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The status of English in the EU institutions after Brexit: A discursive analysis of selected press articles

ALBERT GUZIAK

Abstract

The aim of this article is to find out what the status of English, currently the primary working language within the EU institutions, might look like once the United Kingdom leaves the EU structures. To that end, this paper will analyse a selection of press articles. Although the manner in which the so-called Brexit will take place is still uncertain, a diverse range of opinions and prognostications on what will happen to English is being expressed publicly, taking into consideration many factors (political, sociological and purely linguistic) which may contribute to a possible scenario or scenarios. This article does not lay claim to submitting any firm or reliable vision of the future as none such exists elsewhere. This paper intends to analyze some discursive strategies employed by the authors of the articles to place the discussed subject into a discursive framework by using tools of critical discourse analysis which mainly focus on the relation of power and language.

Status języka angielskiego w instytucjach UE po brexicie – analiza dyskursu wybranych artykułów prasowych

Abstrakt

Celem niniejszego artykułu jest próba określenia, na przykładzie wy-
branych artykułów prasowych, jak może wyglądać status języka an-
gielskiego jako obecnego podstawowego języka roboczego w instytu-
cjach UE, po tym jak Wielka Brytania opuści struktury Unii Europej-
skiej. Pomimo faktu, że sposób oraz warunki wyjścia Zjednoczonego
Królestwa z Unii Europejskiej, tzw. brexitu – nie zostały jeszcze usta-
lone, w opinii publicznej wciąż pojawiają się liczne komentarze oraz
prognozy dotyczące tego, jak będzie wyglądał status języka angiel-
skiego w instytucjach unijnych w nowych „po-brexitowych" realiach,
biorąc pod uwagę wielorakie czynniki – natury politycznej, socjologicz-
nej i czysto językowej, które mogą umożliwić nakreślenie możliwych
scena-riuszy. Artykuł nie prezentuje jednej pewnej wersji dotyczącej
pozycji i statusu języka angielskiego (nie jest też możliwe jednoznaczne
jej określeniu), skupia się na przedstawieniu i analizie strategii dys-
kursywnych, jakimi autorzy wybranych artykułów prasowych mogli
się posłużyć, w celu umieszczenia omawianego tematu w określonych
ramach dyskursywnych. Do zbadania owych strategii wykorzystano
narzędzia krytycznej analizy dyskursu, która w głównej mierze uka-
zuje relację władzy i języka.

1.   Premises of the present discursive analysis

The invocation of Article 50 of the Treaty on European Union by the UK's government in 2017 (commonly known as Brexit) entailed an ongoing discussion on whether English would maintain its predominance as the primary working language utilized by the EU institutional apparatus. There have been many debates, media articles, political comments or statements on that matter, none of them giving credit to one particular scenario; the complexity of this relation between power and language is accompanied by the fact that even the manner in which Brexit will be implemented is as yet undetermined. Although this issue is creating a political whirlwind and uncertainty on both sides of the English Channel, one indisputable point is that English is by no means a lingua franca of our times and this must be taken into ac-count even if the UK finally leaves the EU after the transition period. As mentioned before, the consequences of Brexit for the English language are to be considered at many levels of common public communication. By the example of the chosen press articles, I intend to shed some light on the continuing public debate by using tools of critical discourse analysis which should demonstrate linguistic strategies to confirm different hypotheses that the authors of the chosen material have proposed.

2.   Linguistic landscape within the EU institutions

Linguistic diversity is one of the foundations of the EU that comes to the fore in Europe each and every day. Languages constitute both an essential part of European identity and the most direct expression of culture. In the EU, constructed on the motto "United in diversity", the ability to communicate in several different languages is an essential advantage for common people, organizations and businesses. Languages are also a cornerstone for respecting cultural and linguistic diversity in the EU. Respect for a linguistic mosaic is a fundamental value of the EU,

as is esteem for the individual person and an openness towards other cultures. This is incorporated into the preamble to the Treaty on European Union, as can be read in the following: "drawing in-spiration from the cultural, religious and humanist inheritance of Europe and confirming the attachment to the principles of liberty, democracy and respect for human rights". This approach has no precedent, either among multilingual states or even in international organizations. The principle is anchored in the EU's Charter of Fundamental Rights – as an EU national, every EU citizen has the right to use any of the 24 official languages to contact the EU institutions, and the institutions are obliged to reply in the same language, pursuant to Article 41(2)(1): "Every person may write to the institutions of the Union in one of the languages of the Treaties and must have an answer in the same language". EU law and other legislative texts are published in all official languages, except Irish, due to resource-related reasons (only regulations adopted by both the Council of the European Union and the European Parliament are currently translated into Irish). Meetings of the European Council and the Council of the European Union are interpreted into all official languages. Members of the European Parliament benefit from the right to use any official language when making speeches in Parliament. The term official languages, due to the nature of a legal aspect, also requires a legal clarification; the first relevant regulation, dating from 1958, determining the languages to be used by the former European Economic Community, has been amended following subsequent accessions to the EU, and defines the Union's official languages, together with Article 55(1) TEU (Treaty on European Union) which states:

> This Treaty, drawn up in a single original in the Bulgarian, Czech, Danish, Dutch, English, Estonian, Finnish, French, German, Greek, Hungarian, Irish, Italian, Latvian, Lithuanian, Maltese, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Slovak, Slovenian, Spanish and Swedish languages, the texts in each of these languages being equally authentic, shall be deposited in the archives of the Govern-

ment of the Italian Republic, which will transmit a certified copy to each of the governments of the other signatory States.

This legal article is a prerequisite for all official legal documents issued by the EU institutions addressing all EU member states, confirmed in the legal spirit of related regulations, corroborated by the relevant values underlying the EU and grounded in everyday practice. Every citizen of the EU has the right to write to any of the institutions or bodies of the EU in one of these languages and to receive an answer in the same language. However, considering the everyday practice of using languages as a working tool within the EU institutions only three are classed as working languages: English, French and German. Of those three, English is, without doubt, predominant and its elevated position (in comparison with French e.g.) has been continually growing over the past 25 years. This appears to be the result of new countries who brought into the EU a large wave of speakers whose first foreign language was English, according to the article: As Britain leaves, English on rise in EU – to French horror, appeared on May 7th 2018:

> English has also long been in ascendance as the EU's main working language after the last wave of enlargement from 2004 which provided officials and diplomats from Central and Eastern European countries who had studied the language of Shakespeare, but not of Molière's. The use of EU English — sometimes called Globish for its non-native eccentricities — has become so widespread that several institutions have made behind-the-scenes efforts to streamline costs or improve their efficiency by either prioritizing an English-only format or adding English to meetings where French was once used exclusively.

3. Predominance of English as a global language

In order to better understand what might ensue in the balance of linguistic powers from the UK's leaving the EU, one must first have a closer look at the factors that contributed (or are

contributing) to the superior position of English as the first
working language of the EU institutional apparatus. According
to Crystal (2003), the general developing dominance of English
was a result of two factors: the expansion of British colonial
power, which peaked towards the end of the nineteenth century,
and the emergence of the United States as the leading economic
power of the twentieth century. This shift of political power took
place to the detriment of other major European languages such
as French or German. Political dominance, however, is ineffec-
tive for the widespread use of a particular language if that lan-
guage is not accompanied by an attractive culture that could
be embraced or followed by ordinary people. Cultural power
seems thus to be at least equal in importance to political power
affirming the latter. But as has been seen, English is the domi-
nating linguistic force in the EU right now, and this is not just
true of languages used within the institutions. As the Williams
(2016: 68) say in their work "the emerging de facto process
within Europe involves accepting English as the universal lin-
gua franca". This brings us to the theories surrounding English
as the most prominent international language in Europe in gen-
eral. But how did English reach this level of dominance in the
supranational European scene?

Phillipson (2003) distinguishes two main aspects that he con-
siders to have contributed to the rise of English: the structural
aspect and the ideological aspect. Structural aspects involve
such factors as internet usage, the investment in teaching Eng-
lish in many countries around the world, attractive exchange
programs of English-speaking countries for students, and the
mobility of labor leading to a preference for an already dominant
language. Ideological aspects, on the other hand, include the
different ways that language policy issues are understood in dif-
ferent countries, and the levels of awareness of language policy
issues. It is obvious that English has assumed the role of the
leading actor on the European linguistic scene. To strongly un-
derline this statement, one must not ignore the purely linguistic
qualities, advantages and intrinsic features of the English

language which helped to accelerate its European or world-wide diffusion among non-native speakers of English. First of all, English is a very flexible language. One example of this is the ability of conversion i.e. using the same word as both a noun and a verb (drink, fight, silence etc.). English grammar is generally considered and felt to be simpler than that of most other common languages. It dispenses entirely with noun genders (no dithering about French's *le plume* and *la plume* 'feather' or 'pen', or about *el mano* and *la mano* 'hand'), and often dispenses with the article completely (It is time to go to bed). The distinction between familiar and formal addresses was abandoned centuries ago. The single English word you has seven distinct choices in German: *du*, *dich*, *dir*, *Sie*, *Ihnen*, *Ihr* etc. Case forms for nouns are almost non-existent (with the exception of some personal pronouns like *I/me/mine*, *he/him/his* etc.), as compared to Finnish, for example, which has fifteen forms for every noun, or Russian which has twelve. In German, each verb has sixteen different forms, while English retains only five at most (ride, rides, rode, riding, ridden) and often only requires 3 (hit, hits, hitting).

On the other hand, English possesses some inherent traits which might not appeal to non-natives, such as pronunciation that seems to be relatively simple but has more than its fair share of apparently random spellings, silent letters and phonetic inconsistencies. Examples include the pronunciation of the *ou* in *thou*, *though*, *thought*, *through*, *thorough*, *tough*, *plough* and *hiccough*, or the *ea* in *head*, *heard*, *bean*, *beau* and *beauty*. Nevertheless, as a working language and vehicular language of communication it offers valuable traits; English is generally reasonably concise compared to many other languages, as can be seen in the length of translations (a notable exception being Hebrew, whose translations are usually shorter than their English equivalents by up to a third). English is, additionally, less prone to misinterpretations because of social nuances than, for example, Japanese. The non-appearance of coding which distinguishes social variations (a feature peculiar to a number of different

languages recognizing a difference between formal/informal verbal structures and strongly accentuated feminine and masculine noun forms) may cause English to appear progressive and liberal with the result that its users do not fear that they are committing any linguistic faux pas. Taking into account the above-mentioned factors and the irrelevance of the richness of varieties of English (including within the EU institutions), the language of Shakespeare occupies a prominent position among other global languages as the universal lingua franca. This fact also pertains well to its present dominance in the EU institutions. Will this supremacy of English be shaken after Brexit?

