' (n=21, 10.7%), the mentor was said to stop talking (n=17, 8.6%). One mentor used a phrase 'who can hear me, raise your hand', and one student stated the mentor used a special spot in the classroom when she wanted students to pay attention.

It could be concluded that the mentors resorted to the usual techniques of quieting down their students, without any diversity. The student-teachers did not comment on any of the techniques; however, for some mentors they added that raising their voice was only a temporary solution.

#### **4.4. How does the mentor deal with multi-level classes? (Which techniques/ procedures are applied?)**

A common situation in the classrooms is a multi-level class, with students much above the expected level and students who are struggling. The results of the survey confirmed this to be so only in some cases. It is worth mentioning that this question, out of the ones discussed here, had the most diverse answers. Interestingly, a great number of student-teachers stated that they did not observe a multi-level class (n=31, 15.8%). Then, roughly the same number of students reported that the mentors resorted to group work (n=30, 15.3%), with a slightly smaller number of mentors who approached lower proficiency students to offer additional help (n=25, 12.7%), while others adjusted the level of activities, questions, and examples to different students' needs (n=22, 11.2%). One unexpected result appeared – that the mentors did not do anything with differently proficient students (n=16, 8.1%) – these answers were all reported in one year only, in 2015. On the other hand, in 2014 and 2016 it was reported that better students got additional work (n=16, 8.1%). Some mentors were said to have used activities that were appropriate for all (n=8). Finally, one mentor was observed to be slowing down better students.

The results showed that still a large number of student-teachers did not recognize different student needs in the classroom, which might be ascribed to their inexperience and the relatively small number of classes observed. Still, all the schools had students who were taking an individualized educational program, but none of the student-teachers commented on that. Another important finding was that the number of student-teachers who recognized that group work might be a way to deal with multi-level classes had decreased in the course of three years, from 22 to only 6.

#### **4.5. How does the mentor move students from one activity to the next?**

During their TEFL course, student-teachers have limited practice in teaching during their micro- and macro-teaching, and usually start their lesson planning with activities lining one after the other without a proper transition between them. Even when transition is suggested to them, it is difficult for them to integrate it. Therefore, it was hoped that making student-teachers actively seek for this in their mentor's classes would raise their awareness. The student-teachers reported that the mentors 'simply moved on' (n=39, 19.8%) while some stated that the mentors 'smoothly' went from one activity to the next (n=38, 19.3%). Another group of mentors announced the next activity (n=35, 17.8%), whereas in case of some mentors the student-teachers stated that they gave the instructions for the next activity and in that way moved students to it (n=28, 14.2%). Finally, the smallest number of student-teachers stated that the lessons had 'a natural flow' (n=9), without further explaining the answer.

The results showed that the student-teachers were capable of seeing the flow of the lesson; however, they did not report on any particular ways of achieving this. We could say that the student-teachers did not see that transitions were any specific action on the teacher's part, or that they, as some of them stated, were smooth and therefore difficult to discern as a separate part of other teacher actions. Still, it was expected that the student-

teachers would report the use of visual aids or other material, but that was not the case.

#### **4.6. What does the mentor do if a student may misbehave?**

Since it was recognized that “for the absolute beginner teacher, managing the classroom, in the sense of being able to discharge the social function of the teacher as typically presented, is indeed often the first worry” (Richards 2003: 155), a number of diverse answers and comments were expected for this question. The important point here was that the question was not about the already realized behaviour, but about possible misbehavior. However, only one student-teacher mentioned it was important to call out these students before ‘it’s too late’, and another one that ‘it was difficult to foresee’. The majority of answers reported on the mentor’s reaction to the behaviour, which could be said to be rather typical and traditional – calling on students (n=36, 18.3%), giving warnings (n=32, 16.3%), calling on a particular student to do the activity (n=22, 11.2%), approaching the student (n=21, 10.7%), raising one’s voice (n=17, 8.6%), reprimanding the student (n=17, 8.6%) and, finally, threatening (n=9).

Preemptive actions that might be used to prevent discipline problems, such as group work or pair work, work stations, buddy-system were not reported. That might not necessarily mean that they were absent from the classroom, but that student-teachers perhaps had not discussed them with their mentors as discipline tools. Unfortunately, the student-teachers did not follow up with whether the warnings mentors had issued were followed by a particular measure.

#### **4.7. A challenge for me will be...**

As the last question to be discussed here is the one where the student-teachers had to predict, based on the teacher-mentor practices and the real classroom experience, what their biggest challenges might be when they started teaching. Understandably, they answered in the greatest

number that discipline was their biggest concern (n=61, 31.1%). Then, getting and keeping students interested (n=35, 17.8%), managing the time (n=23, 11.7%) and getting all students involved (n=22, 11.2%) were the next most common answers. The student-teachers made a difference between students' interest and their attention, so a certain number was concerned with getting and keeping students' attention (n=15, 7.6%). For some of them, overcoming stage-fright (n=14, 7.1%) was perceived as a challenge. Finally, in a smaller number, the student-teachers mentioned being able to answer all students' questions (n=7), 'actually teaching students something' (n=4), having fun and interesting activities (n=3) and two students stated that they wanted to 'relax and be like their mentor'.

It was not surprising that the student-teachers mostly mentioned preventative discipline (having clear rules and routines, organizing time, etc.) and supportive discipline (maintaining a respectful atmosphere, having a positive classroom tone, etc.), while they did not mention corrective discipline. The reason for this might be that they did not have the experience beforehand, and would not have been able to comment on classroom rules, behavioural warnings, direct questioning and the like.

## **5. CONCLUSION**

The results proved that the student-teachers showed a good recognition of teaching practices; however, the majority reported them without deep reflection. Even though the student-teachers were asked to reflect on their observation period in the schools, over the period of three years it was rarely seen that they made specific comments on practices they witnessed; therefore, their answers were mostly in the form of a report.

Since student-teachers were assigned to particular mentors as a group, in some cases their report was more of a group work than an individual reflection. The student-teachers might have simply observed the same practices of that one mentor, and since their reflection was more in

the form of a report, a considerable amount of overlap could be expected. Secondly, group work was probably an easier way to do the task.

On the other hand, even though a group of student-teachers worked with one mentor, there was in some cases a variety of answers for the practice of one mentor. Raising student-teachers' awareness, therefore, must be insisted on, as it seemed that their observation did not bring them insights that had been expected.

While students' answers did not reveal deep reflection, the reports still gave an insight into the routinized teaching of the mentors. In itself, this was not a negative finding, as it has been shown that the routine shows the mastery. On the other hand, it might show that the mentors were set in their ways (Wiliam 2010) and relied on 'traditional activities', as the students would put it. However, they did not qualify this term, and it was difficult to see which particular activities constituted the 'traditional' approach. It might be concluded that the mentors mostly relied on textbooks, used dialogues and role playing, which, while incorporating a communicative element, was not differentiated or included elements of task-based learning, or cooperative learning, for example.

It should be stated that the study followed only student-teachers from one university, and therefore cannot be generalized to include all student-teachers in Serbia. Also, the limitations of a questionnaire are well reported (Munn and Drever 1990, Patton 2002), with some of the answers showing that certain questions should have been differently phrased or further explained. Finally, even though the questions were open-ended, focus groups, or think-aloud protocols might be another ways of data collection.

Based on the results, we can say that there are ways in which to improve the course material and approaches to student-teacher training, foregrounding the important elements during their observation of micro-teaching. As Pilipović (2011) notices, student-teachers could benefit from guided observations that would raise awareness of decision-making in response to learners' performance, changes in tempo and other situations

that cannot be recreated during micro-teaching. They should be made aware of their actions and made to think more about what they bring to teaching in terms of their beliefs and expectations. Then, some additional mentor support could be offered, in the sense that they insist on student-teachers' feedback and remarks, and not let them be passive observers. A useful follow-up to the research might be an in-depth study of a particular mentor and their work with student-teachers, in the format of a case study.

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# **TOPICS IN ANGLOPHONE LITERATURES**



JOVANA PETROVIĆ

## GOTHIC ELEMENTS IN LOUISE ERDRICH'S *LOVE MEDICINE*<sup>1</sup>

The paper analyzes how Louise Erdrich uses different Gothic elements to explore the complex issue of Native American identity in the postcolonial era. In *Love Medicine*, Erdrich portrays Native American characters that are shaped by the culture, religion and values of the white world as well as tribal spirituality and Native beliefs. They are faced with having to overcome the clash between these two opposing worlds which seems to be the primary source of supernatural elements in the novel. As a matter of fact, all the ghostly beings arise from this conflict, and can be said to represent an intrusion of the repressed ethnic cultural heritage. In the novel, Louise Erdrich portrays characters that struggle to come to terms with their Native sense of self. This aspect of their identities has been suppressed by the white world through the imposition of Christianity and the colonizers' belief system. Ghosts that appear in *Love Medicine* as reminders of what once was, and that haunt Erdrich's Native American characters, symbolize attempts either to recreate the lost aspects of the characters' identities or to repress and ultimately erase them. On the one hand, ghosts represent a doorway between the past and the present through which the characters can revisit the past in order to make peace with it. On the other hand, they have the power to haunt and influence the present when one chooses to deny one's ethnic heritage. Either way, all of these creatures and supernatural occurrences speak about the great trauma of colonization and its consequences on the Native American people.

Keywords: Louise Erdrich, *Love Medicine*, Gothic, ghosts, ethnicity.

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

The vitality of the centuries-old Gothic genre in popular culture and contemporary literature is evident through numerous movies, different subgenres of metal music and literary works that heavily rely on the genre's conventions to explore a variety of different themes. Whereas in the world of the cinema the Gothic is usually used to portray the other side of the human psyche, in the realms of music, the Gothic is used to depict youth's dissatisfaction with the postmodern and late capitalist Western society (Punter and Byrnes 2004: 4). However, the path of the Gothic genre in contemporary literature seems to have taken an interesting and somewhat unexpected turn. Since the genre originates from Europe and is inherently linked to its values and belief systems, it must seem odd to see its conventions increasingly used by ethnic writers of very diverse origins. Louise Erdrich (Native American), Toni Morrison (African-American) and Maxine Hong Kingston (Chinese-American) have all relied on the elements of the supernatural, ghosts and revenants as well as other Gothic tropes to tackle the problems of the marginalized ethnic groups in the United States. In other words, these writers have found a way to incorporate conventions of the genre that itself has been considered the Other to describe the condition of the marginalized in the mainstream American society. In this paper, I would like to cast some light on how Louise Erdrich uses different Gothic elements to explore the complex issue of Native American identity in the postcolonial era.

## **2. GHOSTS AS VEHICLES FOR HEALING**

Gothic genre, with its preoccupation with the past and “family secrets ... of transgressive protagonists” (Punter and Byrnes 2004: 29), teeming with ghost stories that “revolve around moments of silence which somehow allow a sense of the ‘other’ to intrude” (Punter and Byrnes 2004: 286), seems particularly fitting for the exploration of postcolonial texts that deal

with the repressed past and erased cultural heritage. As a writer of Ojibwe (Anishinaabe or Chippewa) and German origins, Louise Erdrich in her novels primarily tries to describe and make sense of these two conflicting aspects of her identity as well as the violent history between her people and the white society. Through different removal policies, land allotment and reservation systems, the Ojibwe people have been pushed westward from their homeland around the Great Lakes and enclosed on the reservations. Furthermore, the religious conversion, conducted primarily by the Catholic Jesuits through boarding schools paved the way for the systematic destruction of the Ojibwe culture and traditional beliefs. The ethnic aspect of Native American identity has been repressed by the policy of assimilation, and it is precisely this aspect of one's identity, the forbidden part of one's history that resurfaces in the shape of ghosts and ghostlike creatures. Ghosts, as one of the main literary devices used in Gothic literature, represent "political interventions to address fragmented histories and lost cultural identities" (Weinstock 2014: 48). The intrusion of the suppressed past into the present that tries to either deny it or cope with it signifies an attempt of the marginalized Native Americans to come to terms with the trauma of colonization by recreating "ethnic identity through an imaginative recuperation of the past and to press this new version of the past into the service of the present" (Brogan 1995: 151). In other words, these ghosts in postcolonial ethnic writing either tell the stories about the traumatic past, as is the case in Toni Morrison's *Beloved*, or serve as haunting absences about which stories are told in order to fill in the gap made by the colonizers. Thus, the broken sense of identity of the whole communities, families or even individuals is recreated. This idea is especially prominent in Louise Erdrich's *Love Medicine* and *Tracks*. Brogan calls these ethnic ghost stories "cultural haunting stories" and emphasizes that ghosts in them have a communal nature, representing "people's historical consciousness" (Brogan 1995: 152). As such, these narratives provide us with stories and memories of and about the Other, thus focusing on the marginalized and oppressed aspects of the communal and individual ethnic identity, challenging the official history (Brogan 1995: 158).