4. Materials and methodological foundation

In order to attempt to answer the question posed in the preceding chapter, I have chosen three different press articles which were issued online within the last two years and these are: "EU has no plans to downgrade use of English after Brexit appeared" (The Guardian, 2018), "As Britain leaves, English on rise in EU — to French horror" (Politico, 2018) and "The fate of English in the EU after Brexit: Expected and unexpected twists" (online edition of VOX CEPR Policy Portal). The most relevant method through which I will execute this analysis is critical discourse analysis (CDA) which traditionally focuses on power relations and on how they are expressed and utilized through discourse, in this case via the chosen online press articles. In my view, this method will adequately cover the submitted thesis of the position of English since this aspect primarily results from the power relations within the EU institutions. The CDA is the core of this research and discourses are seen as central social practices wherein interdiscursivity, material conditions, and other social practices in discursive social analysis are emphasized. Furthermore, CDA is equipped with tools to look at comparatively more abstract aspects of the text, such as implications, intertextuality and context etc. I will apply Norman Fairclough's view of CDA, being that "discourses should ideally be analyzed

simultaneously at three levels: text (micro-level textual elements), discursive practice (production and interpretation of texts), and social practice (situational and institutional context)" (Melckersson 2018). Following Fairclough's perspective, CDA is as much a theory as it is a method, and it has to be connected with a specific context to produce meaningful interpretations. A specific interpretation is then related to the term legitimation which refers to a broader social context. The process of legitimation is that through which something becomes legitimate, in other words, gains legitimacy (Fairclough 2010). The use of semiotic practices, language, and more specifically discourses, within some social and political framework of beliefs, norms, and values plays an important role in constructing legitimacy.

According to Fairclough and Wodak, CDA sees discourse – language use in speech and writing – as a form of "social practice". Describing discourse as social practice implies a dialectical relationship between a particular discursive event and the situation(s), institution(s) and social structure(s), which frame it: The discursive event is shaped by these, but it also shapes them (Norman/ Ruth in van Dijk 1997). Within this framework, I am going to employ an analysis of the legitimation strategies proposed in the context of CDA by van Leeuwen and Wodak. The four legitimation strategies are as follows: rationalization – provides the rationale, establishes recurring rationalities (e.g. by referring to experts, and proven statistics), authorization – authorizes claims, establishes recurring authorizations and authorities (e.g. by referring to authorities or those in recognized positions of authority), narrativization – provides a narrative structure to concretize and dramatize, establishes recurring narrative and drama structures involving references (e.g. by referring to exaggerations), moralization – provides the moral and ideological basis, establishes recurring moralities and ideologies (e.g. by referring to some values, norms and emotions) (Melckersson 2018: 12).

5.   Discursive analysis of the selected press articles

5.1. "EU has no plans to downgrade
use of English after Brexit"

The article proposes an explicit and unequivocal hypothesis, according to which, it is not the EU's intention to downplay the usage of English as a working language once the UK leaves its structures. As one will deduce from the first passage of the text, the European Commission, or more precisely a communiqué issued by this executive body, said: "Buried in the small print of the European commission's proposed budget for 2021-27 is confirmation that it has no intention to reduce the use of English in its meetings or documents". As can be seen here, the author specifically used the authorization strategy and so this seems to be the intention of the text – to maintain an objective perspective by referring to the officials' statement. This aim is furthered by the second strategy of rationalization, used in the article. References to statistics about the number of native English speakers living in the EU are found there: "When the UK leaves the EU in 2019, only 1 % of the EU population – in Ireland and Malta – will be living in countries where English is an official language", are used, as well as information to prove something about the popularity of English within the EU institutions:

> English has been used more widely used than French since Sweden, Finland and Austria joined the EU in 1995, bringing in more speakers of English as a second language. The dominance of English became entrenched when central and eastern European countries joined in the mid-2000.

In this article, the narrativization strategy can also be seen, for example, in the following fragment: "France is keen to restore the pre-eminence of its language, but is fighting a constant battle. Its EU ambassador walked out of a meeting last week when officials decided to use an English-only translation of the budget

proposal". This ironic and slightly mocking echo in the text is presumably explicable by the fact that the author and the magazine are both British and that it accurately reflects the permanent battle for supremacy between the English and the French, mostly re-initiated and conducted by the French.

5.2. "As Britain leaves, English on rise in EU – to French horror"

Here is a sort of dramatization/exaggeration in the title of this article, particularly in its second part. This, according to the previously discussed strategies, would represent the narrativization of the content. This strategy, how-ever, only rarely appears again in the whole text; referring to a diplomatic incident from 2018 during which France's EU Ambassador ostentatiously left an official meeting of the Council after its decision to use only the English translation:

> Late last month, France's EU Ambassador Philippe Léglise-Costa walked out of a diplomatic meeting after the Council decided to use only English-language translation in a new working group on the EU's long-term budget (ignoring his demand for arrangements for other languages).

This passage concretizes and dramatizes the whole echo of this article. The two main strategies the author operates with are rationalization and authorization. The text makes several references to people or officials in established positions such as: "It is a lost fight, said Alain Lamassoure, a former minister and senior French MEP from the conservative European People's Party. "The French language has occupied a dominant position but I wouldn't know how to maintain that". The first part is equally an example of narrativization strategy. The authorization strategy is further found in: "Last year, Mario Monti, the former Italian prime minister and European commissioner, said English should become the EU's main official language once the

U.K. leaves the bloc". On the other hand, the author brings up specific statistics which tend to prove that the situation of French as a second working language might shift to the detriment of English, as can be read in the following passages: "At least 80 percent of Commission officials speak French as a first, second or third language. There are 141,725 pages translated into French, and 422 out of 552 interpreters have had French in their language offer for years", reassured by evoking an authority (authorization strategy): "since the beginning of the Juncker's mandate, the use of French has been invigorated in internal meetings and public speeches, in particular, French is present in almost all meetings of the Commission". Moralization strategy, the last of the four, appears in the text by referring to value and emotion-based attitudes towards the usage of French, represented by France's current president, Emmanuel Macron:

> This domination of English is not inevitable, Macron told French officials at a re-cent speech at the Institut de France in Paris. It is up to us to simply get some rules back in place [...] occupy some places again, he said. English is not destined to be the only foreign language Europeans speak, he added.

The author of this article frames its text in the context of EU institutional intricacies between higher officials and state dignitaries, putting its stress on their statements and public utterances, accompanied by some statistics and data. The resonance is rather neutral and void of emotional bias towards any of the parties in the linguistic contention, merely assuming, based on proofs, that English might keep or even enhance its predominance in EU institutions.

5.3. "The fate of English in the EU after Brexit:
Expected and unexpected twists"

The authors of this article, which appeared in 2018 on the website of VOX CEPR Policy Portal, argue (while preserving a tone of neutrality) that the status of English after Brexit is uncertain. This does not actually contravene any sound-minded impression of the mechanism of EU institutions and their internal intricacies and 'diplomatic tug of war', it just concludes that any-thing could happen in the matter of English. The wording in the heading of the article shows some dramatization in the message and creates a vision of a film-like scenario. The strategy used is a good example of narrativization. This strategy, however, should signal that the article will present creative and visionary scenarios reminiscent of an action movie or an historical drama. In fact, the possible outcomes of Brexit and specifically its ramifications for the usage of English are based on strict data and statistics, thus utilizing the rationalization strategy as in Figure 1.

	Method 1		Method 2		Method 3	
	Before	After	Before	After	Before	After
English	37	28	13	1	25	15
German	25	28	18	20	21	24
French	20	21	13	15	16	18
Italian	13	15	12	13	13	14
Spanish	11	12	8	9	10	11
Polish	8	9	8	9	8	9

Figure 1
Percentage of speakers in the European Union before and after Brexit for the six most-spoken languages in the European Union (The Fate of English in the EU after Brexit 2020)

Figure 1 is based on data gathered from a study conducted by the Special Eurobarometer Survey and commissioned by the European Commission. It shows the total number of speakers of the 6 most spoken languages in terms of population number, regardless of whether these speakers are native, proficient or just speakers of those languages. This table, accompanied by the methodological clarification, composes the core of the pre-sumptions and theories on the usage of English after Brexit, which were drawn by the authors of this article. This data leads them to conclude that English might lose its dominance once the UK leaves the EU. Apart from the hefty statistical founda-tion, the article also makes reference to established norms or recurring emotions, like in the following:

> In principle, there are two routes to sustain English as an official language of the EU: Ireland or Malta switches their official native language in the EU to English. This may create a national problem. Although most Irish and Maltese citizens speak English, how would they react to this 'unpatriotic' change?

The quote above deals with possible problematic consequences for the language identity of the two remaining English-speaking countries. The second emotional echo can be heard in the fol-lowing fragment, illustrating the complexity of exercising power, here in terms of language, by the two "engines" of the EU: France and Germany: "It would be surprising if Germany (and Austria) or France (and French-speaking Belgians) were to sup-port a status quo sustaining the current prevalence of English". The empirically or emotionally based and tainted assumptions are concluded with a reference to authority, in this case the Council of European Union which should eventually decide on the reshuffling of linguistic positions within the EU institutions:

> The EU Council, which has to vote unanimously, would have to find extremely good arguments to convince countries to vote for the in-troduction of English in place of Irish by Ireland (or Maltese by

Malta) – or to vote for English, if English ceased to be an official language in the EU.

This article generally frames the problem of the status of English after Brexit in the context of strong statistical data on the usage of languages among EU citizens, values and norms (like in the cases of the Republic of Ireland and Malta) and institutional competency on that matter within the EU. As with the previous articles, this one also does not provide one definite future scenario.

6. Conclusion

In conclusion, we can only attempt to give ourselves an idea of what the position of English after Brexit might look like at the EU level; the ongoing discussion is to be placed into a wider scope and context of the role which English has been playing at the global level. From the elected textual material and the applied methodology, we could infer that the current domination of the English language within the EU institutions seems to be rather unchallenged and unthreatened. This conclusion is corroborated by the frequent references to public and official statements either made by key leaders of the EU or issued by its main institutions. Furthermore, some statistical and empirical data are evoked in the articles to underpin this thesis. Nevertheless, some tendencies of a political nature which aim at shaking the predominance of English within the EU, could not be, however, taken for granted as a larger Europe-wide phenomenon. As we learnt from the presented methodology of CDA, the relation of power and language is a dynamic construction, always inserted into a specific and updated socio-political context and the outcome is still in the distant future providing that the UK leaves the EU for good or bad.