In Erdrich's *Love Medicine*, the death of June Kashpaw triggers an outburst of stories told by her family members in an attempt to come to terms with June's life and strange death that has disturbed the reservation. In the very first pages of the novel, June is portrayed as a promiscuous woman and a drunkard, alienated from her family and community, thus fitting into the stereotype about Native American women. She is described as "a long-legged Chippewa woman, aged hard in every way except how she moved" (Erdrich 2005: 1); who "has seen so many [men] come and go" (Erdrich 2005: 2). From the stories of other characters about June, we also learn that she has tried to drown her illegitimate son Lipsha and that she has abandoned her son King many times. Her estrangement from the community is emphasized through the narrator's comment that "they weren't expecting her up home on the reservation. She didn't *even* [emphasis added] have a man there, except the one she'd divorced" (Erdrich 2005: 3). Moreover, the very first pages of the novel describe her drunken attempt at making love to a stranger, after which June walks off towards the reservation through a blizzard, "unclear whether she was more drunk or more sober than she'd ever been in her life" (Erdrich 2005: 6), and dies. Even her death is mysterious since there is no body and nobody seems to understand what happened. As such, June is a source of shame for her community and an undesirable element. But she is also a riddle, a part of the tribal past that requires to be resolved.

June is present throughout the novel in the form of a ghost. In other words, "June's presence, that is, her absence, haunts the book" (Silberman 2000: 139). June's death can be interpreted through two belief systems, Native American and Christian, which is best seen in the last sentence concerning June's homecoming: "The snow fell deeper that Easter than it had in forty years, but June walked over it like water and came home" (Erdrich 2005: 7). As Catherine Rainwater explains, home either refers to Christian heaven or reservation where, in accordance with traditional Native American beliefs, June's spirit "mingles with the living and carries out unfinished business" (Rainwater 2000: 165). June indeed roams the pages of the novel as a ghost – she is completely silent and yet very much present.



Echoing the symbolic absence of Fleur Pillager in *Tracks*, June's silence epitomizes a gap in tribal history and a loss to the Native American community. June's presence is shaped by the memories and remembrances of the people close to her who, in an attempt to "to feel the proper way" (Erdrich 2005: 8) for June, paint a completely different picture of her. Thus, they challenge the stereotypical representation of June from the beginning of the novel and offer an alternative version of her story, enabling the community to make peace with her and heal. For example, June's niece Albertine comments about June:

Whatever she lacked as a mother, June was a good aunt to have – the kind that spoiled you ... She talked to me the way she would talk to grown-up people and never told me to go play outside when I wanted to sit at the edge of a conversation. (Erdrich 2005: 8)

On the one hand, Albertine recognizes June's fallacies and wrongdoings, acknowledging that "[June] wasn't much as a mother" because she left her husband and son many times to spend time with white people to whom "an Indian woman's nothing but an easy night" (Erdrich 2005: 8-9). As Cox explains, "Albertine recognizes the public story of [June] and her death as a dangerous precedent, breaking and erasing community and family" (Cox 2015: 168). However, instead of allowing this public version of June's life to tear up the community, Albertine insists on remembering June not only as a good aunt but also as someone immersed into the tribal tradition: "June grew up on the plains. Even drunk she'd have known a storm was coming. She'd have known by the heaviness in the air, the smell in the clouds. She'd have gotten that animal sinking in her bones" (Erdrich 2005: 10). Similarly, Marie, June's adoptive mother, also emphasizes June's strong connection to her ethnic heritage:

The woods were in June, after all, just like in him [Eli], and maybe more. She had sucked on pine sap and grazed grass and nipped buds like a deer ... It was as if she really was the child of what the old people called *manidoog*, invisible ones who live in the woods. (Erdrich 2005: 86)

Susan Farrell explains that June is actually caught between two worlds, Native American and contemporary white (Farrell 1998: 110), which is evident from all the stories told by her relatives. Abused by a drunkard father and abandoned in the woods to fend for herself after her mother's death, June rejects her family and her heritage. As a child, she tries to persuade her cousins Gordie and Aurelia to hang her. Her desire to be hanged is a part of the game in which Gordie, Aurelia and June are imitating Western movies that entrenched the belief that Native Americans are a dying nation, to which June succumbs. Marie recognizes this feeling of inadequacy June experiences as a Native American woman in the white world and comments: "There was a sadness [in June] I couldn't touch there. It was a hurt place, it was deep, it was with her all the time like a broke rib that stabbed when she breathed" (Erdrich 2005: 90).

The importance of telling stories and recreating memories for the purpose of healing and recuperation is perhaps best understood through the character of Lipsha and his relationship with June. June's experience of the collision between the white and the Native world, and the devastating effects of denunciation of her ethnic heritage are paralleled to the experiences of her illegitimate son. Like June, Lipsha is caught between two worlds, Native American and Catholic, which is rather humorously described through Lipsha's crisis in Catholic faith.

Our Gods aren't perfect, is what I'm saying, but at least they come around. They'll do a favor if you ask them right. You don't have to yell. But you do have to know, like I said, how to ask in the right way. That makes problems, because to ask proper was an art lost to the Chippewas once the Catholics gained ground. Even now I have to wonder if Higher Power turned it back, if we got to yell, or if we just don't speak its language. (Erdrich 2005: 232)

Lipsha is endowed with a healing touch usually associated with shamanic powers. It is an essential and yet dangerous part of him:

Uncurling from me like a seed out of the blackness where I was lost, the touch spread. The spiked leaves full of bitter mother's milk. A buried root. A nuisance people dig up and throw into the sun to wither. A globe of frail seeds that's indestructible. (Erdrich 2005: 254)

However, his healing touch is compromised by an interference of Catholic beliefs. While trying to make love medicine, "an old Chippewa specialty" (Erdrich 2005: 237), to rekindle the love between his adoptive grandparents Marie and Nector, Lipsha deviates from the Native "prescription" and tries to get it blessed in the convent. His mistake results in Nector's death and the loss of touch. Lipsha's confusion stems from the fact that he does not know who his parents are and where he belongs. It is here that June's absence becomes central to the novel. As Sanders explains, "[June's death] sets ... her son Lipsha on [his] own journey" to discover home (Sanders 1998: 149). Stories about June lead Lipsha to realize that June is his mother. This discovery results in an identity crisis in which Lipsha leaves the reservation searching for answers about his father, Gerry Nanapush. The family is reunited in King's home, owing to the loose ends left after June's death. Gerry, having escaped from prison, goes to see King, driven by "curiosity and the urge to see someone again, or the hint of someone, the resemblance of June" (Erdrich 2005: 323), while Lipsha visits King so as to confront him for the years of bullying. However, Gerry is ultimately the one who provides Lipsha with a sense of identity and belonging. In the novel, Gerry acts as a trickster figure whose task is to establish "continuity with the dead that guides the living" (Brogan 1998, cited in Burnham 2014: 232). Hence, he represents a missing link between June and Lipsha. Gerry tells Lipsha that he is a descendant of a powerful shaman family, "a Nanapush man", thus explaining the origins of his healing touch. This enables Lipsha to root himself deeply within his native community and tribal cultural heritage:

I have some powers which, now that I think of it, was likely come down from Old Man Pillager. And then there is a newfound fact of

insight I inherited from Lulu as well as the familiar teachings of Grandma Kashpaw on visioning what comes to pass within a lump of tinfoil. It was all these connecting threads of power, you see, that gave me the flash of vision... (Erdrich 2005: 307)

Lipsha's words signal that "with the family history clear at last, the disruption caused by death can now be overcome" (Silberman 2000: 142). Lipsha decides to return to the reservation in the car bought by June's insurance money, commenting that "there was nothing left ... but to bring her home" (Erdrich 2005: 333). As Karla Sanders explains,

Lipsha Morrissey speaks not of driving the car back to the reservation, but of laying his mother to rest. Bringing June home is Lipsha's way of helping her to heal, even after death. June's spirit can now be put to rest because her son has accepted her and through him she will find the connection that she lost and healing that she needs. (Sanders 1998: 153)

Finally, Gerry and Lipsha are the ones who paint the most loving portrait of June, "slim, but not too slim. Long legged. Always with a nice, a really nice laugh, but she was a shy one. So far away sometimes you couldn't touch her" (Erdrich 2005: 330).

All of these usually conflicting pieces and fragments about June bring her back in an attempt to "assert continuity" in the face of disruption (Brogan 1995: 164). June can be interpreted as a symbol of loss and disappearance, but also as "a vehicle for historical recovery" (Brogan 1995: 164). On the one hand, June is a ghost much in the same way as Native Americans are ghosts in the mainstream society, alienated, acculturated and doomed to ultimate erasure. Her life embodies the conflict between the two opposing worlds and the possible devastating consequences of that struggle. Yet, at the same time, her death causes the return of many characters to the tribal community in an attempt to confront the past and make peace with it. The majority of stories solely touch upon June and her life, and yet they instigate the communal and individual healing and recuperation as is evident

from the story about Lipsha. These stories are told so that historical meaning and ethnic identity can be reestablished.

### 3. GHOSTS THAT EMBODY REPRESSION

However, Erdrich seems to suggest that an obsession with the past is a double-edged sword – it can bring growth, but also destruction. As Brogan explains, cultural haunting stories abound in “themes of possession [and] exorcism” (Brogan 1995: 152) that stem from the “memories that refuse burial, that insist on survival, that bring the dead back to life” (Brogan 1998, cited in Burnham 2014: 233). These remembrances return as haunting ghosts and spirits that try to assert “continuity with the past over which one has no control” (Brogan 1995: 155). Brogan emphasizes that characters who struggle to come to terms with their past “run the danger of being swallowed up by the very past they attempt to deny” (Brogan 1995: 155). In ethnic ghost stories, especially those written by Native American writers, a possession by the denied past is expressed through “the metaphor of consumption” (Brogan 1995: 155). This metaphor is epitomized through the windigo creature from Ojibwe and Cree traditions, an interesting example of Native American contribution to the American Gothic (Burnham 2014: 230). According to the Ojibwe and Cree legends, windigo is a cannibalistic, cold-hearted evil being that destroys other people. When a windigo spirit possesses a person, it turns them into a cannibal. Thus, windigo stands as a symbol of individualism and consumerism in its insatiable desire to consume and destroy everything around itself (Burnham 2014: 231). Transposed into the contemporary Native American ethnic writing that deals with the identity struggle, windigo’s cannibalism symbolizes “the eating away of tribal culture by an invasive new culture” (Brogan 1998, cited in Burnham 2014: 232). In other words, those who try to deny their past and their ethnic heritage run the danger of being possessed by the windigo spirit that will ultimately lead to their destruction as is portrayed through the character of Leopolda, and her battle with Marie.

As a matter of fact, the chapter in the novel concerning the conflict between Marie and Leopolda, called “Saint Marie,” abounds in supernatural occurrences stemming from both Native American spirituality and Christian practices. As Catherine Rainwater explains, “both ... allow for supernatural dimension of existence” (Rainwater 2000: 166). The clash between these two belief systems is expressed through the entanglement of Christian and Native American religious beliefs embodied by Marie and Leopolda who both struggle to come to terms with their Native sense of self. Moreover, in this chapter, Erdrich relies on the Native American folktales (the windigo legend) and European fairytales (*Hansel and Gretel* and *Cinderella*) to portray not the conflict between good and evil but the battle for the preservation of one’s ethnic identity.

“Saint Marie” features its title character Marie Lazarre in an attempt to denounce her Native American identity and become a Catholic nun and ultimately a saint. Marie is of lowly origins, “the youngest daughter of a family of horse-thieving drunks” (Erdrich 2005: 62), a “skinny, white girl, dirty Lazarre” (Erdrich 2005: 64). She takes pride in being pale-skinned with a “mail-ordered Catholic soul you get in a girl raised out in the bush, whose only thought is getting into town” (Erdrich 2005: 44). From these fragments, it is evident that Marie is dissatisfied with who she is. Furthermore, she even believes that she is more prone to being possessed by Satan than other people:

She [Leopolda] always said the Dark One wanted me most of all, and I believed this. I stood out. Evil was the common thing I trusted. Before sleep sometimes he came and whispered conversation in the old language of the bush. I listened. He told things he never told anyone but Indians. I was privy to both worlds of knowledge. I listened to him... (Erdrich 2005: 46)

This idea stems from Marie’s Catholic upbringing. Through this excerpt, Erdrich actually points out the stereotypical belief that Native Americans are inherently related to Satan owing to their pagan beliefs and supposed inborn savagery. In other words, the demonic aspect of Marie’s

identity seems related to her Native American origins. Therefore, in order to erase her shameful roots and try to gain power in the white world, Marie decides to join the Sacred Heart Convent. In the process, she chooses another identity for herself. Marie envisions herself as Virgin Mary, a Christian symbol of worship, “carved in pure gold ... with ruby lips ... and toenails [which] they would have to stoop down off their high horse to kiss” (Erdrich 2005: 43). However, Karla Sanders explains that

Marie lacks a sense of who she is, of her own personal identity, so she creates a vision of herself that is borrowed from the role model prescribed by the nuns, the Virgin Mary ... This identity is problematic not only because it is borrowed from the colonizer’s culture and another time, but also because it is ephemeral and hollow; it can offer her no cogent future, no positive identity ... Marie’s vision of herself as the statue of the Virgin Mary discloses her inculcation in the dominant culture and underscores her disparagement of her own heritage. (1998: 135)

The inadequacy of Native Americans in the eyes of the Catholic Church is also reflected through Marie’s own words that “[Native American] souls went cheap” (Erdrich 2005: 44). Furthermore, by having this chapter narrated by the older Marie that critically reflects on her younger self, Erdrich underlines Marie’s unfounded fascination with faith as a possible provider of a better life. Nevertheless, young Marie seems insistent on trying to deny her Native American origins and reinventing herself, following the model taken from another culture which makes her vulnerable to being possessed by a windigo spirit.