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Language communication
in a pragmatic perspective:
Flouting the cooperative principle

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Abstract

The aim of the article is a pragmatic analysis of various linguistic communication situations in the light of Grice's principle of cooperation (1975). The analysis shows that language strategies involve a deliberate flouting of the cooperative principle using various pragmatic functions. The presented communication strategies in English, German, Polish and Russian show similarities in their occurrence. The sender may convey intentions not directly, but by hidden means of expression which often become an exponent of an apparent question, a change in the argumentative direction, the use of ambiguous words, irony or even silence. Hence, we can talk about the implementation of the pragmatic functions of "language avoidance", "counter-argumentation", "counter-proposal", "irony" etc.

Keywords

Komunikacja językowa w perspektywie pragmatycznej: Łamanie zasady współpracy

Abstrakt

Celem artykułu jest analiza pragmatyczna rożnych językowych sytuacji komunikacyjnych w perspektywie zasady współpracy Grice'a (1975). Analiza pokazuje, że strategia językowa obejmuje zamierzone naruszanie zasad konwersacyjnych Grice'a z wykorzystaniem różnych funkcji pragmatycznych. Prześledzenie strategii komunikacyjnych w języku angielskim, niemieckim, polskim i rosyjskim wskazuje na podobieństwa w ich występowaniu. Nadawca może bowiem przekazywać swoje intencje nie bezpośrednio, lecz za pomocą ukrytych środków wyrazu, z których często wykładnikiem staje się pozorne pytanie, zmiana kierunku argumentacyjnego, użycie wyrazów niejednoznacznych ironia czy nawet milczenie. Stąd też możemy mówić o realizacji pragmatycznych funkcji „uniku językowego", „kontrargumentacji", „kontrpropozycji", „ironii" itd.

Słowa kluczowe

pragmalingwistyka, teoria użycia języka Grice'a, zasada kooperacji, funkcje pragmatyczne języka, strategia komunikacyjna, kontrargumenty, kontrpropozycje, uniki językowe, milczenie w komunikacji, ironia

1. Introduction

One of the most important issues of intercultural exchange is language communication. In this paper, this problem is presented from the pragmalinguistic point of view. Linguistic pragmatics proposes a synthetic approach towards the use of language. It combines not only the knowledge of linguistics but also that of other disciplines, such as philosophy of language, psychology, sociology, ethnography etc.

The development of pragmatics has been influenced by works of numerous philosophers of language and linguists, such as Austin (1962, 1975, 1979), Ducrot (1972), Grice (1975), Lyons

(1977), Searle (1969), Wittgenstein (1958), Wunderlich (1972), Levinson (1983) and many others.

From the point of view of pragmalinguistics, language communication is described not statically but dynamically, that is, as speech acts in which "the meaning of the word is realized in its usage" (Wittgenstein 1958, Komorowska 2010).

The fundamental role of language communication implies both a speaker and recipients (one or more). The pragmalinguistic analysis is based on the theory of the act of speech with the following components: Locution, Illocution and Perlocution.

In this paper, we understand these terms following Austin (1962) and Searle (1969): locution as content, illocution as the actual speech act and perlocution as a strategy of speaking influencing the receiver. I propose the following definition: "A speech act is a deliberate communicative action expressing the intention of the sender in order to realize the pragmatic meaning of the utterance".

Although the illustrative examples come from four languages: English, German, Polish and Russian, this paper does not aim at any comparative or contrastive analysis. However, the examples demonstrate that the pragmatic phenomena we concentrate on are similar in these two Germanic and two Slavic languages – which is obvious in the case of related languages and cultural proximity.

2. Contextualization and illocution

A pragmatic interpretation of a speech act should take into consideration both verbal and non-verbal context. The following utterance exemplifies verbal context: Close the door, please. Nonverbal context specifies time, place, social relations between people etc. In the course of explaining the pragmalinguistic meaning, the fundamental issue is the process of contextualization which is closely related to life situations. In the example Close the door, please, its context tells us that the utterance takes place in a room with a door, that there is a person who is

ready to respond to the request, and that there is some social interdependence between them which enables one of them to ask a favour and the other to react to it (Awdiejew 1987). Illocution can be expressed explicitly or implicitly. Examples of direct (explicit) and indirect (implicit) speech acts in English, German, Polish and Russian are provided below.

Direct speech acts – requests:

 (1) English: *Close the door, please.*
        Would you please close the door?
    German: *Machen Sie bitte die Tür zu.*
        Können Sie bitte die Tür zumachen.
    Polish: *Proszę, zamknij drzwi.*
        Czy mógłbyś zamknąć drzwi?
    Russian: *Пожалуйста, закрой дверь.*
        Ты бы не мог закрыть дверь.

Indirect speech acts – requests:

 (2) English: *I hate drafts.*
    German: *Ich vertrage keinen Durchzug.*
    Polish: *Strasznie nie lubię przeciągów.*
    Russian: *Я ужасно не люблю сквозняков.*

A particular utterance may have different interpretations, as in the following example:

 (3) *I like paintings*

It may be understood in a number of ways, such as:

– When participants of a conversation pass by a gallery, one of them makes a proposal which means 'Let's go in for a while'.
– A thief at a police station makes an excuse: I'm not guilty, I just love paintings.
– When asked by a friend what present a person would like to

> receive on their birthday, the person asked provides a prefer-
> ence.
>
> – When a person takes a painting down from a wall, and their
>   spouse makes a request meaning 'Don't take it down because
>   I like it'.

Illocution in indirect speech acts may be illustrated by the fol-
lowing examples with sham questions. (Komorowska 1995). The
utterances in these contexts are not real questions, they contain
hidden illocutionary force.

Warning: 'I warn you, if you don't or won't do this, then...':

(4)	English:	*You don't want to kill yourself, do you?*
	German:	*Willst Du unter ein Auto kommen?*
	Polish:	*Czy chcesz wpaść pod samochód?*
	Russian:	*Андрей, ты хочешь попасть под машину?*

An apparent question becomes an exponent of the illocution of
warning the addressee not to cross the street when it is danger-
ous. A verbal warning may be accompanied by non-verbal be-
havior such as preventing the addressee from crossing the
street.

Criticism: 'I do not like this...':

(5)	English:	*Is this your hair style?*
	German:	*Ist das deine beste Frisur?*
	Polish:	*Czy to aby twoja najlepsza fryzura?*
	Russian:	*Неужели, это твоя самая красивая причёска?*

The sender expresses disapproval of the interlocutor's hairstyle
by choosing a strategy involving a question. The illocution of cri-
ticism will be strengthened by an ironic intonation or a disap-
proving facial expression.

Reproach: 'I'm angry because you ...'

   (6)   English: *Do you have to drink so much?*
          German: *Musst du denn so viel trinken?*
          Polish: *Czy ty musisz tyle pić?*
          Russian: *Тебе нужно столько пить?*

The apparent question expresses an illocution of criticism in connection with, for example, alcohol abuse by the interlocutor. In this linguistic situation, the sender uses a question to reinforce the intention of persuading the addressee to stop acting in a certain way – in this case, drinking to excess.

Refusal: 'I do not want to ...':

   (7)   English: *After what you did, do you think I will still be your friend?*
          German: *Meinst Du, dass ich nach all dem noch Lust habe, mit Dir befreundet zu sein?*
          Polish: *Czy ty sądzisz, że po tym ja będę się z tobą przyjaźnił?*
          Russian: *Ты считаешь, что после этого я буду дружить с тобой?*

The sender makes it clear to the addressee that he or she intends to stop being friends with him or her and the reason is the situation which has occurred. The strategic use of the question as an exponent of illocution additionally strengthens the sender's decision-making power and constitutes a kind of objection to the behaviour of the addressee's who, from that moment on, became unworthy of friendship.

Acceptance: 'I think, after all, you should ...':

   (8)   English: *Why don't you give it to him?*
          German: *Warum gibst du es ihm nicht?*

> Polish: *Czemu mu tego nie dasz?*
> Russian: *Почему ты не дал ему это?*

The illocution of the given utterances is the sender's advice to give another person a specific object. So, these utterances could be explained as 'give him what he wants, you don't need it anyway, and it is important to him'.

Aggression (attack): 'I'm against ...':

> (9) English: *By the way, who invited you here?*
> German: *Wer hat Dich denn eingeladen?*
> Polish: *Swoją drogą, kto cię tutaj prosił?*
> Russian: *А кто тебя сюда просил?*

The question becomes an exponent of aggression towards the addressee and expresses an illocution of dissatisfaction, criticism and accusation as the addressee is attacked for their decision to come. It can be guessed that the dissatisfaction with their arrival results from presuppositional knowledge, e.g. it is related to the addressee's behaviour, assessed negatively by the sender.

Apprehension: 'I'm afraid that...':

> (10) English: *Isn't it too late?*
> German: *Ist das nicht zu spät?*
> Polish: *Czy to aby nie za późno?*
> Russian: *Ты не слишком поздно сюда идёшь?*

In this context, the question becomes an exponent of criticizing the addressee for being late. The strategic use of the interrogative structure may be strengthened by an ironic intonation, as well as by a facial expression.

Doubt: 'I doubt that …':

> (11) English: *Are you sure you know what you are doing?*
>   German: *Weißt Du wirklich, was Du tunst?*
>   Polish: *Czy na pewno wiesz, co robisz?*
>   Russian: *Ты уверен в том, что ты делаешь?*

The question becomes an exponent of the illocution of a re-minder to the addressee that his or her behaviour is not ac-ceptable for the sender and raises an objection. Additionally, the illocution may contextually be reinforced by the intonation of impatience and other non-verbal means of expression.

Request: 'I would like you to do this …':

> (12) English: *Don't you think it would be a good idea to*
>   *visit mother?*
>   German: *Glaubst du nicht, es wäre eine gute Idee, die*
>   *Mutter zu besuchen?*
>   Polish: *Czy nie sądzisz, że dobrze byłoby odwiedzić*
>   *mamę?*
>   Russian: *Не считаешь, что хорошо бы было пойти*
>   *к маме?*

The sender, guided by the presuppositional knowledge of the given situation, wants to persuade the addressee to visit his or her mother. Thus, the apparent question becomes an exponent of the illocution of counsel, which can be explicated as 'Having certain information, I advise you to visit your mother'.

3. The Cooperative Principle,
implicature and presupposition

It is worth recalling the ideas of Grice and other scholars which include conversational implicature, presupposition and the Co-operative Principle.

Grice (1975) describes what implicature is by giving a number of illustrative examples. Davis (2019) provides a concise definition of this phenomenon:

> "Implicature" denotes either (i) the act of meaning or implying one thing by saying something else, or (ii) the object of that act. Implicatures can be determined by sentence meaning or by conversational context, and can be conventional (in different senses) or unconventional.