The windigo presence in the novel is Leopolda, the most zealous nun at the Sacred Heart Convent. From *Tracks* and *Love Medicine* we learn that Leopolda is of Native American origin as well, but that she has denounced that part of her heritage and devoted herself to being a nun. However, by rejecting her Native sense of self, she has become a windigo. Accordingly, she is described as a dehumanized creature, a product of persistent denial of her ethnicity:

Her fingers were like a bundle of broom straws, so thin and dry, but the strength of them was unnatural. I couldn't have tugged loose if she was leading me into rooms of white-hot coals. Her strength was some kind of a perverse miracle, for she got it from fasting herself thin. Because of this hunger practice her lips were a wounded brown and her skin deadly pale. Her eye sockets were two deep lashless hollows in a taunt skull. [The nose] stuck out far and made the place her eyes moved even deeper, as if she stared out the wrong end of a barrel gun. (Erdrich 2005: 49)

Michelle Burnham explains that windigo is a creature and a state of mind brought about by starvation (2014: 231). Leopolda starves herself almost to death in order to please god, to make herself more close to him and thus erase her Native American roots. Furthermore, windigo is described as having a cold, frozen heart which propels it to destroy others. Once a person is transformed into a windigo, that person has the power to consume others and transform them “into cannibals by starving them, by weakening and possessing them so that they forfeited their humanity, their identity” (Vecsey 1990, cited in Riley 2000: 16), which is what Leopolda tries to do to Marie. Interestingly, if we follow Leopolda's development from *Tracks* to *Love Medicine*, we can see that her path very much resembles that which Marie is about to take.

Marie seems fixated on Leopolda and insists that she should become her spiritual guide. Her obsession stems from not only the resemblance mentioned above but also the fact that Leopolda is Marie's mother. For this reason, Marie has rather complicated and ambivalent feelings towards Leopolda: “I wanted sister Leopolda's heart ... sometimes I wanted her heart in love and admiration. Sometimes. And sometimes I wanted her heart to roast on a black stick” (Erdrich 2005: 49). On the other hand, Leopolda understands Marie's insecurities and needs so she tries to push her in her own direction – she attempts to possess Marie and erase her ethnic identity. Leopolda's “spiritual cannibalism manifests itself in her mania for total control of the children she teaches” (Jaskoski 2000: 32). Thus, Leopolda tries to control Marie physically and emotionally – first, she locks her in the



closet, and then she promises her love for which Marie craves: “He [the Satan] *wants* you ... That’s the difference, I give you love” (Erdrich 2005: 48). Echoing the story of Cinderella and her stepmother, Leopolda forces Marie to sleep behind the stove and do all the dirty work in the convent. However, Marie is not easily broken – she constantly oscillates between trying to fight back and yielding to Leopolda. At this point in the novel, the windigo seems to be in both women, symbolizing the Catholic identity the two women have chosen for themselves. Ironically, they both try to purge the evil spirit from one another, relaying on Native American methods of exorcism. Since it is believed that windigo can be destroyed by fire that melts its cold heart (Burnham 2014: 231), Leopolda scalds Marie’s back with hot water, whereas Marie pushes Leopolda into the stove (in the same fashion as Gretel kills the evil, cannibalistic witch).

In the end, Marie manages to obtain the identity she wants for herself owing to Leopolda, which at the same time helps her break free from the windigo spirit. Having stabbed Marie with a fork, Leopolda invents the story that Marie has had a vision accompanied by the stigmata – the appearance of Christ’s wounds. Therefore, as Karla Sanders explains, “the stigmata ... grants her [Marie] the identity for which she has always yearned” (Sanders 1998: 135). In this manner, Erdrich points out the falsity of miracles with which Catholic missionaries tried to manipulate the people into obedience. Moreover, Memmi (1967) explains that Leopolda’s lie “signifies the strategy of the colonizer to ‘falsify history’ and thereby ‘extinguish the memories’ of the colonized, causing them to question the veracity of their own experience” (cited in Riley 2000: 20). However, as soon as other sisters express their worship towards Marie, she realizes how hollow this chosen identity is. When Leopolda finally bows down to her, Marie does not feel triumphant but pities Leopolda: “[There was] no joy when she bent to touch the floor. No dark leaping ... Rise up! I thought. Rise up and walk!” (Erdrich 2005: 60). She thus manages to break away from the inadequate identity and the grasp of her windigo mother. Marie’s rejection of Leopolda’s dangerous path leads her to reinvent herself as Marie, the Star of the Sea, “the trickster heroine and emblem of virtue” (Jaskoski 2000: 33), a powerful matriarch

deeply immersed into her tribal community. On the other hand, Leopolda dies estranged from not only her community but also a significant part of herself. Even in death, she is deprived of her humanity: “shriveled on the stick bones [with] arms thin as ropes [and] pure white hair [that] sprang out straight and thin from her skull. The rest of her, too, was frail as a dead plant” (Erdrich 2005: 148).

### **3.1. The Setting of the Chapter**

In relation to these two characters and their struggle with identity, it is also important to emphasize that Erdrich casts Leopolda’s attempt to possess Marie into the Gothic setting of the convent, “a frequent Gothic location ...[that] provides a scenario within which all manner of deprivation and violence can proceed” (Punter and Byrone 2004: 288). Erdrich describes the Sacred Heart Convent as an all prevailing, sinister presence located “on top of the highest hill, so that from its windows the Sisters can be looking into the marrow of the town” (Erdrich 2005: 44). By portraying the convent in such a manner, Erdrich further draws our attention to the devastating influence of the Catholic missionaries on the Native Americans, their culture and tribal heritage. On the other hand, the convent is also described as an unreachable, mysterious place, a symbol of god’s purity, with “gleaming white” walls, “so white the sun glanced off in dazzling display to set forms whirling behind your eyelids. The face of God you could hardly look at” (Erdrich 2005: 44). It appears as such to the Native Americans who look at it from the reservation. To them, the convent is appealing but inaccessible. It is exactly this ambivalent influence of the Catholic religion on the tribal people that is epitomized through the character of Marie and her battle with windigo Leopolda. As a matter of fact, by using the metaphor of windigo consumption to describe the clash between Marie and Leopolda, Erdrich actually criticizes “the way the Catholic Church, as agent of the colonizers, has consumed the lives of Indian People and encouraged them to kill off parts of [them]selves” (Anzaldúa 1987, cited in Riley 2000: 16).

#### 4. GHOSTS OF TRADITION

Finally, it is also important to emphasize another ghostlike creature that haunts *Love Medicine*. Whereas on the one hand, Leopolda stands as a symbol of what happens when one loses his or her ethnic identity, Old Lady Pillager symbolizes its opposite. Old Lady Pillager lives solely by tribal rules, not allowing the outside world to corrupt her ways of life. She is demonized in much the same way as Leopolda. She is a mysterious presence in the novel, feared and misunderstood by her kinsmen as is evident from Lipsha's words:

But the truth was I was afraid of her [Old Lady Pillager], like everyone else. She was known for putting the twisted mouth on people, seizing up their hearts ... I have always thought it best to steer clear of that whenever I could. (Erdrich 2005: 237)

The only difference between Leopolda and Old Lady Pillager seems to stand in the fact that Leopolda causes destruction (which is evident from her conflict with Marie) whereas Old Lady Pillager brings life (she helps Marie through a difficult, life-threatening childbirth). Michelle Burnham explains that "these creatures function as sources of necessary balance within traditional belief systems; while they should and must be brought under control, they do not and cannot get conquered or eliminated" (Burnham 2014: 233). In other words, they tell the stories of the past repression and as such are not to be eliminated but acknowledged and made peace with. Therefore, it can be concluded that the characters of Leopolda and Old Lady Pillager represent two radical ways of dealing with colonization and the attempts of erasing one's ethnic heritage.

#### 5. CONCLUSION

In *Love Medicine* Louise Erdrich tackles the issue of Native American ethnic identity through the use of certain Gothic conventions. She

portrays the characters that struggle to come to terms with their Native sense of self by either trying to recreate the lost aspects of their identity or by trying to repress and ultimately erase it. On the one hand, ghosts represent a doorway between the past and the present through which the characters can revisit the past in order to make peace with it, as is the case with June and her family. On the other hand, ghostlike creatures have the power to haunt if one chooses to deny and forget the past and one's ethnic heritage, which is evident from the story about Marie and Leopolda, among others. Either way, all of these creatures and supernatural occurrences speak about the great trauma of colonization and its consequences on the Native American people.

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## **LITERARY WIT AS A MEANS OF CREATIVE COMMUNICATION IN THE SELECTED SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY ENGLISH POETIC TRADITION**

The paper analyses literary wit in John Donne's *Holy Sonnet XVIII* (1620) within the framework of the semiotics of culture developed by Yuri Lotman and focuses on the socio-communicative functions of a literary text. Culture is constructed of multiple interactive semiotic systems, whereas literary texts operate as specific signs within culture acting as the semiosphere. Interpretation of literary texts as signs promotes the generation of their meaning which unfolds through an act of artistic communication. However, the texts of art are double coded since they have a more complex texture in comparison to natural language, hence they need to be decoded in order to be interpreted and understood. The authors of this article argue that literary wit is a complex means of literary communication between the author and his readers. This communication also encompasses a close interaction of the reader with the text, its cultural tradition and context. Moreover, it offers a confrontation of the reader with himself. It is through this communicative and creative act which involves reading and deciphering that the meaning of literary wit is generated.

Keywords: literary wit, semiotics of culture, communication, generation of meaning, 17<sup>th</sup>-century English Metaphysical poetry.

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

In the literary context, England stands out for its prominent writers representing a specific quality of wit (Freeman 2009; Klaver 1965; Milburn 1966; Smith 2006). The seventeenth century demonstrates the highest point of appreciation and application of literary wit. In the history of English literature, this was the century “obsessed with wit: defining it, analyzing it, amplifying it, using it, rejecting it, and using it to reject it” (Summers and

Pebworth 1995: 1). It should be noted that literary wit was initially perceived as a confirmation of an acute intelligence and poetic skill. It inspired the strife to use words in an ingenious way as it was believed that witty discourse was indicative of the speaker's superior intellectual capacity. However, its meaning has shifted to such an extent that at present it can be referred to as amusing remarks or simply catchy one-liners that sometimes adopt a derisive tone.

The given article focuses on literary wit as a swift, brief, eloquent and intricate verbal expression which is directly connected with the human faculty of sense, hence, on the seventeenth-century literary wit favouring "incongruous congruity" (Michelson 2000: 4) and shocking surprise, fostering pleasurable effects with regard to intellectual gratification. Literary wit has been selected as a relevant and novel object of investigation as it has been a rather rare topic in literary criticism. The research that is specifically orientated toward the analysis of literary wit could be classified into four groups. The first group of scholars focus on the very term of wit and its extrication (Klaver 1965; Milburn 1966). The representatives of the second group explore the employment of wit in the works of the select authors (Michelson 2000; Reid 2013; Smith 2006; Williamson 1961). The third group of literary researchers consider the particular historical periods and cultural tendencies that determine the development of wit (Summers and Pebworth 1995; Williamson 1961). The fourth group examine the mechanisms of literary wit and its evaluation (Freeman 2009; Furlong 2011). In the context of Lithuanian literary criticism, no extensive studies on literary wit have been carried out, to the best knowledge of the authors of this article. The majority of scientific publications follow a common tendency and focus largely on humour (Šidiškytė 2017; Vidurkytė 2012) making only brief remarks on wit without introducing a more extensive analysis.

The authors of this article believe that literary wit requires considerable attention since it plays an important role in the formulation and transmission of literary principles and serves as a significant



representation of wisdom. Such transmission becomes possible through an act of creative communication when the reader interacts with a poetic text demonstrating the craftsmanship of wit. Therefore, the article aims at revealing the discourse of wit as a specific type of literary communication on the basis of the seventeenth-century English poetry represented by John Donne (1572–1631), the leader of the Metaphysical School. In order to achieve it, the principal insights of Lotman’s cultural semiotics to form a theoretical framework have been applied with particular consideration for the semiotic processes of meaning-generation beneficial for the interpretation of literary wit. Further on, the analysis of literary wit in John Donne’s *Holy Sonnet XVIII* (1620) and its interpretation as a communicative act have been carried out.

## **2. CULTURAL SEMIOTICS: LITERARY TEXT AS A MEANING – GENERATING MECHANISM**

As mentioned above, the analysis of the empirical material with regard to understanding the potentialities of literary wit as reflected in the seventeenth-century poetic work is grounded on the theory of cultural semiotics developed by the semiotician Yuri Mikhailovich Lotman (1922–1993) representing the Tartu-Moscow Semiotic School. This branch of semiotics focuses on the cultural context, that is the multiple interrelated sign systems and the functioning of a literary text in a particular culture. Within Lotman’s conceptual framework, culture is treated as a complex metasystem which can function “only by being immersed in a specific semiotic continuum” (Lotman 2005: 206). In other words, culture requires a special domain or semiotic space in which its subjects can acquire signification. Lotman rationalises about it in the following way:

[S]emiotic space may be regarded as a unified mechanism (if not organism). In this case, primacy does not lie in one or another sign, but in the “greater system”, namely the semiosphere. The

semiosphere is that same semiotic space, outside of which semiosis itself cannot exist (Lotman 2005: 208).