As regards the Cooperative Principle, following Kant, Grice (1975: 45) distinguishes four categories within it: Quantity, Quality, Relation and Manner. The category of quantity relates to two maxims:

> 1. Make your contribution as informative as is required (for the current purposes of the exchange).
> 2. Do not make your contribution more informative than is required.
> (Grice 1975: 45)

The category of quality concerns telling the truth (with the supermaxim: "Try to make your contribution one that is true" – Grice 1975: 46) and includes the following maxims:

> 1. Do not say what you believe is false.
> 2. Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence.
> (Grice 1975: 46)

The category of relation calls for relevance ("Be relevant" – Grice 1975: 46), and the category of manner concerns not what is said (as the other categories do), but how it is said (Grice 1975: 46). The supermaxim "Be perspicuous" includes the following maxims:

> 1. Avoid obscurity of expression.
> 2. Avoid ambiguity.

  3. Be brief (avoid unnecessary prolixity).
  4. Be orderly.
  (Grice 1975: 46)

Grice (1975: 47) mentions other maxims, including the maxim of politeness which concerns observing the needs of other people, avoiding bothering or criticizing them, avoiding showing off, expressing gratitude etc. (see, among others, Brown and Levinson 1994, Ożóg 1990, 2001, Marcjanik 2007, Marcjanik ed. 2005, 2007).

It should be stated that deciphering implicature is possible due to:

  – presuppositions, i.e. conventional implicatures;
  – presumption or anticipation.

Presupposition may be understood in many different ways. For instance, Beaver and Geurts (2014) give it the following definition: "the phenomenon whereby speakers mark linguistically the information that is presupposed or taken for granted, rather than being part of the main propositional content of a speech act".

This paper adopts the view on presupposition proposed by Ducrot (1972). Presuppositions, according to him, are facts given to speakers before a particular speech act. In the following example,

  (13) A: *Yesterday I met Jane.*
        B: *When did she come back from Paris?*

the presupposition is that Jane stayed in Paris.

The sphere of anticipation, whether real anticipation or presumption, has its analogy in the sphere of cooperation and it is not an act of speech. For example, for the category of quality when Speaker A wants Speaker B's help, Speaker A assumes that B's contribution will be real, not feigned, and – depending

on the situation – that if B is asked to help A to make cake and A says he/she needs sugar, A does not expect B to pass him/her salt, or if A asks B for bread, A does not expect to receive anything else (Grice 1975).

4. Obeying the rules

In fact, speakers of the same language and participants in the same speech community tend to obey similar rules. As Levinson (1983: 101) points out, Grice's theory,

> in which he develops the concept of implicature, is essentially a theory about how people use language. Grice's suggestion is that there is a set of over-arching assumptions guiding the conduct of conversation. These arise, it seems, from basic rational considerations and may be formulated as guidelines for the efficient and effective use of language in conversation to further co-operative ends.

In language communication, people either observe these guidelines (maxims of conversation, which have been presented – Grice 1975) or flout them. They may still obey the maxims of conversation by giving indirect answers. Let us consider the following examples.

A is standing at a car and B is heading toward A. In their conversation (14), B implies that there is an open gas station, so A can buy gas there.

(14) A: *I ran out of gasoline.*
    B: *There is a gas station around the corner.*

In (15), A asks for the time and B does not answer directly, but provides information about a television programme being cast at the same time every day.

(15) English: A: *What is the time?*
              B: *There is news on TV now.*

German: A: *Wie spät ist es denn?*
             B: *Die Tagesschau läuft / ist gerade.*
Polish: A: *Która godzina?*
             B: *W telewizji pokazują „Wiadomości".*
Russian: A: *Который час?*
             B: *По телевидению уже идут „Известия".*

5.   Breaking the rules

Breaking Grice's postulates may involve elusive responses, refusal to continue the topic (pretending not to know the answer and pausing), counterproposals, counterarguments and irony.

In the analysis below, I distinguish various communication strategies aimed at conveying the sender's hidden intentions and I propose explications in the form of a pragmatic framework. The pragmatic frame is understood here as a pragmatic explication of a given communication situation based on presuppositional knowledge.

5.1. Elusive responses

Elusive responses can be presented as follows: "For some subjective reason I do not want to make my speech clear, so I use an elusive response" (Komorowska 1996b). The following examples illustrate this phenomenon:

(16) English: A: *John, are you married?*
                 B: *Not quite.*
     German: A: *Herr Müller, sind Sie verheiratet?*
                 B: *Eigentlich nicht.*
     Polish: A: *Czy jesteś mężatką?*
                 B: *Niezupełnie.*
     Russian: A: *Андрей Иванович, вы женат?*
                 B: *Не совсем.*

In (16), B uses an elusive response. The laconic answer meaning 'not quite' can be understood in different ways:

- B is not married, but he/she is going to marry soon;
- B is not married, but he/she lives with somebody;
- B is married, but is now separated from his/her spouse;
- B is married, but he/she and his/her spouse live separately;
- B is married, but his/her spouse is not home now etc.
  (Komorowska 1996b: 169)

Considering (16) in terms of the Cooperative Principle, we may observe that B fails to conform to the category of quantity (in not giving as much information as is required) and the category of manner (in giving an obscure answer).

5.2. Refusal to continue the topic: Pretending not to know the answer and pausing

These strategies are underlined by the following approach: "I do not want to talk about it, do not ask me anything else". Let us consider the following examples:

(17) English: A: *Are Ann and John in love?*
                 B: *I don't know.*

   German: A: *Sind Anna und Johann verliebt?*
                 B: *Das weiß ich nicht.*

   Polish: A: *Czy Anna i Jan są zakochani?*
                 B: *Nie wiem.*

   Russian: A: *Анна и Иван любят друг друга?*
                 B: *Я не знаю.*

In all the examples in (17), for some reason, B does not want to continue discussing a certain topic. To indicate the refusal, speakers may use not only the phrases meaning 'I don't know', but also phrases meaning 'It's none of my business' (e.g. Polish *To nie moja sprawa* 'It is not my business', *Nie obchodzi mnie to* 'I don't care about it'). If B actually knows the answer to A's question, he or she flouts the category of quality (not telling the truth), as well as the maxim of politeness (Komorowska 1996b: 170).

Reluctance to answer a question in a conversation may also manifest itself as a moment of silence, e.g.

(18) English: A: *Have you graduated yet?*
                   B: ....
     German: A: *Hast du die Schule beendet?*
                   B: ....
     Polish: A: *Czy skończyłeś już szkołę?*
                   B: ....
     Russian: A: *Ты уже закончил школу?*
                   B: ....

(19) English: A: *Are you getting married soon?*
                   B: ....
     German: A: *Heiratest du bald?*
                   B: ....
     Polish: A: *Czy masz zamiar wkrótce się żenić?*
                   B: ....
     Russian: A: *Ты скоро выйдешь замуж?*
                   B: ....

Lack of any answer (silence), meant to avoid continuing a particular topic in a conversation – similar to refusal (Rokoszowa 1999) – is also flouting the maxim of politeness.

5.3. Counterproposals

Counterproposals are connected with changing the topic of a conversation. From the point of view of one of the interlocutors, they may be described as follows: "Do not ask me anymore, because I do not want to answer, let us change the subject". (Komorowska 1995: 107). Let us quote the following example coming from a conversation in English:

(20) English: A: *Are you getting married to Jane soon?*
                   B: *Isn't it a beautiful day?*
     German: A: *Heiraten Sie bald mit Jane?*
                   B: *Ist es nicht ein schöner Tag?*

Polish: A: *Czy wkrótce bierzesz ślub z Jane?*

                    B: *Czy nie jest to piękny dzień?*

Russian: A: *Вы скоро женитесь на Джейн?*

                    B: *Разве это не прекрасный день?*

In (20), B clearly rejects the topic of the conversation proposed by A. It is not pleasant for him. For some reason, B does not want to answer A's question, and instead, changes the topic, which is actually a new proposal: "Let us talk about the weather". Let us consider an example found in a conversation in the four languages.

(21) English: A: *What about going together to the theatre on Saturday?*

                    B: *What a nice tie you are wearing!*

        German: A: *Gehen wir am Samstag ins Theater?*

                    B: *Du hast eine schöne Krawatte.*

        Polish: A: *Co z naszym pójściem do teatru w sobotę?*

                    B: *Ale masz ładny krawat...*

        Russian: A: *Ты бы пошёл со мной в субботу в театр?*

                    B: *Какой у тебя красивый галстук...*

As can easily be seen, in (20) and (21), by changing the topic of the conversation, B flouts the rule "Be relevant".

5.4. Counterarguments

Counterarguments resemble counterproposals, but there is a difference between them. One speaker answers a question indirectly, so the response does not exclude the topic of the conversation. Still, the speaker wants to shift his or her interlocutor's attention: "You, for sure, understand the necessary implicature that ... and that I am trying to direct your attention to another topic" (Komorowska 1995, Antas 2008). In the following examples:

(22) English: A: *Did you take your exam in literature?*
                    B: *I had to go abroad.*

    German: A: *Haben Sie Ihre Prüfung in Literatur abgelegt?*
                    B: *Ich musste ins Ausland.*

    Polish: A: *Czy zdałeś egzamin z literatury?*
                    B: *Musiałem wyjechać za granicę.*

    Russian: A: *Вы сдали экзамен по литературе?*
                    B: *Мне пришлось уехать за границу.*

the answer given by B means 'you receive the necessary implicature, I didn't take my exam in literature and I direct your attention to my trip abroad'. Let us consider another, humorous, conversation, taking place at a biology lesson in a Russian primary school, where A is a teacher and B is her pupil. B apparently does not know the answer, but instead of admitting that directly, chooses to try to amuse the teacher (and/or the other pupils in the classroom):

(23) English: A: *Ivan, how many legs does a fly have?*
                    B: *Irina Sergyeyevna, don't you have other problems?*

    German: A: *Sag mir, Ivan, wie viele Füße hat eine Fliege?*
                    B: *Irina Sergeevna, haben Sie keine anderen Sorgen?*

    Polish: A: *Powiedz mi, Iwan, ile nóg ma mucha?*
                    B: *Irina Siergiejewna, czy Pani nie ma innych problemów?*

    Russian: A: *Скажи, Иван, сколько у мухи ног?*
                    B: *Ирина Сергеевна, у вас что нет других забот.*

The attention is redirected from the pupil's lack of knowledge to his behaviour which may be considered amusing or – more probably – impudent by the teacher.

Also in the case of requests, speakers may give indirect answers, which enable the shift of attention from A's problems to B's, e.g.