At the same time, culture is regarded “as the sum of texts and the set of functions correlated with them, or as a certain mechanism which generates these texts” (Lotman et al. 1975: 73). Consequently, a work of art is by itself a sign operating within the sign system of culture. In this respect, the notion of text gets expanded towards the notion of culture. Hence, culture is seen as a unique text which includes non-verbal systems, while an individual text is conceived as part of the culture text. Actually, cultural text turns out to be the most abstract model of reality in relation to a specific culture; therefore, it is possible to describe it as a representation of a cultural worldview of that culture (Lotman 2004b: 81). Thus, cultural text (or art in general) is perceived as a means of communication. Lotman outlines the general characteristics of such artistic communication and claims that, like any communicative act, it involves a sender (addresser) and a receiver (addressee) of information. Consider the following:

If a work of art communicates something to me, if it serves the goal of communication between sender and receiver, then it is possible to distinguish in the work: 1) a message – that which is transmitted to me; 2) a language – an abstract system, common to sender and receiver, which makes the very act of communication possible (Lotman 1977: 15).

The scholar also warns that “in order to receive the information transmitted by art, one must master its language” (Lotman 1977: 14). Moreover, the text cannot only contain but it must also receive additional information and accumulate it in its memory. It means that a text no longer denotes simple messages from the author to the reader but acquires intellectual qualities which enable it to participate in the communicative act. The growing complexity of the text attributes to several important socio-communicative functions which, according to Lotman, are realised in the following five processes:

- 1) "Communication between addresser and addressee. A text fulfills the function of a message from the bearer of information to the audience" (Lotman 1988: 55).

Here the process of exchange when information is passed from the sender to the receiver is described. A text acquires an important function of transmitting the author's message to the potential reader. Lotman highlights that, due to its high "semantic saturation," an artistic text is "the most economical, compact method for storing and transmitting information" (Lotman 1977: 23). However, literary texts display a multiple coding, thus their message can be understood solely by the receiver with adequate reading competences. That is why he proposes that the practice of text comprehension would be regarded as message deciphering which is possible through the following steps:

[T]he reception of a message, the choice (or manufacture) of a code, and the comparison of text and code. In the process of interpretation, systemic elements, which are the carriers of meaning, are distinguished in the message. Nonsystemic elements are not perceived as carriers of information and are discarded (Lotman 1988: 57).

Thus, it is important for the reader to discern in what language (or code) the text is organised, which will enable him to decipher the textual signs through a productive close reading.

- 2) During the second process, the socio-communicative function of the text expands from the message as such to the bearer of a collective cultural memory. Consider the following:

A text fulfils the function of a collective cultural memory. In this capacity it discloses a capacity for continual replenishment and for

retrieving some aspect of the information stored in it and temporarily or totally forgetting others (Lotman 1988: 55).

The reader is gaining knowledge while communicating with an artistic text as a container of a collective cultural memory. A text can carry information from the past to the future which can be revived in the communicative process of reading and re-reading. Lotman argues that within every culture there is always a certain amount of texts containing the codes that are lost with time, thus the process of new code creation is frequently understood as reconstruction or “remembering” (Lotman 2004b: 11). Nonetheless, as the scholar maintains, while some information can be fixed in texts waiting to be excavated and passed on, another kind of information can be lost or totally forgotten.

- 3) “The communication of the reader with himself” (Lotman 1988: 55).

Lotman insists that the text “retrieves certain aspects of the personality of the addressee himself” (Lotman 1988: 55). In this type of communication, that is when the recipient of information communicates with himself, the text acts as “a mediator, helping to reorganize the personality of the reader and change its structural self-orientation and the extent of its links with metacultural constructions” (Lotman 1988: 55). Hence, while communicating with himself through a literary text functioning as a mediator, the reader transforms the information, which leads to the restructuring of his actual self. He reconstructs the essence of his personality which, as “an individual set of socially significant codes”, is constantly changing in the very act of communication (Lotman 1990: 22). Hence, while reading a literary text, the reader is also “reading” and interpreting himself.

- 4) As observed by Lotman, the text might also take the role of an interlocutor.

In this sense, the text does not act as a mediator anymore. A highly organised text demonstrating intellectual qualities “becomes an interlocutor on an equal footing, possessing a high degree of autonomy” (Lotman 1988: 55). During the communication between the author acting as the addresser and the reader as the addressee, the text functions “as an independent intellectual structure, playing an active and independent role in dialogue” (Lotman 1988: 55). Lotman believes that the text has the authority of an intelligent interlocutor who participates on an equal basis within the interaction between the author and the reader.

- 5) The final process of communication distinguished by Lotman is by far the most complex one as it invokes several functions of the text. In the communication of the text with the cultural context, the former ceases to be “an agent of a communicative act” and becomes “a full-fledged participant in it” functioning as “a source or a receiver of information” (Lotman 1988: 55).

The text can be understood “as a substitute for the overall context to which it is, in a certain respect, equivalent, or as metonymic” (Lotman 1988: 55). In this respect, the text signifies the context as “a part of the whole” (Lotman 1988: 55). Moreover, since the cultural context is by itself elaborate and manifold, the text is able to establish different relations with various structural levels of the context. Simultaneously, another peculiarity of the text as a constant and established structure is its capacity to move from one context to another. Lotman maintains that generally it occurs with the “long-lived works of art” when they are transferred into another cultural context where they “self-recode” (Lotman 1988: 55). In this way an individual text turns into “an informant that has moved to a new communicative situation” (Lotman 1988: 55). It “becomes more significant than itself alone and acquires the features of a cultural model” when it likens itself “to the cultural macrocosm” (Lotman 1988: 55). On the other hand, it demonstrates an independent behaviour when comparing itself “to

the autonomous individual” (Lotman 1988: 55). Hence, literary texts with their specific complex artistic structure become a part of a cultural text. In this regard, all literary texts can be treated as means of communication between the author and the reader.

### **3. LITERARY WIT AS A SPECIFIC MEANS OF ARTISTIC COMMUNICATION**

To reveal literary wit as a specific means of artistic communication John Donne’s *Holy Sonnet XVIII* was selected for the analysis. This enables the authors of this article to carry out an exposition of all the discussed socio-communicative functions of a literary text.

The first function involves the interaction between the author and the reader through the text. In this communicative process, the literary text acts as a message between the two agents of a communicative act. Thus, it could be claimed that Donne communicates with his readers through the sonnet serving as his message. The poet is seen as the addresser initiating the creative communication with the reader viewed as the addressee receiving his message. The message is transferred by the poetic text which invokes the encoded literary wit yet to be decoded. It is important to stress that the codifying means employed by the addresser and those of the addressee are never identical. As a result, the communicative situation involves the stages of incomprehension and search for clues which would reveal the content of the poetic meaning since, according to Lotman, “a text that is absolutely comprehensible is at the same time [...] absolutely useless” (1990: 80).

As the addresser, Donne passes on his intricate message through the poetic text which is saturated with literary wit. The poem focuses on the allegorical figure of the bride of Christ as the true institutional Church. Consider the following excerpt from the sonnet:

*Show me, dear Christ, Thy spouse so bright and clear.  
What! is it she which on the other shore  
Goes richly painted? or which, robbed and tore,  
Laments and mourns in Germany and here?*

*(Holy Sonnet XVIII, lines 1–4)*

Here the poet introduces his individual modelling system of the world which is conveyed through Christian epithalamic tradition. The metaphor which he applies is based on the Biblical notion of the Church or the community of believers viewed as the bride or the spouse of Christ. Consider the following excerpt from the *Revelation XIX* where the Church is described as a beautifully dressed bride who is waiting for a wedding:

*Let us rejoice and exult  
and give him glory,  
because the wedding celebration of the Lamb has come,  
and his bride has made herself ready.  
She was permitted to be dressed in bright, clean, fine line.<sup>1</sup>*

Indeed, there are similarities in the depiction of the bride in the discussed texts. St. John presents her as dressed in “bright, clean, fine line”; Donne describes her as “bright and clear” (line 1). However, the poet is uncertain who Christ’s spouse really is. Therefore, he pleads Him to reveal her true identity. The talk with Christ seems to echo the Biblical *Song of Songs* 1:7:

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<sup>1</sup> BibleGateway. *Revelation XIX, 6-9*:  
<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Revelation+19&version=NET>. Accessed 20 October 2017.

*Tell me, you whom I love,  
where you graze your flock  
and where you rest your sheep at midday.<sup>2</sup>*

Hence, from the very first lines of the sonnet the reader is drawn into a conversation with the author who expresses his spiritual and religious concerns. At the same time, the reader undergoes communication with the cultural Christian tradition of Donne's time in order to decipher how the author understands the chosen community of believers, the possible spouse of Christ, whether the one "on the other shore" (line 2) or dwelling in England and Germany. The former is "richly painted," the latter is in a poor condition. Thus, the reader communicates not only with the author, but also with the cultural tradition. To be more specific, the witty text serves as a representation of collective memory, which, according to Lotman, is the second socio-communicative function of the text. Here literary wit incorporates a religious context in which it acquires meaning. As an allegory, it is waiting for the reader's earnest decoding. To do that, he needs to familiarise himself with the religious context of the time.

It is believed that Donne composed this sonnet in the 1620s, during the period of Counter-Reformation that is marked by the battle of White Mountain when the Catholic forces won over the Protestant legion, which drastically altered the "religious landscape" in Europe (Curta and Holt 2016: 772). The poet expresses his consideration of the mentioned events by enquiring whether Christ's true religious community is the one located in Continental Europe ("the other shore") that is involved in the movement of Counter-Reformation. Donne compares her to a luminous and

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<sup>2</sup> BibleGateway. *The Song of Songs*.

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Song%20of%20Songs%201>. Accessed 26 October 2017.



translucent, or lavishly decorated lady who applies a lot of cosmetics and wears fancy dresses, thus referring to the Catholic Church of Rome with its rich grandeur. Yet, the author extends his sympathy and solidarity while talking about the spouse who is ravaged and tortured like an underprivileged woman, thus referring to the Protestant Church of Germany and England.

The communicative process in the act of decoding the meaning of the Metaphysical literary wit is based on mutual activation since the sonnet operates as an interlocutor, which corresponds to the fourth function described by Lotman. It projects on the reader its own system of codes, yet in order to be discovered as meaningful, it encourages the reader to communicate with it via close reading. Actually, only under such a condition will intelligence meet another intelligence since “for intelligence to function there must be another intelligence” (Lotman 1990: 2). Taking this into account, it could be stated that the reader is not passively reading the verbal texture but is interacting with the text as an interlocutor. As noted by Frances Cruickshank, “verse is living and active. It thinks, speaks, eludes, intervenes, overwhelms and overtakes. In its articulate self-consciousness, it woos both writer and reader, staging reflective conversations and sacramental intimacies” (Cruickshank 2010: 1).

Simultaneously, the poetic text of the sonnet communicates with the particular cultural context, which is the fifth function distinguished by Lotman. It not only acts as a participant in the communicative situation but also as a complex body of the receiver and the source of information (for the reader). Donne applies his literary wit as an informant which self-recodes in a new communicative situation of the present day by representing the cultural macrocosm of the seventeenth-century cultural and religious context.

Through the Metaphysical mechanism of his literary wit, the poet also reveals the apostasy of the addresser. The author questions his own faith: by his upbringing he was a Roman Catholic, a descendent of St Thomas More on his mother’s side. His brother died for Catholic faith.

Nevertheless, he changed his religion in his young age and finally in 1621 he was appointed the Dean of St. Paul's Cathedral in London. Through the message encoded in Sonnet XIX, Donne communicates his deep religious conflicts. He questions the identity of the true Church and asks how he might distinguish between Catholicism and Protestantism poetically represented as Christ's brides. What Church is true? Is it the one that existed a thousand years before the Protestant Church? Or is it just a matter of fashion which appears suddenly and then soon fades away: "Sleeps she a thousand, then peeps up one year? / Is she self-truth, and errs? now new, now outwore?" (lines 5–6). Moreover, the poet uses the geographical code of conceit intermixed with the Biblical code: "Doth she, and did she, and shall she evermore / On one, on seven, or on no hill appear?" (lines 7–8). Once again the cultural context is brought up when encoding and deciphering the meaning of "one hill," "seven hills" and "no hill" at all. The first reference alludes to the Biblical Mount Moriah where the first Temple was built by Solomon (Balfour 2015), the second one hints at the ancient city of Rome often called the city of seven hills (Vout 2012), whereas the absence of hill might suggest Geneva as the centre of Calvinism. Hence, it occurs that the Metaphysical author strives hard to identify the true Church out of the two conflicting Christian traditions.

While communicating with the author, the reader is also communicating with himself since a conversation with the other usually leads to a conversation with oneself. As a result, in the process of deciphering the sonnet's wit, the reader is invited to start a conversation with himself and, together with the author, search for the answers to the posed questions. In the analysed case, literary wit functions as a mediator opening up a space for an introspective scrutiny of the reader's religious beliefs, which is the third function according to Lotman. The semiotic interaction between the reader and the text is also worth mentioning here since both agents of the communicative act affect each other in the reading process. This means that the specific textual structures do stimulate self-reflection in the reader; yet, due to feedback, such introspection also

promotes the structural density and complexity of the text since the reader, in his turn, complements the poetic text with his insights.

In the following lines (9–10), Donne extends the marriage trope by suggesting that his search of the true bride is a chivalric quest. He envisions the potential believers as knights who seek to find the true religious community allegorically perceived as a bride who could be the subject of pious devotion as well as romantic love. Thus, the traditional Biblical allegory is inventively reworked by applying its original underlying logic: if the Church can be perceived as a spouse, it should acquire all the features that a spouse might possess. Hence, just like any spouse, the Church may be open to amorous desire felt by her or she might be the object of the knights' adventure: "Dwells she with us, or like adventuring knights / First travel we to seek, and then make love?" (lines 9–10). By means of his wit Donne reveals the implications invoked by the traditional allegory and originally juxtaposes the sacred with the profane. Due to the epithalamic tradition, he eroticises the Church. The sonnet is reminiscent of the erotic portrayal of the female body of *The Song of Songs*. However, contrary to *The Song of Songs*, the author does not stay within the romantic frame, rather turning to the display of radical physicality of the bride. Donne extends a Metaphysical conceit in depicting the Church as a promiscuous spouse who might be involved in adulterous affairs:

*Betray, kind husband, Thy spouse to our sights,  
And let mine amorous soul court Thy mild dove,  
Who is most true and pleasing to Thee then  
When she is embraced and open to most men.*

*(Holy Sonnet XVIII, lines 11–14)*

Here, the inversion of meaning is based on Luke 11: 9–10 where Jesus teaches His disciples as follows:

So I tell you: Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you. For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.<sup>3</sup>

In the given excerpt, the door might stand for Jesus Christ who has referred to Himself in this way: “I tell you the solemn truth, I am the door for the sheep” (John 10:7); or it might imply the Church which is regarded as the Lord’s Temple and as such is always open to His disciples. The poet reworks this idea wittily, in a shocking Metaphysical manner, exposing the accessibility and welcoming of the Church both in a spiritual and erotic way. Hence, paradoxically, the Church as a bride portrayed by Donne seems to have the implications of the whore of Babylon depicted in the *Book of Revelation*. Indeed, the author works out a witty paradox based on the logical deduction of the notion that the true Church viewed as a bride of Christ who is her husband should remain faithful to Him. Here the bride as the Church acts similarly to Christ: she is “open to most men” (line 14), which has an erotic implication of intimacy through infidelity. In this way the poet expresses the idea that the Christian Church is open to all mankind. The more believers enter it, the better. Moreover, it can only be perceived as a true “bright and clear” bride by those to whom Christ bestows a right to court, that is to woo and have a love affair with her. The yoking of the sacred and profane planes results in the unpredictability and expansion of the grotesque paradox. It fosters the progressive image of the Church as a bride to a spouse. The concluding lines have a shocking effect on the reader but this is done purposefully.

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<sup>3</sup> BibleGateway. *Luke 11: 9–10*.

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Lk+11%2C+9-10++&version=NET>.  
Accessed 20 October 2017.

The Metaphysical transformation of the Biblical image of the Church as a bride forces the reader to reconsider his own moral values and beliefs and reorganise the mindset through an introspective communication with himself. This means that the reader approaches the text from his previous individual experience but, through the contact with the Sonnet, this experience gets broadened as the reader acquires new information. Such artistic communication operates in two ways: it enables the reader to reconstruct his self-image within the frame of an amorous relationship between himself as a lover (an “amorous soul”) and the welcoming community of believers; but it also reactivates the literary wit in the poem and prompts its further operation. No doubt, literary wit is a means for exploring the communicative experience it conveys. It is not an embellishment to the poem but its centre and impetus. Therefore, it could be described as a thought-provoking construct. Consequently, the development of artistic communication is also the process of thought development. The deciphering of literary wit is not prone to passive perception but prefers an active dialogue or even polylogue if the author, cultural tradition and context are taken into account. The intensity of participation in this communicative act enables the transmission of the message and a communicative transaction between the participants since the productive synergy of all the participants in a communicative act reorganises the reader’s perception by expanding the sites of interpretation.

#### **4. CONCLUSIONS**

The seventeenth-century English culture is a semiosphere of multifarious signs within which literary texts were composed. The poetry of the century is saturated with literary wit which requires synergetic energy of the participants of an artistic communicative act in order to be actualised. The analysis of John Donne’s *Holy Sonnet XLIII* revealed that

such artistic communication involves all five functions of the text distinguished by Yuri Lotman.

Firstly, the author is regarded as the addresser who communicates with his readers/interpreters, or addressees through his poetic text which functions as a message encoded in a witty language. Donne possesses a profound frame of mind and in order to extend his unique vision to the reader he incorporates the intricate language of the Metaphysical wit. His wit informs the reader about the author's complex attitudes towards the religious turmoil of the time as well as his personal pondering upon Christian faith.

Secondly, while reading and interpreting Donne's poetic message, the addressee also communicates with the religious cultural tradition of the seventeenth-century England when the analysed sonnet was composed. Having this in mind, it is possible to define literary wit in a new light, as an elaborate system containing various codes that can transform the received codes and generate a new message. Wit expressed in the literary text of the poem becomes both a source and a receiver of information. This means that the reader who converses with the religious cultural tradition exchanges the information with the text as an interlocutor and in this way they complement each other.

Thirdly, the poetic text can act as an informant who travels through centuries to reach a contemporary communicative situation. In this respect, wit might be seen as a way to store and transfer the specific information about the seventeenth century English tradition of the discourse of wit. Surpassed with multiple meanings, literary wit reflects on the seventeenth-century cultural context of England in a new interpretive landscape. It has been discovered that while structuring his Metaphysical literary wit, Donne draws on other texts, the Scriptures. He also provides various geographical codes for the reader as points of reference to the cultural context of his time.

Fourthly, wit also functions as an interlocutor that plays an active role in the dialogue with its readers/interpreters. It arouses, intensifies and provokes the creative potential in its perceivers. However, sometimes such artistic communication might be quite complicated, especially when it involves literary wit which does not surrender to a simplistic interpretation, requiring an intense intellectual probing. In order to do that, the reader/interpreter must develop adequate competences. The more complicated the witty text is, the more complex is its structure. If literary wit demonstrates a remarkably elaborate structure, it asks for exceptionally intelligent interlocutors with a developed artistic taste.

Finally, literary wit also serves as a mediator through which the reader can communicate with himself thus acquiring new knowledge about himself through the extension of his previous limits, which leads to a dynamic transformation of his actual self. Donne's sonnet invites the reader not only to get acquainted with the religious-cultural context of the time, but also to envision the Church as a community of believers from a completely new and playfully unexpected perspective.

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IVANA M. KRSMANOVIĆ

## **JOHN KEATS'S "ISABELLA" AS A ROMANTIC DEMETER: INDIVIDUATION UNACHIEVED**

This study aims to apply the principles of archetypal criticism onto the poem, analyzing its characters, storyline and topography. Isabella's tragic life can be seen as a paradigm of individuation, a process of achieving personal completeness through the attempt to integrate the conscious and the unconscious. Isabella, as a mother archetype, undertakes a transitional road from (1) an innocent child to (2) a shy lover and finally to (3) a desperate mother who lost her beloved one. On her voyage to her better and more profound self, Isabella, like every other mystic hero, undergoes many tumultuous events including an initiation rite through the loss of virginity. Isabella is a Romantic Demeter – an archaic ultimate representation of psyche. By not being able to fully achieve her motherhood, Isabella's individuation, as I will prove, remains unachieved. Her quest to "acquire identity" or get involved in "Soul-making" as Keats formulates it, stays far from the realm of individuation due to the fact that she cannot embrace her pain and suffering. Although her battle to turn her personal life from chaos to cosmos does not turn well, Isabella definitely incites macrocosmic or social "order-making" since the story of her tragic life "from mouth to mouth through all the country pass'd." Isabella's death discredits the Romantic heroine seen as a lonely victim of a brutal society. It is also an account of a woman's struggle to fully realize her inner self or to nurture and celebrate a Goddess Within.

Keywords: John Keats, Isabella, archetype, individuation.

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

Although John Keats's intention was to write a lovable, commercially successful poem to pay tribute to Boccaccio, his narrative poem *Isabella or a Pot of Basil* neither received much positive critical attention nor brought the author the financial benefit he had wished for.

Unwilling to rewrite it or alter its weaker parts, Keats published the poem in 1820, two years after composing it. Keeping the original storyline with smaller changes, Keats told a story of a young couple's forbidden love which ends with the brutal murder of the male. After a series of tragic events, the heroine of the narrative, Isabella, loses her mind and dies "lone and incomplete" (Keats 1820). One of the reasons Keats hesitated about publishing the poem was his ambivalent attitude toward it. Although he somehow liked it, he thought it was "too smokable" (Gittings 1970: 298) and not good enough to please the public.<sup>1</sup>

Keats's obsession with women is projected in his most representative lyrical works. Starting with his most famous poem, *Endymion*, then *Isabella, Lamia*, "La belle dame sans merci," and in his majestic odes, Keats's playfulness with female characters as an essential part of his poetic discourse reveals his personal and poetical preoccupation with women. In these poems, we find *femme fatales*, powerful goddesses, and vulnerable mortals, who, each in her own way, personify Keats's efforts to demystify women.

The storyline of Keats's *Isabella* follows the narrative plan of Boccaccio's *Decameron*. Isabella, the sister of two wealthy Florentine traders, falls in love with Lorenzo, an employee of her brothers'. After having spent some time in mutual courting, Isabella and Lorenzo start a romance, hiding their relationship from her brothers. Isabella's brothers, determined to marry their sister to their rich superiors, decide to lure Lorenzo into the woods, kill him and bury him there. When they complete their evil plan, they hide the truth from Isabella. After some time, Lorenzo's spirit appears to desperate Isabella in a dream and reveals what happened. Isabella goes to look for Lorenzo's grave, cuts off his head and

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<sup>1</sup> Keats's letter to Woodhouse: "I will give you a few reasons why I shall persist in not publishing *The Pot of Basil* – it is too smokable" (Gittings 1970: 298).

puts it in a pot with basil, hiding it from her brothers. Watered with Isabella's tears and nurtured by her attention, the basil grows incredibly. Having discovered Lorenzo's head in the pot, the brothers take it away from Isabella and leave Florence for good. Isabella goes crazy and dies of sorrow.

## 2. ISABELLA'S STORY

Keats's poem focuses on the main character's tragic life as a story worth sharing, and the first evidence is the title itself. As a passionate admirer of Shakespeare, Keats could have named the poem *Isabella and Lorenzo*, alluding to a tragic love story of two lovers (similarly to *Romeo and Juliet*). However, Keats rather relies on the Romantic conventions of his fellow writers (Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*, Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*), so he deliberately leaves his main character "lonely" in the title of his romance to emphasize that this story centers on the woman.

Additionally, before the reader is informed about the details of Isabella's fate, the first verse reveals the moral of the story and hints at the poet's opinion of Isabella's character: "Fair Isabel, poor simple Isabel" (Keats 1820). Undoubtedly, this saga is about a woman and her sufferings.

Although the poem applies the romantic pattern of "forbidden love," Isabella's character is significantly different from the canonical representation of women of the time. Isabella lives with her lover in the same house, but, contrary to conventions, she is not married to him. She is, as the narration reveals, a "sweet" girl of "untouch'd cheek" courageous enough just to whisper her affections "in the pillow" (Keats 1820). However, she is the one who breaks the silence and acts contrary to what is expected of women in love. She yells Lorenzo's name and is the first to declare her love.

Isabella's character is more closely defined by her disability to communicate or, more precisely, to speak. A lack of dialogue between the two lovers actually defines their relationship which is reduced to spontaneous speechless passion. The only "voice" that Isabella is allowed to have is singing. Isabella sings after the sexual act in which they "exchanged / the inner fragrances of their hearts" (Keats 1820). Singing, as a symbol of happiness and satisfaction, contributes to the description of her somewhat elfin character. In addition, singing, as the only vocalization allowed to her, implies that the couple experiences strong inhibitions about openly discussing consummated love. Singing is a small, narrow valve through which Isabella can publicly acknowledge that she is happy in her emotional relationship. The lack of communication between the two lovers living under the same roof implies that the brutality of social ties has a significant impact on their behavior.<sup>2</sup>

It is interesting that this lack of dialogue is not limited to Isabella and Lorenzo alone, but extends to the second male-female relationship in the narrative, that between Isabella and her brothers. An honest and meaningful dialogue between the sister and her brothers does not occur throughout the poem. Instead, "many a jealous conference had they, / and many times they bit their lips alone" (Keats 1820). Isabella's brothers are not deprived of the power to speak; on the contrary, they communicate with Lorenzo very well and talk confidently between themselves. However, they find communication with their sister irrelevant or unnecessary. Perceiving women as unworthy of conversation emphasizes the cruelty of

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<sup>2</sup> Motion argues that Keats placed Isabella "in a similar relation to her family as his to George and Tom," (Motion 1997: 250). In other words, John Keats's brothers incited his feeling of resentment due to their private issues which influenced both Keats's life and career. This implies that Keats, while creating the character of Isabella, decided to place her in a similar social pattern he had experienced and found extremely disturbing.

the masculine toward the feminine, and implies that a similar social practice was quite common at the time.<sup>3</sup>

The social and material status of a family is placed above the needs and desires of a woman who becomes equal to a real estate or money.<sup>4</sup> The forced passivization of the female protagonist through her relationship with the males is a projection of a ruthless capitalist society in which there is no room for love, but only for business contracts. Interestingly, at this point Isabella sees no urge to change either her behavior or the social constraints. She becomes alienated and desperate once she finds out her lover is missing, so “she had died in drowsy ignorance” (Keats 1820). Lorenzo’s spirit gives an account of the tragic events. The ghost’s story becomes Isabella’s harsh reality. Her bizarre act of cutting off of her lover’s head and its preservation in a pot lead her to madness and suffering.