(24) English: A: *Would you like to help me with my essay?*
               B: *I am very busy.*
    German: A: *Möchten Sie mir bei meinem Aufsatz helfen?*
               B: *Ich bin sehr beschäftigt.*
    Polish: A: *Czy chciałbyś mi pomóc w moim eseju?*
               B: *Jestem bardzo zajęty.*
    Russian: A: *Не могли бы вы мне помочь в моём сочинении?*
               B: *Я очень занят.*

5.5. Irony

The pragmatic function of irony is to break the rules of the categories of Quality and Quantity. A speaker bluntly tells a lie. The following pragmatic frame is typical of irony: "I tell a lie on purpose because I want to prove that...".

The English conversation in (25) and the Polish exchange in (26) exemplify breaking the category of Quality:

(25) English: A: *Did he help you to carry your bag?*
               B: *Mark? Carry my bag? You know his good manners.*
    German: A: *Hat er dir geholfen, deine Tasche zu tragen?*
               B: *Mark? Meine Tasche tragen? Sie kennen seine guten Manieren.*
    Polish: A: *Czy pomógł ci nieść twoją torbę?*
               B: *Marek? Nosić moją torbę? Znasz jego dobre maniery.*
    Russian: A: *Он помог вам нести сумку?*
               B: *Марк? Неси мою сумку? Вы знаете его хорошие манеры.*

(26) English: A: *Did Alexandra offer you anything to eat*
                     or drink?
                     B: *Of course, she did. You know how*
                     hospitable she is.

      German: A: *Hat Alexandra dir etwas zu essen oder zu*
                     trinken angeboten?
                     B: *Natürlich hat sie es getan. Sie wissen,*
                     wie gastfreundlich sie ist.

      Polish: A: *Czy Aleksandra poczęstowała cię czymś?*
                     B: *Oczywiście, wiesz przecież, jaka ona jest*
                     gościnna.

      Russian: A: *Александра предлагала вам чтонибудь*
                     поесть или выпить?
                     B: *Конечно, да. Вы знаете, какая она*
                     гостеприимная.

Examples (25) and (26) involve presuppositions: in (25) A knows
that Mark has bad manners and does not help other people,
and in (26) A is aware of the fact that Alexandra is not hospitable
at all.

   In some cases, irony is made explicit by adding an additional
comment, e.g.

(27) English: *You are so smart, keep on… but this will get*
                     you nowhere.
      German: *Mach nur so weiter, Du wirst schon sehen,*
                     was Du davon hast…
      Polish: *Jesteś bardzo mądry, rób tak dalej… to*
                     daleko nie zajdziesz.
      Russian: *Ты очень умный, продолжай … далеко не*
                     уедешь.

(28) English: *You are as pretty as a Hollywood actress –*
                     at the age of 70.
      German: *Sie sind so hübsch wie eine Hollywood-*
                     Schauspielerin – im Alter von 70 Jahren.
      Polish: *Jest Pani tak piękna jak gwiazda Hollywood*
                     – w wieku 70 lat.

Russian: *Вы красивы как голливудская актриса –*
                  в свои 70 лет.

Irony may also involve breaking the category of Quantity, which is connected with the use of litotes (understatements). For instance, one can make the following comment in Polish (and in the other languages as well) about a man who was furious for some reason and broke all the furniture in his house (Grice 1975):

(29) English: *He got a bit irritated.*
     German: *Er wurde ein bisschen irritiert.*
     Polish: *On się nieco zdenerwował.*
     Russian: *Он немного рассердился.*

6. Conclusion

The conducted pragmatic analysis of various linguistic communication situations demonstrates that the language strategy can involve flouting the cooperative principle with the use of various pragmatic functions. Tracing the communication strategies in English, German, Polish and Russian shows the similarities in their use. The sender may convey intentions indirectly, employing hidden means of expression whose exponent is an apparent question, a change in argumentative direction, the use of ambiguous words, irony or even silence. Hence, we deal with the realization of the pragmatic functions of "language avoidance", "counter-argumentation", "counter-proposal", "irony" etc.

Acknowledgement

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Basic levels of categorization:
A comparison of selected
English and Polish verbs

OLGA SOKOŁOWSKA

Abstract

The phenomenon of basic level concepts in cognition and categorization, so crucial in the cognitive account of natural language is typically accessed via what is perceptually the most outstanding phenomena represented in many languages, at least those rooted in Proto-Indo-European (specifically English and Polish) by nouns fulfilling the criteria of basic terms, originally established for classifying color vocabulary. These are prototypical examples in the category of nouns – relating to countable, material objects. Nominal representation, according to Langacker (1987) is indicative of a given stimulus being perceived and conceptualized as a *thing*, i.e., a region in one or more cognitive domains (conceptions) established in the speakers' minds. This is a rather self-imposing construal of physical, countable stimuli, which meet the good gestalt criteria, such as animals, plants, and man-made objects of everyday use. The semantic scopes of nouns representing such phenomena seem to overlap to a relatively high degree across languages, especially related ones, such as English and Polish, and finding the precise equivalents within them does not pose particular problems. This is hardly the case when it comes to phenomena represented by verbs and classifiable as *processes* in Langacker's cog-

nitive, semantic account of the division of words into parts of speech. A comparison of the meaning of selected basic English verbs and their closest Polish counterparts reveals serious discrepancies in a number of cases. Thus, certain basic English verbs representing common, everyday physical activities prove to differ considerably from their Polish counterparts with regard to their respective levels of schematicity/ specificity of meaning, and, in consequence, the range of cognitive domains involved in their semantic scopes. This is the case of such equivalent lexemes as *płynąć/pływać – swim; sail; flow; float* or *break – łamać; tłuc; rwać; drzeć.* In both cases, one language is quite specific while the other is much more schematic as regards the actual cognitive domains activated by corresponding words and the degree to which that activation in the stimulated conceptual blends depends on the lexical context in which the respective words are used. This indicates that even related languages spoken by communities from similar cultural circles may codify considerably different construals of the same nonmaterial phenomena, specifically processes.

Keywords

basic levels of categorization, basic language terms, cognitive domains, equivalence

Poziom podstawowy kategoryzacji: Porównanie wybranych czasowników w języku angielskim i polskim

Abstrakt

Zjawisko poziomu podstawowego w poznaniu i kategoryzacji, kluczowe dla kognitywnego podejścia do języka, zostało rozpoznane za pośrednictwem bytów najbardziej wyróżniających się w ludzkiej percepcji świata, reprezentowanych w wielu językach, w tym tych o praindoeuropejskich korzeniach, jak angielski i polski, przez rzeczowniki spełniające kryteria słownictwa podstawowego, pierwotnie ustalone dla celów klasyfikacji terminologii barw. Są to przykłady prototypowe w kategorii rzeczowników – odnoszące się do policzalnych przedmiotów materialnych. Reprezentacja przez rzeczownik wskazuje, według Langa-

ckera, na konceptualizację danego bodźca jako *rzeczy*, czyli regionu w jednej lub kilku domenach kognitywnych (koncepcjach) ustalonych w umysłach użytkowników języka. Taka konceptualizacja wydaje się być raczej oczywista w przypadku bytów materialnych, policzalnych, posiadających wszystkie cechy dobrego *gestaltu*, takich, jak zwierzęta, rośliny, przedmioty codziennego użytku. Zakresy semantyczne rzeczowników funkcjonujących w różnych językach, szczególnie spokrewnionych, jak angielski i polski, które reprezentują takie byty zdają się być w dużym stopniu do siebie podobne, a znalezienie dokładnych odpowiedników w zestawieniu tych języków nie nastręcza szczególnych trudności. Takiej symetrii nie daje się jednak zauważyć w przypadku zjawisk opisywanych w obu językach przez czasowniki, klasyfikowanych jako *procesy* w kognitywnej, opartej na kryteriach semantycznych, Langackerowskiej klasyfikacji wyrazów jako części mowy. Porównanie znaczenia wybranych podstawowych czasowników angielskich ze znaczeniem polskich wyrazów uważanych za ich odpowiedniki ukazuje w wielu przypadkach istotne różnice. Niektóre powszechnie używane angielskie czasowniki podstawowe odnoszące się do codziennych czynności fizycznych różnią się znacznie od swoich polskich odpowiedników pod względem schematyczności lub specyficzności znaczenia i, co za tym idzie, także pod względem zestawu domen kognitywnych obejmowanych przez ich zakres semantyczny. Przykładami tego zjawiska są takie ekwiwalenty leksykalne, jak np. *płynąć*/*pływać – swim*, *sail*, *flow*, *float* or *break – łamać*, *tłuc*, *rwać*, *drzeć.* W obu przytoczonych przykładach jeden z branych pod uwagę języków odnosi się do danego procesu w sposób znacznie bardziej schematyczny/specyfikujący niż drugi – biorąc pod uwagę wybór i liczbę domen kognitywnych rozpoznawalnych w ich zakresach semantycznych, a także rolę kontekstu leksykalnego we wnoszeniu tych domen do stymulowanych amalgamatów pojęciowych. Wskazuje to na fakt, że nawet pokrewne języki używane przez społeczności pochodzące z podobnych kręgów kulturowych mogą konwencjonalizować znacząco różne sposoby obrazowania tych samych bytów niematerialnych, szczególnie czynności.

Słowa kluczowe

podstawowe poziomy kategoryzacji, podstawowe terminy języka, domeny kognitywne, ekwiwalencja

The purpose of this paper is to develop a new perspective in the outlook on a long-recognized and well-known issue – basic level categories in human cognition, whose psychological reality is corroborated by a specific kind of linguistic labels (*basic* terms) attached to them by speakers of different languages. What seems to deserve attention is the question of whether the cross-language symmetry observed with regard to specimens of natural life (plants, animals) symbolized by nominal expressions is maintained when it comes to more elusive categories (especially those which are typically referred to by means of verbs). An approximation at answering this question appears to be a comparison of the semantic scopes of certain predications functioning in two languages which are distinct but related by Proto-Indo-European roots: English and Polish.

The recognition of the phenomenon of basic levels in cognition emerged as part of a broader inquiry into the meaning and use of certain symbolic units (words) referring to cognitive stimuli constituted by material objects that exhibit good gestalt properties (fulfilling the criteria of proximity, similarity, closure, continuity), which predisposes them for the role of figures standing out against their backgrounds. Plant and animal terminology is especially attractive as an object of such studies because it concerns omnipresent phenomena of utmost interest to the members of any human community. Being able to correctly recognize and name such objects has always been an important issue in people's lives, irrespective of their culture and advancement in technological development.