If we apply the principles of archetypal criticism to this poem, we will encode the archetypal voyage of the female character to individuation. Individuation is defined as a process in which “a protagonist undertakes a voyage, mainly physical, sometimes emotional, during which he learns something about themselves or finds the meaning of their life, as well as social acceptance” (Gallo and Herz 2005: 112). Individuation is the process in which the individual self develops out of an undifferentiated unconscious – seen as a developmental psychic process during which

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<sup>3</sup> Mellor argues that with the famous six poets of Romanticism there is a common tendency to deprive their female characters of speaking by “eras[ing] the female from discourse” so a female “does not speak; she therefore has no existence” (Mellor 1993: 19).

<sup>4</sup> Everest demonstrates how Keats’s intentional stylistic approach and prosody reveal a world of economic transactions in love (Everest 1995: 107–126). In other words, they indicate the materialism of romance. Everest argues that there is an opposition between two worlds (the lovers’ and the brothers’) in which Lorenzo is more of “a passive observer” and Isabella “an easy prey” (Everest 1995: 120–121). More recently, Schulkins (2016:79) expressed similar views in her article “Economy of Romance”, arguing that Keats “questions romantic conventions in a money-oriented world” (Schulkins 2016: 78).

innate elements of personality, the components of the immature psyche, and the experiences of the person's life become integrated over time into a well-functioning whole. Isabella's transition from falling in love to death in insanity is a Romantic depiction of the personal pursuit of completeness, the paradigm of individuation. Karla Alwes is right when she defines it as a transition from a child to a woman, from a shy lover to a desperate mother (Alwes 1993: 65). Apart from the plot, there are other archetypal segments in *Isabella* – characters and topography. They help the heroine's mission and the realization of her individuation process.

### 2.1. Isabella as a Romantic Demeter

At the beginning of the poem, Isabella is depicted as a simple girl who lives an ordinary and almost dull life with her brothers. She is neither a *Damsel in Distress* nor a *Femme fatale* as a type of character the reader would usually encounter while exploring Romantic poetic narratives,<sup>5</sup> or typically “portrayed as a distinct threat to male dominance of the normative institution of marriage” (Brown 2012: 6). There is nothing unusual in either her character or her looks. Isabella is a girl who (voluntarily) lives in a world of restrictions, which does not seem to bother her much. Only when

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<sup>5</sup> Mario Praz was among the first to provide an extensive study of the *Femme Fatale* of Romanticism comparing her to the Byronic hero. According to Praz, *Femme Fatale* resists being transformed into a helpless victim (Praz 1933). Ann Mellor adds to the understanding of female characters in Romantic poetry: “When a female character or principle asserts her independence or difference in canonical Romantic poetry, she is all too frequently defined as an evil to be eradicated or overcome” (Mellor 1993: 28). Mellor also claims that in Romantic poetry “a truly independent woman is not desirable” (Mellor 1993: 28). Theresa Kelly has investigated the socio-political conditions which shaped the depiction of Romantic females arguing that “female characters act often to the distress of their male creators” (Kelly 2000: 330). The most recent study is that of Heather Brown who explored Gothic ballads, novels and the Romanticized *Femme Fatale*, revealing important links to the decadence and decline of *Femme Fatale* in Romantic literature (Brown 2012).



she falls in love with young Lorenzo will she realize that she needs to break the imposed limits.

Isabella is a female archetype or a heroine that initially completely belongs to a certain social circle. She lives in a predominately male household and her behavior does not indicate that she might strive for emancipation, personalization or, in Keats's words, the undertaking of "Soul-making," (Gittings 1970: 250) a process which denotes the achievement of psychical completeness. At the beginning of the story there is nothing individual about Isabella's character, so we witness her coexistence with her (male) family (her own microcosm). Similar types of family structure characterized tribal families and ancestral communities. At this stage of the poem a mechanism of destiny or outer necessity can be recognized in Isabella's behavior and relationship with her brothers. Her singing as the urge to express herself vocally is a substitute for the communication that she is deprived of. It is also a reflection of her subsequent need to unload the burden of repression.

The negative characters of the narrative, traditionally presented as devils, snakes, monsters, or giants, are here the two wealthy brothers. The coexistence of the main heroine (Isabella) and the demonic forces (her brothers) is the oldest form of rivalry in both mythological narratives and literature. The chaos in the relationship between the hero and antihero is correlated with the personal, psychological chaos inside the hero/heroine. Struggling to win her own completeness and achieve individualization, Isabella is forced to (passively) oppose the forces she is facing. Her brothers successfully demonstrate their personal inhibition to accept a different woman (although she is their sister).

Isabella's path to individualization is accompanied by the archetypal figure of a Wiseman, found here in the episodic character of the old nurse. A wise woman is a female replica of the old Wiseman. She protects Isabella and directs her to the right path, and their joint crossing of the river symbolizes the entry into a new, unknown territory. It is also another step in Isabella's Self-defining process. A wise old man as an archetypal figure

is the greatest spiritual synthesis that harmonizes the conscious and unconscious spheres of the soul (Meletinski 2011: 7).

The myth of creation is a basic myth, or a myth par excellence as Meletinski states (Meletinski 2011: 21). In the process of the cosmization of the world, of creating cosmos out of chaos, the role of a hero who undertakes an active battle against demonic forces is extremely important. The creation of the world automatically refers to its arrangement, so the beginning of Isabella and Lorenzo's love at the same time means a struggle to arrange or realize the relationship, followed by a metamorphosis of their characters. The process will leave them transformed, but not "superhuman" or "super personal", as we would expect.

Isabella's macrocosm (the society she lives in) and her microcosm (her small family) first impose similar restrictions. However, the prescribed social conventions do not seem to be so limiting until Isabella experiences physical love. The experience of love, sexual pleasures and sensuality are merely Isabella's first step in the "Soul-making" process, an initiation rite. The archetype of the hero's initiation or the rite of passage has its origins in the mythical and fairy-tale tradition, and dates back to the earliest times. Such challenges are often depicted through difficult tasks or a battle with daemons (Jung 1977: 45). With a number of transitional customs, sometimes even temporary ritual death or other challenging obstacles, the archetypal hero becomes a legal member of a tribe or achieves personal cosmization. The process includes temporary isolation from the society and contacts with other worlds, but also exploration of one's soul in search of new values (Meletinski 2011: 12). Abandoning the initiation makes the individual isolated from society and thus prevents further personal transition from infantile attitudes to a more complete Self. Initiation as such includes not only the cosmization of the world, but a certain harmonization with the person's needs.

Isabella's "epistemology" of sexuality is her initiation, her rite of passage into the world of womanhood. Losing virginity is a process of transformation which secludes her from society in order to push her closer

to herself. Isabella thus experiences an essential metamorphosis which, in certain way, represents the next step to emancipation, growth, and evolution of the female in her. That is why Isabella cannot stay in the orbit of the initial society and her voyage to individuation cannot be limited to domestic and social relations. Her loss of chastity also implies leaving childhood and the "age of innocence" behind, and entering the world of human development where she will strive to reach "three kinds of fulfillment: individual, sexual and social" (Frye 2000: 148). Sexuality thus immensely adds to the heroine's maturity, shapes her character and influences her socialization. Although it leads to bliss, the holy secret of marriage (or sexual relations) is a trauma for Isabella, since "the evolution of the personality is at once blessing and curse" (Jacobi 2001: 123). It is bitter-sweet knowledge, similar to Eve's revelation of nakedness after eating the forbidden fruit.

Becoming a complete being, realizing our true Self through the process of spontaneous growth and development is the essence of individuation (Stajn 2007: 190). The first phase of the process is acknowledging the Shadow which symbolizes our "darker" side, the invisible and inseparable part of personality (Jakobi 2008: 305). As an archetypal form, the Shadow is usually found in the ancestral man's performances, personified in many shapes. The meeting with the Shadow is an acceptance of the soul's "other side", its hidden opposition. It is always realized in "the material from the unconscious, e.g. *a figure in a dream* (my emphasis)" and inevitably has "individual and numerous soul attributes of the dreamer" (Jacobi 2001: 128). A Shadow can be a person we know who, for some reason, "becomes the bearer of projections of one or several traits concealed in the unconscious" (Jacobi 2001: 128). Isabella's "unconsciousness" is projected by the archetypal character of the Ghost who Isabella sees in her dream. Lorenzo's Spirit she dreams of is an unconscious work of her psyche, as Jacobi explains:

According to whether it belongs to the realm of the Ego, or the personal unconscious or to that of the collective unconscious, the

shadow has a personal or collective form of appearance. Therefore it can manifest itself equally well in the guise of a figure from our field of consciousness, i.e., our older brother (or sister) [...] (Jacobi 2001:128)

What the Shadow in her dream says is a painful but “awakening” truth, so Isabella’s passive confrontation with the Shadow looks like her “sobering,” like the awakening of the conscious or a trigger for the activities she performs to solve the issues that torment her and obstruct her voyage to a true Self. The confrontation is seen as passive because Isabella merely listens to the Shadow’s lamentation over the tragic events, without her even trying to respond or interfere in any way. However, awakening by the Shadow is a challenge for a personality, but at the same time it is an urge to deal with it and establish the harmony between “what I am” and “what I think I am”. Achieving that balance is of extreme importance since, according to Jung “the one who acknowledges their shadow and their light, sees himself from two sides, and thus gets in the middle” (Jakobi 2008: 305).

A sexual experience opened the door which Isabella did not know existed. Having experienced sexual closeness with her young lover, Isabella may wish for parenthood, the poem leads us to assume. Isabella’s urge to become a mother is incited just after the experience of sexual pleasure and she falls in love so much that, after a period of separation, her “untouched cheek [...] Fell thin as a young mother’s, who doth seek / By every lull to cool her infant’s pain” (Keats 1820). Soon after the image of Isabella’s breasts prepared for breastfeeding, Keats names Isabella “such a bride” (Keats 1820). In order to heighten the strength of the mother archetype, Keats introduces the character of “an aged nurse” (Keats 1820) who accompanies Isabella to the forest. A nurse or a midwife is typically defined as a woman trained to assist pregnant women in childbirth. Isabella’s readiness to become a mother is not just her projected behavior, it is a real state of affairs confirmed by her physical appearance and the

role of the nurse who has helped her dig Lorenzo's grave. The character helps Isabella's transition from a naive girl to a mother-to-be.

However, in that social context, Lorenzo's murder deprives Isabella of the right to become a mother. Yet, in her half-realized individuation process, Isabella cannot stop or return. The process cannot be undone and thus she regresses to the state before revealing her sexual self. Isabella's readiness to become a mother is demonstrated in her "motherly" behavior, so the mother archetype becomes dominant throughout the poem, and is obvious in her bizarre and disturbing treatment of Lorenzo's head. Isabella instinctively takes the head in the same manner as a mother would treat her child: "she calm'd its wild hair with a golden comb" (Keats 1820) and after she kisses the head, she puts it "in her bosom" (Keats 1820). In order to show that the change towards individuation is not a mere projection of Isabella's but a step to the next level, the poet adds: "those dainties made to still an infant's cries" (Keats 1820). The poet implies that no matter what Isabella feels or thinks at this point, her body is on its way to get fully transformed and embrace motherly duties.

The mythological character of the Mother (Magna Mater, Mother Nature) is one of the oldest and most dominant archetypes. As the first created and most powerful archetype, it can be traced back to folklore and mythology in multiple forms: as Nature, Tree, Ocean, Woods, Cave, Athens, Ishtar, or Demeter. As a Christianized symbol, mother is Mother of Jesus, Eve, the Church, and generally also a "personification of cities, countries, science and ideals" (Jakobi 2008: 158). That timeless synthesis of love, protection, upbringing and care is intrinsically rooted in the collective unconscious of every human being (Jakobi 2008: 175). A mother has an irreplaceable effect on her child's growth, development, and reach for independence. A mother is "a bearer of the whole life to which we as helpless children have been at the same time entrusted and conceded" (Jakobi 2008: 159). Mother as an archetypal character is usually found in literature as extremely positive, although there is a less common alternative of the archetype – a mother that abandons and rejects her child. As

Jovanović states, “[a]mbivalent attitude toward Mothers is conditioned by their archetypal duality, the ability not only to give, but also to take life” (Jovanović 2011: 109).

Mother is a never-ending and immortal unconscious element (Meletinski 2011: 7), a fertility goddess, and as a “mythological representation of Earth, she is connected with cosmos and chaos, with the creative principle, mostly natural, which includes eroticism” (Meletinski 2011: 73). Eroticism and sexuality are deeply linked to fertility, childbearing, and creativity, since “sexuality is not a mere instinct it is an indisputably creative power” (Jakobi 2008: 163). Delivering a child is a potentially traumatic experience. Isabella’s manic preservation and hiding of the pot of basil is an act of madness, a consequence of trauma, and resembles a mother’s unreasonable possessiveness while nurturing a newborn child. Lorenzo’s head (or the pot of basil) becomes a valuable item which fortifies the archetypal character of mother and helps Isabella’s individuation process: “Primary acquirement of an object by a culture hero can be redesigned as a redistribution of a previously existing object, as an initiation rite, execution of a difficult marital ritual, task, element of a battle against primitive daemons” (Meletinski 2011: 81). The title of the poem is thus not merely decorative, but Keats establishes the link between Isabella and the pot of basil on purpose.

When Isabella is identified as a metaphor for the Mother archetype, a correlation between a Greek version of the archetype and Keats’s Isabella can be traced. Demeter is a goddess of marriage, fertility and child rearing. The Hellenic culture recognizes Demeter as a goddess of agriculture who takes care of wheat from seed to harvest (Bihalji-Merin et al. 1990: 616). Like Demeter, who is overburdened with sorrow due to her loss of beloved daughter Persephone, Isabella represents motherhood similarly shaded with sadness due to her loss of beloved Lorenzo’s head. The Demeteresque traits of Isabella’s character are at the same time a “sphere of the purest humanity” (Jung and Kerenyi 1951: 158) since “Demeter means to be pursued, to be robbed, raped, to fail to understand, to rage and grieve, but

then to get everything back and be born again” (Jung and Kerenyi 1951: 171). The only difference between Demeter and Isabella is the aspect of “re-birth,” which is perhaps the essential distinction between the characters of the mother-goddess on one hand and the mortal mother on the other.

Setting oneself free from their mother is the last step in the individuation process since it allows a woman to achieve “the first feeling of her own, unique individuality” (Jakobi 2008: 183). One of the ways to set oneself free from the archetype (in the sense that it does not disturb their further personal integration) is to become a mother herself. Since Isabella does not realize her motherhood, she feels frustrated, which forces her into madness and death.

The last step in the individuation process is the Self, or self-actualization (Stajn 2008: 190). Achieving the Self for a personality means the harmonization of the two worlds – the inner world of oneself and the world of reality, which includes a complete change of life principles and acceptance of life as one of conflicts and suffering. Based on the archetypal theory, pain must be embraced, not suppressed. Jung distinguishes between repression and suppression of suffering, and is in favor of the first. Repression, as he claims, does not produce a neurosis and it corresponds to a moral choice, while “suppression is a rather immoral ‘penchant’ for getting rid of disagreeable decisions.” (Jacobi 2001: 147). According to Jung, the biggest problems in life remain unsolved since they “express a necessary polarity which is imminent in every self-regulatory system. They can never be solved, only “outgrown” (Jakobi 2008: 411). Jung’s idea is thus the same as Keats’s, as expressed in his letters: “Life must be undergone” (Gittings 1970: 99).

### **3. CONCLUSION**

From a virgin to a demonized female, Keats affirms that woman is an essential symbol of English Romanticism, as a symbol of the personal

search for individuation and a sense of striving for a personal identity realization. The metamorphosis of Keats's Isabella lies in her embrace of pain and empathy, self-realization and self-definition, including a more subtle expression of vulnerability and of coming closer to a truer self as the essence of an individual in the process of becoming. An act of passion and love transforms Keats's heroine as the experience becomes an initiation rite which contributes to her evolution into a yet unknown and unexplored self.

Although Isabella, a Romantic Demeter, undertakes a brave and unusual road of self-reflection, she does not reach its end. She is unable to accept the gloomy circumstances of her reality. After her pot of basil is cruelly taken from her, her individuation process remains unachieved. Instead, she goes mad due to an accumulation of frustration and neurosis, with no real outlets to set them free. Her individuation is abruptly stopped, as demonstrated in the final lines of the poem:

For Isabel, sweet Isabel, will die;  
Will die a death too lone and incomplete  
(Keats 1820)

"Too lone and incomplete," Isabella has to die, although we have to give her credit for her strong wish to change, grow and work on her own "Soul-making". Isabella is punished with death because her story does not conform to the mythic hero's conventional epilogue. Although her battle to turn her personal life from chaos to cosmos does not turn out well, Isabella definitely incites macrocosmic or social "order-making" since the story of her tragic life "from mouth to mouth through all the country pass'd" (Keats 1820). Not only does Isabella deserve certain "social acceptance" (Gallo and Herz 2005: 112), as defined by the archetypal approach to the individuation process and its outcomes, she announces a new social order in future: a new generation is to be a successor of the old one, bringing a completely new set of values. Isabella's quest to "acquire identity" or get



involved in "Soul-making," as Keats puts it, stays far from the realm of individuation due to the fact that she cannot embrace her pain and suffering to the fullest. It remains unachieved. Her death discredits the Romantic heroine depicted as a victim of a cold and brutal society. It is also an account of a woman's struggle to fully realize her inner self and to nurture and celebrate a Goddess Within.

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SLADANA STAMENKOVIĆ

## **THE BAUDRILLARDIAN BODY IN *THE BODY ARTIST* AND *ZERO K* BY DON DELILLO**

The notion of the body has generally been considered as the physical part of the body-soul binary opposition that constitutes the Self. In literary theory, the body has often been defined as “a mere auxiliary to the Self, a vehicle or object that houses the mind or the soul” (Hillman and Maude 2015: 1). Such definitions classify the body as a less important element of one’s identity and the soul as the dominant one. As the expendable part of such a binary opposition, the body could also be interpreted in terms of Baudrillard’s theory of simulacra, in which the body might operate as a simulacrum, “a copy without an original” (Smith 2010: 199). Moreover, it can also be defined as an artificial construct that serves the purpose of simulation. In DeLillo’s fiction, and specifically in *The Body Artist* and *Zero K*, the body is often represented as a piece of technology and his characters seek life beyond it. However, in his works, the body also proves to be essential to one’s identity and inseparable from the Self. In these two novels, DeLillo uses the notion of the body to discuss life and death, but also art and the contemporary society, along with the role the body has within them all. This paper aims at highlighting important parallels between the two novels by discussing the similarities and differences of the role of the body in the construction of characters’ identities and lives, as well as the implications of the body itself in both novels.

Key words: *The Body Artist*, *Zero K*, Baudrillard, simulacrum, body.

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

In the prose of Don DeLillo, the notion of the body plays a significant role. As a part of the Body-Self duality, it is essential to performing everyday tasks, as well as social roles. In *The Body Artist* and *Zero K*, the notion of the body is discussed in relation to life and death, and the subsequent question of an afterlife. While seemingly accepting the body’s position as the inferior aspect of the duality, DeLillo relates this notion to the quintessential question of whether one can affect life and death

(in other words, whether one can truly hold control of these notions) and, more importantly, surpass the natural course of life by completely avoiding death. In both these novels, the body suffers severe manipulation, corruption, and violation, while proving to be a crucial element of one's identity.

In terms of Baudrillard's theory of simulacrum, the body may be interpreted as a means of simulation, or a mere simulacrum, since it is assigned the traits of a mere piece of equipment or technology. Yet, as is the case with the simulacrum, its value eventually shows underneath all charges of inadequacy and lowliness, and it proves to be an important part of who DeLillo's protagonists are and how they deal with death and loss.

## **2. THEORETICAL OVERVIEW**

The notion of the body in literature has various interpretations. Mainly, it is regarded as the physical part of the Body-Soul binary opposition. Both Christian and humanist traditions see the body as "a mere auxiliary to the Self, a vehicle or object that houses the mind or the soul" (Hillman and Maude 2015: 1). In that sense, the body is the element of a person that is, eventually, to be cast away. The physical part is often, throughout different traditions, seen as the site of sins and flaws to which the human spiritual side is bound in this world. The Self, or the soul, is thus seen as a more abstract, but also more positive part of the binary opposition, whereas the body is the one which is marked as negative, or even as the Other. In different texts, the body can even be interpreted as the cage or the prison which captures the soul. Throughout literary history, other slightly negative associations with the body were also prominent – the body was often seen as something carnal and sexual, and thus sinful in the eyes of pre-modern literature.

Hillman and Maude argue that the body "can itself be 'written' – marked and changed by ideological socio-historical forces" (Hillman and Maude 2015: 2). In making such claims, they rely on theoreticians such as

Foucault, Jameson, and Baudrillard who all claimed that the body is the site of knowledge and power, but also of the culture it inhabits. For example, for Foucault, “the body emerged as a discursively organized product of institutionalized knowledge and control” (Hillman and Maude 2015: 2). On the other hand, for Jameson and Baudrillard, who “emphasized the shaping force of culture on the body,” this notion was only important on the level of image since it is “the image of the body, rather than the body itself that became the carrier of cultural signs” (Hillman and Maude 2015: 2). In these terms, the body becomes the postmodern site of signs and signification, the space shaped and determined by the dominant culture.

Furthermore, the body may be interpreted as the sign itself. The sign, or the signifier, in Baudrillard’s theory, stands for the copy that has successfully surpassed the original. This sign which started as a replica and has cast away all relation with the original it stemmed from is what Baudrillard defines as simulacrum, “a copy without an original” (Smith 2010: 199). In that sense, the body can be interpreted as a replica on various levels. From a religious standpoint, the human body is a copy of God’s features. From the standpoint of Darwinian Theory, the human body is a copy of primates, or in other words, of animals. Even if we do not go as far back as evolution and creation theories, one’s body is technically a copy of their parents’ bodies. In these terms, the body can be interpreted as a replica which is slightly modified, or as a simulacrum.

The body, in the light of Baudrillard’s theory, can also be interpreted as a means of living. For the Self, the body is a piece of technology used to perform everyday tasks. In this sense, it participates in creating the hyperreality which Baudrillard discusses in all his works. Therefore, it can be said that the body is not only a simulacrum, but a means to the process of simulation, as well.

### 3. THE BODY IN *THE BODY ARTIST*, AND *ZERO K*

In both *The Body Artist* and *Zero K*, the body occurs related to both life and death. In other words, in these novels, not only does the body directly determine whether a character is alive or not (thus being crucial for both life and death), but it is also an important indicant of the quality and ways of someone's life, not to mention one's identity. Concerning the relation to life, the body is the space that one inhabits, a house or a temple for the Self. Its primary function is to act as a means of living, but also to perform social roles. In terms of death, the body serves as a piece of technology or equipment which has an expiration date. Also, examples of the corruption of the body are prominent in both novels, occurring in different forms, such as death, illness, decay, and pain. For example, in *The Body Artist*, the protagonist's husband commits suicide, thus desecrating his own body. As a reaction to such a loss, she goes through a difficult period of grief during which she takes little care of her body, only to proceed with doing harm to it. Furthermore, she encounters a person whom she calls Mr. Tuttle, whose body can also fit this description even though it is not physically spoiled – yet it is but a shell to the mentally challenged Self. Needless to say, Mr. Tuttle does prove to be a much more complex character, yet the obvious untraditional connection between his Self and the body indicates that neither element of the mentioned duality works in its full capacity. In other words, since the body is disconnected from the Self, it does not manage to fulfill its full purpose.

In *Zero K* the corruption of the body is quite prominent, and on various levels. Illness appears most notably in the character of the protagonist's stepmother who seeks to surpass her illness in the face of imminent death. His father decides to follow her by volunteering for a program of freezing human bodies until a cure for different diseases is found. Corruption of the body here does not occur only in the form of death, but also in the form of violating the body. Namely, in order to preserve the bodies, scientists have to strip them of everything that makes them unique

(hair, eyebrows, lashes etc.). What is left is but a shell which carries almost no mark of individuality. Moreover, in order to better preserve cognitive function, the scientists separate the brain from the body, thus ultimately violating a living person's body. Baudrillard himself stated that "by dissecting the body into organs and functions, begins the process of the analytic decomposition of the body" (Baudrillard 1994: 98). He further adds:

This is how one puts an end to totality. If all information can be found in each of its parts, the whole loses its meaning. It is also the end of the body, of this singularity called body, whose secret is precisely that it cannot be segmented into additional cells, that it is an indivisible configuration. (Baudrillard 1994: 98)

In this sense, the program of body preservation can be interpreted as a form of suicide, a conscious choice of death.

Such preoccupation with the body is not characteristic of these two novels only – in DeLillo's fiction, the human body (its flaws and shortcomings in particular) reoccurs as a kind of leitmotif. However, more often than not, it is regarded in a rather negative way. The body is something DeLillo's characters seek to surpass, one way or the other. For example, in *Cosmopolis*, Eric Packer wants to live on a chip or on a disc, he sees his body as mere space made of flesh, and describes himself as but a mind in the space-time continuum, separated from bodily bounds. In *Great Jones Street*, rock star Bucky Wunderlick expresses his belief that it is better to live as a dream in the mind of his audience, than as an actual human being. This he will try to achieve by fueling rumors about himself, while physically hiding in his decaying apartment. Moreover, in DeLillo's first novel, *Americana*, David Bell also attempts to translate himself to film, thus surpassing his own life and body and creating an alternate story of his life. One way or another, they all seek life beyond their bodies.

If we focus on the fact that they all believe life can exist beyond the body, then the body can be seen as something disposable, like garbage. Garbage and its meanings are also prominent elements of DeLillo's prose.

Following the interpretation of the body as a mere shell which is used to perform everyday actions for the Self, or the spirit, it can be said that DeLillo's protagonists see the body as something that is eventually to end in the same way as other consumerist goods – thrown away. In *The Body Artist*, Rey's corpse exists basically at the same level as waste, while in *Zero K*, the storage of bodies submitted to the program of preservation resembles more a landfill of old vehicle shells than a scientific institution. How little value is placed on the body can further be seen in the harm Lauren does to her body by forcing it to perform tasks that are painful and unpleasant.