The phenomenon in question was first described by Roger Brown in his classical paper "How shall a thing be called" published in 1958 (cf. Lakoff 1987:31). One of the leading researchers into human cognition, Eleanor Rosch (cf. Lakoff 1987: 39-57) discovered that the basic level of categorization is connected with the fact that the human mind focuses on a certain number of outstanding and important properties of a phenomenon. This recognition ensures optimal effectiveness in classifying this phenomenon for relevant, practical purposes. The basic level is neither too general nor too specific, and concerns those categorical

generalizations which are best suited for human perception, i.e. "human sized". These are by no means categories occupying the lowest positions determined by the vertical dimension of any categorization systems – whether of folk or scientific provenience. As observed by Evans (2019), basic level categories represent a certain degree of inclusiveness that is optimal for humans, this optimality being determined by average cognitive capacities of *homo sapiens* as well as by the most basic and universal biological needs of the representatives of the species. In the case of living organisms, this level has been found, by studying, among others, the vocabulary used by speakers of non-European languages referring to natural phenomena, to more or less correspond to the level of Genus in Linnaean biological typology.[1] It should be noted that the generic terms used by naturalists in their classifications are not complex or coined specifically for the purpose of labeling types of organisms as happens, for example, in the case of higher order categories, such as *Chordates, Mammals* or lower order ones, such as *pedunculate oak, red oak*, but rather they are simply adopted from casual, everyday language.[2]

The recognition of a certain level of schematicity/specificity of conceptions as basic in human cognition became one of the cornerstones of cognitive linguistics, especially cognitive semantics. Speakers of different languages tend to refer to material objects of cognition exhibiting good gestalt properties by using words representing conceptions of a similar, medium level of

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[1] This is by no means an infallible rule. In another work, the present author (Sokołowska 2018) demonstrates that a basic level in folk categorization can correspond, apart friom the generic (*rat, bear, panther, fox*), to practically any level in the scientific, Linnaean system of classification, i.e., class – *fish, bird*; order – *bat, snake, lizard*; family – *weasel, hare, beaver*, as well as, very commonly, species – *dog* (*canis familiaris*), *wolf* (*canis lupus*), *cat* (*felis catus*), *horse* (*equus caballus*), *lion* (*panthera leo*).

[2] The etymology of common names of living organisms indicates that they often arise from casual observations of nature that focus on the most salient, cognitively relevant characteristics of the encountered phenomena. Good examples are the lexemes *bear* in English and its equivalent *niedźwiedź* in Polish; in both cases it is claimed that these were initially used as taboo words for the much feared animal and originally meant 'the brown one' (English) and 'the honey eater' (Polish).

schematicity/specificity. These words activate[3] semantic infor-
mation of a number of the most relevant, outstanding charac-
teristics of a given stimulus, and seem to be rather easily trans-
latable from one language to another, even between unrelated
languages, as was proved by Berlin and his associates' research
into plant terminology used by the South-Mexican people of
Tzeltal (cf. Lakoff 1987: 33). This research found that, in the
case of living organisms, the basic level of categorization is one
which is represented by words often corresponding to generic
names in Linnaeus's biological taxonomy, such as *rose, maple,
horse, duck,* which provides support to the Doctrine of Natural
Kind Terms (cf. Lakoff 1987: 31-34).[4] The validity of the trans-
latability criterion seems to be supported by a comparison of
certain first-choice nouns referring to certain phenomena (both
natural and manmade) represented by the respective pictures
in Figure 1. Speakers in most situations select such nouns to
label the phenomena in their surroundings even if their lan-
guage offers more general or more specific names (words) for the
categories to which they may belong (e.g. *plant*, *animal*, *fruit*,
furniture, *tool*, *garment* or *pedunculate oak*, *Jack Russell terrier*,
McIntosh apple, *kitchen knife*, *cargo trousers*). Figure 1 illus-
trates a selection of such phenomena. In English and Polish the
first-to-use names are, respectively, *oak/dąb*, *pine/sosna*,
dog/pies, *cat/kot*, *elk/moose/łoś*, *apple/jabłko*, *table/stół*,
knife/nóż, trousers (AE *pants*)/*spodnie*.

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[3] In accordance with the basic assumptions of cognitive semantics, linguis-
tic symbols do not convey meaning like containers but, rather, activate con-
ceptual resources stored in language users' minds in terms of cognitive models
/ cognitive domains.
   [4] But see Note 1.

Figure 1
Examples of common stimuli eliciting basic terms
(source: http://schools.clipart.com/)

As can be observed, the first-choice nouns functioning in both languages exhibit certain characteristics which were first recognized with regard to the nomenclature of basic (focal) colours (cf. Berlin and Kay 1969), the study of which resulted in establishing the so-called basic colour terms of a language. However, it is not only colours, but also a wide range of other stimuli that evoke linguistic symbols which are characterized by certain properties testifying to their special status in a given language, which qualifies them as basic terms of that language. These properties established for basic colour terms, but shared by terms referring to other phenomena are:

– a relatively simple morphological structure,
– native origin,[5]

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[5] Nevertheless, in the case of certain phenomena that are not natural or indigenous to a certain area (exotic animals or plants or certain technical inventions) the criterion of native origin may not apply. For example, the basic level Polish word *pług* 'plow' is of German origin, as it refers to the device

- broad reference not restricted to a small group of selected deno-
  tations,
- availability for all native speakers of a given language,
- early acquisition by children in their native language develop-
  ment.

As already mentioned, such terms are most readily used in daily
life situations since they are the first ones to come to native
speakers' minds.

As a consequence, basic terms can be expected to be the first
to acquire by students learning a foreign language (constituting
the basic vocabulary of that tongue), and to be matched rela-
tively easily with other language counterparts. What is more,
these counterparts are likely to exhibit the above-specified basic
term characteristics, especially when the communities speaking
the source and the target languages are not culturally distant.

The comparison of English and Polish words referring to the
selected phenomena illustrated by Figure 1 confirms not only
the symmetry between both languages with respect to naming
them, but also the basic term properties of the respective words.
It may be noted that the symmetry is not perfect and minor dis-
crepancies may occur. For instance, some animals marked by
one basic level word in one language may fall into different types
represented by a number of basic level words in another lan-
guage, like the schematic English noun *deer*, which in different
contexts may correspond to three different lexemes *jeleń* (red
deer)*, sarna* (roe deer) or *daniel* (fallow deer) in Polish,[6] all of

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adopted by Slavs, together with its name, from German farmer colonists who
settled down in Slavic territories; also the common Polish words for animals
such as tigers, giraffes, gazelles, crocodiles and such plants as bamboo, ce-
dars, palm trees are nonnative and non-Slavic; they are direct loans from other
languages.

   [6] A similar situation may be observed with the noun cherry (Cerasus) in
English, which refers to any small, fleshy fruit containing a smooth, hard pit
and ranging from yellow to very dark red (Webster's New World Dictionary of
the American Language). Polish offers two basic level nouns distinguishing
between the varieties of this fruit: wiśnia (Cerasus vulgaris) for the smaller,
very dark and sourish type (sour cherry); typically used for preserves, and
czereśnia (Cerasus avium) for the larger, sweet kind (sweet cherry), irrespec-
tive of its colour; typically eaten raw.

which belong to the basic level vocabulary. Likewise, the Polish noun *łoś* may be matched in English to *moose* or *elk*, although the use of either of the English lexemes is determined by the local dialect and may not necessarily reflect the distinction between the two species (*Alces americana* and *Alces alces*).

As the above-provided examples illustrate, the recognition of basic level categories arose from studying linguistic representations of physical objects constituting good gestalts in sensory perception. Such good gestalts can easily be distinguished among material phenomena observable in the world at large. However, the main issue addressed within the present paper is the investigation into whether the characteristics of the linguistic labels of tangible, conspicuous stimuli apply as well to lexemes referring to other, nonmaterial phenomena, in whose case it is not possible to talk of gestalt properties of physical nature. Namely, what seems to deserve interest is the issue of the basic level categorization applied to actions, stimuli typically described by verbs. The question is whether basic words describing certain actions in different languages represent conceptions of comparable levels of generality. Do basic verbs in one language easily evoke other language counterparts of identical or almost identical semantic scopes, as is the case with nouns naming natural phenomena at the generic level?

Lakoff, in his fundamental work *Women, Fire and Dangerous Things* (1987), mentions basic motion verbs (*run*, *walk*) and basic locative verbs (*stand*, *sit*, *lie*) without, however, clearly specifying whether they can be considered symbols of basic level categories recognized by the mind. Nevertheless, these English verbs meet the above-specified criteria of basic terms. Most of them are subject to archaic inflection by ablaut, which additionally testifies for their native, Anglo-Saxon origin. In another work, however, *Metaphors We Live By* (1980: 77-86), Lakoff and Johnson posit the notion of experiential gestalts – well defined models of various, not necessarily physical, phenomena. As examples, they quote the notions of war, argument, journey, causation, which are events comprising a series of interrelated activities organized along the temporal axis. These experiences, in

turn, give rise to conceptions subsequently stored in the mind as the Idealized Cognitive Models. It may, then, be assumed that processes symbolized by physical action verbs, which in principle involve the cognitive domain of time, can also constitute such mental gestalts. What is more, action verbs, just like nouns, can represent respective phenomena with varying levels of specificity/schematicity, e.g. *move-walk-amble*, *consume-drink-gulp*, *perceive-look-stare*, one of which (the middle, in these instances) appears to be optimal from the point of view of human cognition. It seems that, just like in the case of physical objects, basic physical activities commonly performed by practically all human beings should give rise to mental gestalts, similar to those evoked by nominal expressions. Figure 2 provides examples of such basic experiences, which seem to be shared by all humans irrespective of their culture and the language they speak: consuming food, moving in three-dimensional space, moving in water, and destroying things. It should be noted that very young children (as young as two years old) are normally able to name many such experiences; as indicated by Clark (1990), with verbs referring to simple physical activities constituting about 25 % of their total vocabulary.
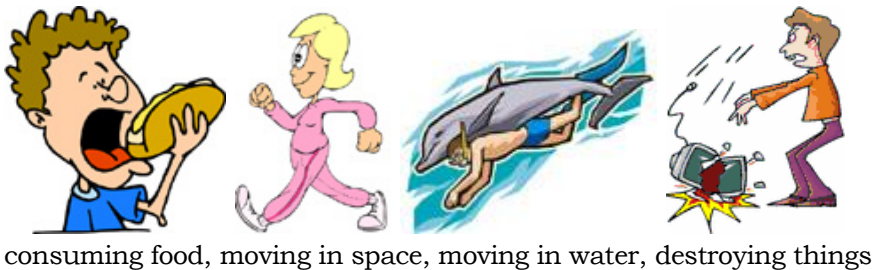

consuming food, moving in space, moving in water, destroying things

Figure 2
Examples of basic experiences shared by all humans
(source: http://schools.clipart.com/)

Given the corporal and physically experiential nature of the illustrated activities, it might be expected that, just as in the case of objects and nouns, the recognition of the basic level of processes and verbs should be cross-linguistic, especially in the case of the two languages taken into consideration within the present work: English and Polish, both of which are Indo-European and both of which are spoken by culturally proximate communities. However, a closer look at the functioning of lexemes referring to the respective experiences reveals the fact that this expectation may not be fulfilled. Table 1 below illustrates the results of an investigation into the issue.

Table 1

English and Polish basic verbs referring
to common physical experiences

Experience	English	Polish
consuming food	eat	jeść
moving in space	go	iść (telic) / chodzić (atelic) jechać (telic)
	walk	iść / chodzić
moving in/on water	swim	płynąć (telic) / pływać (atelic)
	sail	
	flow	płynąć
	float	pływać
destruction	break	łamać tłuc rozbić[7]
	break/tear tear	rwać drzeć

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[7] Given that Polish offers two basic infinitival forms for its verbs (perfective and imperfective), it is always necessary to decide which of them to use for quotation; as a matter of fact even dictionary authors are not always consistent in this respect. In the table cell above the infinitive *rozbić* is perfective, while the remaining verbs (*łamać*, *tłuc*) are imperfective.

Table 1 lists English verbs standing for the basic physical processes discussed here and presents their Polish equivalents. Indeed, in the case of some activities, like consuming food, the specificity and schematicity levels of conceptions represented by basic verbs in English and Polish seem to be comparable. This means that both *eat* and its equivalent *jeść*[8] represent concepts involving a similar (neither very high nor very low) number and array of cognitive domains, i.e. lower order notions activated in the semantic scopes of the predicates (cf. Langacker 1988), such as those of a living organism equipped with an oral cavity, bio-logical needs, food put into that cavity, swallowing, hunger, sa-tiation, taste and perhaps a few other, minor notions. It should be noted that such details as the precise kind of organism, form of food, method of taking and processing it, and mode of swal-lowing are not specified by the verbs alone. These details only emerge in a specific context which activates relevant cognitive domains, e.g. *to eat soup* (the conceptions of liquid, a bowl, a spoon), *an apple* (the conceptions of teeth, biting, chewing, crunching)*, ice-cream* (the conceptions of a tongue, licking), *a steak* (the conceptions of a plate, knife, fork, teeth, biting, chewing), or they may be provided by more specific verbs of a subordinate level, e.g. *to gnaw*, *to chew*, *to lick* etc. Needless to say, the contents of cognitive models evoked by complex pred-icates of the verb + object type are, to a high degree, determined by experience.

Nevertheless, in the case of verbs referring to basic physical experiences other than eating such neat correspondences be-tween English and Polish are impossible to find. The discrepan-cies are illustrated by Table 1. As already indicated, apart from eating, the experiences considered are those of moving in space, moving in/on water, and destroying. The basic Polish verb re-ferring to the most common way of moving in three-dimensional space (in the telic form *iść* and the atelic – *chodzić*[9]) is translated

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[8] Both verbs derive from the same Proto-Indo-European stem *ed-* meaning 'to eat'.

[9] This particular verb, like a number of other ones in Polish also has the atelic iterative infinitival form *chadzać* 'go from time to time'.

by dictionary authors (*The Great Polish-English Dictionary* by Jan Stanisławski and the *PWN-Oxford Polish-English Dictionary*) into two basic English verbs *go*[10] and *walk*, which differ considerably from each other in regard to the specificity/schematicity level of the conceptions they represent. Name-ly, the verb *walk* (like *iść*, but unlike *go*) necessarily involves the notion of legs positioned vertically with respect to the ground and pendular movement as primary cognitive domains. This is the reason why the Polish expression *iść pieszo* (literally 'walk on foot') has a pleonastic flavor: the notion of moving legs in a specific manner seems to be activated by both elements of the phrase. The English verb *go* is much more schematic than the verb *walk* and its Polish counterpart *iść*, and refers to practically any movement in space, without specifying the method, medium, speed, or the possible use of a vehicle. The details are, consequently, provided by the context, e.g. *to go on foot, by bike, by plane, by car, by train, on skis, on horseback*, etc. Most of the enumerated senses must be translated into Polish by means of the basic movement verb *jechać*, which involves the cognitive domain of a means of transport as primary. *Jechać*, in turn, does not seem to have an exact English counterpart, as the closest one, *go*, does not require the domain of any kind of vehicle being activated, and is thus far more schematic. The Polish verb of a schematicity level comparable to that of *go* seems to be *udać się* 'resort to', but it involves certain cognitive domains that *go* does not primarily activate (eminence, respect, official register), and is generally used to describe the official travels of important, estimable persons.

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[10] It needs to be mentioned that the parameter which in English plays an important role in selecting a basic verb of movement is directionality (toward or away from the speaker). It seems that the presented generalizations concerning the verb *go* also apply to its counterpart marking the opposite spatial orientation *come*, apparently representing a similar level of schematicity as its antonym. Polish does not offer two distinct verbs to describe movement toward or away from the speaker. The directionality of movement towards the speaker may be marked by a prefix attached to the stem *iść*, as in *przyjść* 'come' or *pójść* 'go out/away'.

The above described lack of symmetry between the English and Polish basic verbs of motion may sometimes give rise to difficulties in understanding the exact sense of certain expressions for foreign language learners. This may be illustrated by the problems caused to Polish learners of English by the interpretation of a certain situation described in a question eliciting exercise, which is *That man with a pack on his back went into the field and died.* Students are supposed to find out what really happened by asking only yes-no questions. In doing so, Poles invariably tend to think of a person walking or riding across land, and the final explanation, that the story features an unfortunate paratrooper whose parachute did not open, comes as a surprise to them. The conclusion that can be drawn is that the English and Polish basic verbs of physical movement in space represent conceptions of inconsistent specificity/schematicity levels.

A similar situation can be observed in the case of the basic verbs representing movement in/on water. This time, however, it is Polish that offers a lexeme of a much higher schematicity level than its basic level English counterparts. Again, Table 1 illustrates the issue. The Polish verb *płynąć*, in the telic form, is sufficiently schematic to represent not only the movement of an object of any kind, animate or not, in water or on its surface, but also the movement of water (or any other liquid) itself, as in *Strumień płynie przez łąkę* 'The stream flows across the meadow'. It is also maximally schematic as regards the method employed by an object engaged in its movement in/on water. The atelic form of the verb, *pływać* may refer, apart from the activities represented by its telic counterpart, also to floating of an object on the surface of the water without necessarily covering any distance.[11]

By contrast, English has created basic verbs referring to the forms of movement connected with water which represent much more specific cognitive models. Thus, covering distance in/on

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[11] The telic form is not possible in such contexts, since what the atelic verb describes is a stable property rather than activity of an object; that property being its floatability.

water due to the movement of a body or its parts is represented by the verb *swim*, which activates the cognitive domain of a living organism as a primary one. The movement in/on water executed by means of the force of wind, the power of muscles attached to oars, the power of an engine, or even the movement of water itself is metonymically symbolized by the verb *sail,* primarily activating the cognitive domain of a vessel propelled by wind power. The ability to stay on the surface of water not necessarily connected with covering distance is represented by the basic verb *float*, while the directed movement of water itself is represented by yet another basic verb, *flow*. Again, the two considered languages have not produced basic verbs referring to specific basic experiences of comparable schematicity/specificity levels. A possible explanation of this difference may be linked to different cultural experiences of contact with water. Unlike the mostly land-locked Slavs, the English have a long maritime tradition that may have created the need for more concise and precise ways of referring to movement connected with water.

Another basic experience symbolized by basic verbs in English and Polish which differs in the two languages with regard to their schematicity/specificity levels is that of destruction, which, as is well known, may be accomplished in a number of different ways. This discrepancy is again illustrated by Table 1. From a cognitive standpoint, this experience entails purposeful destruction executed by means of physical force, which is also a prototypical instance of causation (cf. the model specified by Lakoff 1982: 47-48, 1987: 54-55). Such an instance clearly pictures a physical action consciously executed by a human, with well-distinguished participants: the agent (performer) and the patient (entity affected), evident energy transfer resulting in changes occurring in the structure of the patient; the action being willed and controlled by the agent, accomplished with bodily and eye contact of the agent with the patient. The basic and commonly used English verb *break* referring to prototypical (as

well as non-prototypical[12]) destruction is highly schematic, and
does not specify the method or the nature of the object of such
activity. Polish, just like in the case of *go,* does not offer an exact
counterpart that would be of a comparative schematic level. The
verb *niszczyć* 'destroy' seems to be quite close, but it is not
a first-choice verb in describing situations where the objects and
the results of destruction (the entities no longer constituting in-
tegrated wholes) are specified, with, e.g., sticks, fingernails,
pencils, keys, cups, windows, wax seals etc. involved. Besides,
unlike *break, niszczyć* does not necessarily refer to the physical
disintegration of an object, but may just as well describe the
unwelcome altering of its appearance by soiling, as in *Grafi-
ciarze zniszczyli mi płot* 'Graffiti taggers destroyed my fence'.
Therefore, the English verb corresponding to *niszczyć* is the su-
perordinate level *destroy*, not *break*, as duly confirmed by both
Polish-English dictionaries mentioned above.

The basic verbs of destruction developed by Polish are much
more specific than *break*, as they involve the cognitive domains
of concrete types of objects and methods of destruction as pri-
mary ones. The English-Polish versions of the above mentioned
dictionaries (Jan Stanisławski and the PWN-Oxford) provide all
of the following as translations of the English lexeme in ques-
tion: *łamać* describing the destruction of objects with a rigid
structure, whether two- or three-dimensional, such as a match,
a seal, ice on a river. Another Polish basic destruction verb, *tłuc*,
is even more specific, as it refers to destroying objects that are
not only rigid, but also made of specific material (glass or porce-
lain). A relevant cognitive domain in this case seems to be the
sound accompanying the action, as the destruction of plastic
cups, for example, is described by *łamać,* not *tłuc*, which would
be used if the cups were made of china or glass. There is another
common Polish verb, *rozbić,* often used in the same contexts as

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[12] Non-prototypical destruction is involved in cases when causing the dis-
integration of a patient is incidental, unwilled, considerably delayed in time,
caused indirectly, not caused by means of immediate energy transfer, or when
the agent is non-human or unspecific, and the patient undergoes a change
that is undetectable to a casual witness.

tłuc, but it does not seem to involve the cognitive domain of a clinking sound, as it occurs in the phrase *rozbić atom* 'to split an atom'. Besides, it has a morphologically complex structure, which casts doubts on its qualification as a basic term. Nevertheless, it is the latter verb that is used in Polish in contexts that involve destruction in a metaphorical sense, e.g. *rozbić rodzinę* 'to break up a family', *rozbić spisek* 'to thwart a scheme', in which activating the cognitive domain of sound is unnecessary.