In DeLillo's prose, and especially in these two novels, there is a question of the manipulation of the body. Further emphasizing the notion of the body as a piece of technology, DeLillo's characters seem to use it at times without valuing its importance specifically, in Foucauldian terms, for identity. Differently put, the body does not seem to affect who DeLillo's characters truly are in any important way, which runs contrary to Foucault's idea that the body is a signifier of one's knowledge and experience, and therefore identity. Moreover, it can be said that the connection between identity and the body at times feels completely lost in DeLillo's works, and especially in these two novels. Apart from using it for everyday tasks, in *The Body Artist* and *Zero K*, the human body is manipulated for the purpose of art and overcoming death. Manipulation or control of the body, as far as Jean Baudrillard's writings are concerned, exists solely in order to enable control over death. He believes that "[i]f a man can control, even modify, his body, then he can control his destiny and distance himself from the chaos around him" (Helyer 2008: 129–130).

In both these novels, manipulation of the body is related to the violation of the body. Namely, in *The Body Artist*, Lauren creates a performance in which she repeats certain movements up to a point where they are excruciatingly painful to both perform and watch. *Zero K* goes even further by having the body almost completely disassembled, like some kind of a toy, vehicle, or machine. The scientists take out patients' brains in order to preserve the body and the mind for the future, or in other words, to



overcome death. Yet, from another angle, this attempt at overcoming death can be seen as choosing death. Both Ross and Artis are technically frozen, but for Jeffrey and the reader they cease to exist once they undergo the procedure. In other words, their disappearance from the protagonist's reality would not be any different if they were actually deceased.

This leads us to the ultimate violation of the body that is present in both novels – suicide. In *The Body Artist* Rey, Lauren's husband, commits suicide, thus openly choosing death and laying his body as waste. In *Zero K*, the situation is a little more complicated. Even though we see that both Artis and Ross are motivated by life and they sign up for the program in order to find a way to prolong their life, the reader perceives their decision as something closer to Rey's choice of death. This is especially the case with Ross, whose reluctance to follow his wife shows that this decision does not have much to do with life itself. Furthermore, it can be said that suicide and participation in the program promise the same, or at least remarkably similar, afterlife. Just as Rey continues to live through his words spoken by Mr. Tuttle, Artis continues to live through a segment of words that represent her stream of thought after she submits herself to the program and body-freezing. They are both posthumously realized through language, yet none of the verbal representations hold anything more than a memory of them. What is more, they are eventually lost once the words are gone – they disappear with their sentences much like Kinbote does in Nabokov's *Pale Fire*. In other words, both Rey and Artis (and later Ross) are responsible for the same type of violation of the body – they consciously chose to aggressively abandon their body, which leads them to the same outcome – death – even though their choices are technically classified as completely different. Rey abandons his life because it is his conscious choice to die, while Artis does so in an attempt to potentially find a cure for her disease and continue living. However, given the fact that there is no solid promise that the cure will ever be found, her choice of this procedure might possibly be interpreted as a way of choosing death by operation over death by disease.

#### 4. THE BODY AND ART VS. THE BODY AND SCIENCE

Although these novels take similar approaches to the notion of the body and its manipulation, the exact manner and motivation for the treatment of the body are somewhat different. In *The Body Artist*, Lauren Hartke manipulates her body in order to create a mechanism which will help her cope with the loss of her husband and, more importantly, spur her art. The first part of the novel marks her succumbing to grief, surrendering to the emptiness left when someone she cares about disappears. At this point, she is not interested in her appearance or comfort, and she gradually starts to compose what will become her Body Time performance.

Over the days she worked her body hard. There were always states to reach that surpassed previous extremes. She could take a thing to an unendurable extreme as measured by breath or strength or length of time or force of will and then resolve to extend the limit. (DeLillo 2001: 57)

The extremes she takes show no or little care of the flesh – at this point, her Self is taken in the whirlwind of grief and artistic delirium. She starts working naked in cold rooms, on bare floors, and spending time in the open under attacks by strong winds. Her endless repetitions of everyday movements are but a simulation of life. At times, it even seems as though she is mocking modern life itself. For example, she repeats the motion of catching a cab in the street up to the point where it becomes empty of meaning, and a thing of ridicule. Yet, the motivation behind her action is not to depreciate life, but to grasp it and hold on to it.

Her bodywork made everything transparent. She saw and thought clearly, which might only mean there was little that needed seeing and a lot to think about. But maybe it went deeper, the poses she assumed and held for prolonged periods, the gyrate exaggerations, the snake shapes and flower bends, the prayerful spans of systematic breathing, a life lived as sheer respiration. First breathe, then pant, then gasp. It made her go taut and saucer-eyed, arteries flaring in her

neck, these hours of breathing so urgent and absurd that she came out the other end in a kind of pristine light, feeling what it means to be alive. (DeLillo 2001: 57–58)

It is precisely this stream of activities that helps Lauren deal with her loss. As a result, she is reborn through her art. Mariella describes her as “colorless, bloodless and ageless [...] rawboned and slightly bug-eyed” (DeLillo 2001: 103). In other words, as Osteen notices, “she resembles a newborn or a plucked bird, prepared to acquire new shape and color” (Osteen 2008: 148). Therefore, the purpose of her body art in this novel is to serve as a means of resurrection, rebirth, and revival.

These three things are precisely what protagonists of *Zero K* seek, as well, although they employ different techniques of achieving resurrection, rebirth and revival. One can even argue that science utilized in order to give rebirth in *Zero K* is diametrically opposed to art in *The Body Artist*; the former has a very precise, clean-cut and pragmatic approach to life, whereas the latter is more concerned with the spiritual, etheric understanding of life. Nevertheless, they share the same goal – prolonging or even rebooting life itself. It is just that in *Zero K*, the body seems to be less related to the person and is instead regarded as a piece of equipment for everyday life. At the beginning of the novel, when scientists discuss the procedure, they specify that they “[are] not talking about spiritual life everlasting” but solely about the body and the ways to preserve it (DeLillo 2016: 8). Yet, even though they discuss ways of fixing a decaying body (or at least preserving it until science invents a way to fix it), and thus overcoming death, future prospects are gloomy. When the protagonist Jeffrey Lockhart thinks about the future for his stepmother Artis, he states that he thinks about Artis as “the one whose mind and failing body would soon begin to drift, on schedule, into the void” (DeLillo 2016: 3). Therefore, it can be concluded that Ross’s and Artis’s disappearance may as well be interpreted as death.

## 5. THE BODY IN THE CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY

Both *The Body Artist* and *Zero K* are concerned with the contemporary society, although *Zero K* is slightly more orientated toward the future. Yet, both novels express strong commentary about the current global society, especially the Western civilization. Key notions that are related to the notion of the body in today's society, according to DeLillo in these two novels, are death, simulation, and the quest for perfection.

Death may be the most important notion that *The Body Artist* and *Zero K* discuss. Manipulating death, as a manner of avoiding the natural end of life (and thus the end which is brought upon one by someone or something else) seems important for all DeLillo's works. Each of his novels contains an implicit or explicit threat of destruction, whether it is the threat of the nuclear bomb in *Underworld*, terrorism in *Cosmopolis* or *Falling Man*, or independent anarchic groups like Happy Valley from *Great Jones Street*. Loss and threat of death occur on personal, national, and global levels. In *The Body Artist*, death is a matter of deeply personal tragedy, an unnatural one, but one that is at the same time desired and undesired – Rey planned his suicide his whole life (if we are to believe the words of his first wife), whereas Lauren has trouble accepting it at first. However, by the end of the novel, she in a way joins Rey in accepting the ending and celebrating life.

In *Zero K*, death is a thing of terror, something the protagonists dread, and even though it is depicted on a personal level, its eeriness creates a sense that the story is representative of a more global terror. Just the thought of an institution like the Zero K operating on a global level resembles the starting point of the future dystopia, where people and their bodies are treated like robots or machines. However, the whole point of joining the program for Ross and Artis is to try and cheat illness and imminent death. Although they both fear it, they welcome the disappearance that the program brings with open arms. It is the element of hope for the better future and life after finding the cure that is their chief motivation for

choosing to disappear from this moment in time. Their relationship with death is a more problematic and complex one than Lauren's and Rey's. By choosing to disappear so that they can find a better life after some time, Ross and Artis give a positive connotation to the notion of death. Death in their case is not the ending, but a pause. In an attempt to avoid death, they consciously chose to simulate it, but for the outside world, their simulation of death is as good as the real thing – for Jeffrey they are indeed both dead. Incidentally, by the end of the novel, Jeffrey's understanding of life and death will resemble more Lauren's and Rey's than anyone else's. He too chooses to celebrate life, admiring the natural phenomenon of sunset in the last sentences of *Zero K*.

*Zero K* and *The Body Artist* are arguably DeLillo's most important novels when the notions of death and inherent threat of it are concerned. Although these novels are not his only reflections on death, it seems that the threat of imminent death in them has not received enough critical attention compared to DeLillo's other works (for instance, *White Noise* is a prime example of such readings and has been the focus of a variety of scholarly works on this topic). America in DeLillo's novels is often interpreted as a Baudrillardian society of terror, and rightfully so. The protagonists in the majority of his novels resemble the living dead, as if they were all participating in a program similar to the one portrayed in *Zero K*. Judging by the way the author depicts them, they seem to imitate life rather than authentically live it. This is further confirmed by the role of the media in DeLillo's novels. His protagonists frequently imitate movie stars and other famous people, or shape their own lives in accordance with movie plots or TV shows.

Yet, in both *The Body Artist* and *Zero K*, emptiness and simulation are better reflected in the characters' interpersonal relationships. Even though we are presented with two families which are supposed to be happy and functional, their essential fragility is revealed once the threat of death or its realization occur. Lauren believes she is living her best life until her husband kills himself and his ex-wife reveals to her that it is something that

everyone who knew him expected. That is, everyone except Lauren, mostly because she does not, in fact, know him as well as we are first led to believe. Jeffrey's situation is a little more complex; his mother dies, but not before she divorces his father who found happiness with another woman. Jeffrey has a somewhat functional relationship with his father (or at least he is trying to have one), although he largely blames his father for what happened to his mother. Yet, despite this seemingly good relationship, Ross chooses to follow his wife to death rather than spend the rest of his days in his son's life. Moreover, the two men do not seem to be able to really understand each other and each other's points of view, which highlights the problem of communication so frequently present in DeLillo's novels.

In this sense, the body can be interpreted as a shell yet again, since it keeps the Self deeply isolated and alone. Interpersonal contact among the protagonists of these novels is essentially lost, so their lives are virtually reduced to mere simulation. However, this does not mean that DeLillo's portrayal of the contemporary society is entirely negative. The beacons of hope are Lauren and Jeffrey who both find their purpose and joy in life in the little things, in tiny segments of everyday life and art.

## **6. IS A PERSON THEIR BODY OR THEIR SOUL?**

The most important question that seems to arise from discussing the notion of the body and its relation to death is that of the respective significance of the body and soul. In *The Body Artist* and *Zero K*, the value of each aspect of this duality seems to be ambivalent. For example, Lauren has lost her husband, but for a short period of time right after his death, he continues to live for her through the words of Mr. Tuttle. Mr. Tuttle repeats the words he heard from Rey while he was still alive, and to him they do not seem to mean anything at first glance. The fragmentation and occasional incoherence of his speech create the impression that he does not truly understand the meaning of Rey's words. Yet, through him, Rey is in a way

embodied even after his death. Artis meets a similar destiny as she continues to live through language after death, in the form of a short stream of her post-operative thoughts. However, like Rey, she is eerily present in Ross' life after her death through memories, her belongings and, most importantly, the promise that he gave her.

The body proves to be an equally important aspect of the body-soul duality. Namely, after the bodies of the departed are gone, their disappearance from the living protagonists' lives is not only physical. The words fade, memories yield, and sooner or later those who remain behind continue with their lives. In the case of Rey's death, that is obvious, but it is even more so in the case of Ross's and Artis' death. Technically, if we believe the program and the scientists, they are preserved alive and will be brought to life again. However, Jeffrey, as well as the readers, say their goodbye to them as soon as they are physically absent from the story. In this sense, the soul and its existence are physically bound to the body and if the soul manages to surpass death at all, it is for a short period of time, as far as the world of the living is concerned.

## 7. CONCLUSION

As much as the body in DeLillo's fiction, especially in these two novels, carries the label of expendable packaging, it proves to be an important part of the protagonists' identities. Their bodies and the way they manipulate them help the reader gain valuable insight into their respective natures and characters. Once the protagonists are stripped of their bodies, or their bodily features, they become but numbers in a list, an unfortunate set of different organs, and eventually drift into complete disappearance (both on the physical level and the level of memories).

In *The Body Artist* and *Zero K*, the body serves as a means to cope with both life and death, and in different ways. In other words, DeLillo's characters turn to manipulating the body to adjust to changes, react to illness

and misfortune and escape the frightening notion of an ending to everything that makes life what it is. Some of the protagonists, like Ray and Ross, throw the body away because they seek a better place for themselves, others, like Artis, seek to find a cure for their failing body, while those like Lauren seek art in and with the body. Both Lauren and Jeffrey choose the lives they have been given – normal, earthly lives with all the possibilities for the corruption of the body. Incidentally, the two of them seem to be the only characters who manage to find inner peace in the end.

This state of inner peace is mostly achieved because the two of them accept, and value as much as their souls, the imperfect bodies they have been given. Neither Jeffrey nor Lauren try to escape their bodies. Instead, they embrace both life and art that the body can be associated with. The other protagonists who try to give advantage to one aspect of the aforementioned binary opposition meet the destiny they fear the most: death and disappearance.

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