However, it would be far-fetched to claim that English generally offers a more schematic basic verb of destruction in comparison to Polish, and that the detailed information about the precise kind of destruction in the former language is always provided by cognitive domains represented by the object noun (whose role is to activate the relevant lower order conceptions, which in Polish is also the task of the verb). The situation is complicated by the fact that the Polish specific verb of destruction *rwać* presupposes a flexible, rather soft object (such as string, paper or fabric) and corresponds to the English verb *break* only in some contexts. It seems that such objects can be *broken* when they are one-dimensional (*break a string*, *break bonds*), otherwise they are *torn* (*tear up a letter*, *tear a sheet*, *tear one's jeans*). Objects, which apart from some length, are also characterized by some width, appear to be associated with another Polish basic verb of destruction *drzeć,* whereas *rwać* does not presuppose concrete dimensionality and may be used to describe the destruction of both one- or two-dimensional objects alike. The third commonly recognized dimension, depth, albeit physically recognizable in flexible entities that can be *broken* or *torn*, does not seem to be relevant in the semantic scopes of the considered lexemes, either in English or in Polish.

As can be observed, the semantic fields of destruction and movement have been tackled very differently by English and Polish, and in the above-discussed cases it is the Polish verbs that provide a higher level of detail about the processes to which they refer (with a notable exception of describing movement in/on water). Of course, the more schematic semantic "content"

of a verb in either language does not result in lower effectiveness
as regards expressing information about a given process. All de-
struction verbs are transitive and together with their objects
they give rise to conceptual blends[13] in which the relevant cog-
nitive domains specifying the manner and effects of an action
may be provided by the nouns. For example, the cognitive do-
main of fragility, as in to *break a cup* is, in English, imported by
the object. Polish, by contrast, offers the much more specific
verb *tłuc* in the corresponding phrase (*s*)*tłuc*[14] *filiżankę* and
seems to provide the specific semantic import from two sources,
as the conception of fragility is found in the semantic scopes of
both phrase members. It has already been mentioned that the
Polish expression *iść pieszo*, which literally means 'walk on foot,'
sounds somewhat pleonastic when it refers to physical move-
ment. The use of the adverb *pieszo* 'on foot' is, however, justified
when it is not clear whether the verb *iść* is used in a physical or
metaphorical sense, as in *Janek poszedł do szkoły* 'John went
to school'; it disambiguates such a statement, clearly indicating
that the physical sense of *poszedł* 'went' is at issue there.

The fact that verbs, as relational predicates, typically occur
in complex constructions (thus giving rise to conceptual blends)
seems to explain the fact that languages tend to preserve a sim-
ilar level of schematicity/specificity of nouns referring to inde-
pendent objects (construed as *things*, i.e. as regions in certain
cognitive domains, cf. Langacker 1987), but assume a rather
free approach to this parameter pertaining to processes, which
relate such independent phenomena to either other phenomena
(transitive verbs) or to certain elements of the setting, profiled
or unprofiled within an utterance (intransitive verbs). It does not
seem to matter much in regard to the contents of the resulting
conceptual blend which element of a phrase is the provider of
a relevant cognitive domain. What seems to be achieved with
a higher degree of verb schematicity is a certain economy in

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[13] The notion of *conceptual blends* is understood in the sense presented by
Turner and Fauconnier (1995).
[14] The prefix *s-* marks the completedness (perfectiveness) of the action in
question.

communication, namely in avoidance of doubling the information concerning the details of a given process that is already provided by an object or an adverbial phrase.

As the presented survey suggests, the assumption of the universality of the basic level of categorization, corroborated by the comparison of nominal expressions, which has given rise to the Doctrine of Natural Kind Terms is observed only to a limited degree in the case of basic verbs, even though it can be claimed that the experiences they symbolize are indeed shared by all humans. It seems that different languages quite arbitrarily, though in all probability not haphazardly, establish different basic levels of categorization with regard to processes, at least the ones selected for the present study. In conclusion, it can be stated that elementary activities (processes) do not seem to constitute cognitive stimuli imposing themselves on human cognition in a similar manner to things. In the case of processes, a much more important role appears to be performed by the freedom of imagery that allows for choosing the levels of schematicity or specificity which are not necessarily the same in all speech communities. Whatever the reasons for this variability, the languages of specific communities duly conventionalize the levels of generality optimal for their speakers. Consequently, the so-established verbs adjust themselves to the respective lexical systems and contribute to the creation of conceptual blends that need to be communicated via language.

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LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

Secondary school students' attitudes to phrasal verbs

DOROTA GÓRECZNA

Abstract

Phrasal verbs are an essential, though difficult to teach and learn, part of the English language. Although phrasal verbs are commonly used by native speakers, for English learners they pose a considerable challenge as far as their acquisition and use are concerned. The aim of this study is to examine students' attitude towards phrasal verbs taught at the B2 level in upper-secondary schools, and to analyse the significance of these multi-word verbs. The paper presents an excerpt of a survey conducted among secondary school students, which examined their understanding of phrasal verbs and analysed students' opinions about the importance of acquiring these demanding multi-word verbs.

Keywords

phrasal verbs, survey, secondary school students

Podejście uczniów szkół średnich
do czasowników frazowych

Abstrakt

Czasowniki frazowe stanowią istotną część języka angielskiego, która przysparza wiele kłopotów w procesie ich nauczania i uczenia się. Chociaż czasowniki frazowe są powszechnie używane przez rodzimych użytkowników języka angielskiego, dla osób uczących się tego języka, zagadnienie przyswojenia sobie szczegółów funkcjonowania tych czasowników jest skomplikowane. Celem niniejszej pracy jest zbadanie podejścia uczniów do czasowników frazowych nauczanych na poziomie B2 w szkołach średnich. Praca ta przedstawia fragment ankiety przeprowadzonej wśród uczniów szkół średnich i analizuje zrozumienie pojęcia czasowników frazowych oraz ich istotę w odniesieniu do posiadanych przez uczniów kompetencji językowych w zakresie języka angielskiego.

Słowa kluczowe

czasowniki frazowe, ankieta, uczniowie szkół średnich

1. Introduction

Phrasal verbs are a vital part of the English language. Having a good knowledge of them means being familiar with the English language itself. As Glennis Pye (1996: 697) claims, "the most fluent speaker can be identified as a non-native speaker through their use of phrasal verbs". Therefore, it is crucial to introduce phrasal verbs to students and to familiarize them with multi-word verbs. There are several approaches to teaching phrasal verbs.

The traditional approach focuses on the selection of phrasal verbs which are supposed to be taught by grouping them together according to the base verb (Side 1990: 144). Such tasks for mastering the acquisition of phrasal verbs can be found in almost every grammar/vocabulary book or coursebook. For

example, in Sue O'Connell's Focus on First Certificate (1987: 27) there is a list of phrasal verbs based on a common verb, together with their definitions and examples of sentences where the multi-word verbs are used. The students' task is to learn all the given phrasal verbs by heart. However, some linguists, such as Darwin and Gray (1999) and Gardner and Davis (2007), have criticized book presentations of phrasal verbs in which lists of phrasal verbs are usually followed by matching or gap-filling exercises. What White (2012: 420) has underlined is that "plain memorisation is what is expected of learners rather than any kind of semantic analysis".

This is why linguists and ELT specialists have been considering different ways to improve the techniques of introducing and teaching phrasal verbs to students using the semantic criteria. In doing so, they have made use of the research of cognitive grammarians, such as Lindner (1981), Lakoff (1987) and Rudzka-Ostyn (2003) all of whom indicated particles as the units which convey the meaning of a single phrasal verb. Thus, an approach to teaching phrasal verbs through particles has appeared. Particle-oriented teaching of phrasal verbs seems to facilitate and enhance the process of learning these multi-word verbs since their acquisition is conducted in a meaningful way. Another form of introducing and teaching phrasal verbs using meaningful criteria is the organization of phrasal verbs around common themes such as family, health or job. The context in which phrasal verbs are presented and taught has been introduced as being of paramount importance and underlined as the factor that also facilitates the process of mastering multi-word verbs by "demonstrating their syntactic behaviour [by] providing meaningful context, exposure and recycling" (Thornbury 2002: 125). ELT specialists have used this knowledge and have introduced books where phrasal verbs are placed in contextualized ambience. One such author is Acklam (1992) who presented and then enabled students to practise phrasal verbs in a variety of related contexts. A combination of all of the approaches is offered by Flower (1993) and Heaton (1995) who, in their books, provide a number of phrasal verb exercises that are classified

by verb, by particle and by topic. Thus, English learners have been supplied with various tools that may enable them to learn and to practise phrasal verbs.

In order to obtain information about students' attitudes towards phrasal verbs and their knowledge of the multi-word verbs, I designed a survey for the students of Gdańsk's upper secondary schools who are learning English at the upper-intermediate level. In this article, I present an excerpt of the research results and I focus on the first four questions of the survey. The aim of this article is to provide information on the students' ability to give a proper definition of phrasal verbs, the learners' indication of the significance of phrasal verb knowledge and the reasons for the importance or unimportance of phrasal verbs.

2. Participants

Students of upper secondary schools in Gdańsk participated in the survey. The survey was conducted in 6 upper secondary schools in Gdańsk with a total number of 550 students who are learning English at the upper-intermediate level.

The schools and the number of students who filled in the questionnaire are presented in Table 1.

Table 1
Participants and their schools

Schools in Gdańsk	Number of students	Percentage
Upper Secondary School No. II	82	15
Upper Secondary School No. III	81	15
Upper Secondary School No. V	214	39
Upper Secondary School No. VIII	62	11
Upper Secondary School No. IX	85	15
Upper Secondary School No. XV	26	5
Total	550	100

As is shown in Table 1, the smallest group of students comes from Upper Secondary School No. XV (26 students), which is only 5 % of all the surveyed students, and the biggest group of students comes from Upper Secondary School No. V (214 students), a group which constitutes almost 40 % of all the surveyed students. The differentiated numbers of students in each school stems from different levels of English. There are schools where only one class is taught at the upper-intermediate (B2) level (Upper Secondary School No. XV) and there are schools where there are numerous groups with English taught at B2 level (Upper Secondary Schools No. II, III, VIII, IX). In these schools, the numbers of students range from 62 to 85, which constitutes from 11 % to 15 % of all the students who participated in the survey. However, at Upper Secondary School No. III there are more classes where English is taught at this level, but only some of the students participated in the questionnaire. Additionally, Upper Secondary School No. V is the school with the most classes of B2 English.

As regards the gender distribution, 324 (59 %) were girls and 226 (41 %) were boys. All of them were either 1st or 2nd grade students at the time that the questionnaire was conducted.

271 of the students were at the end of the 1st grade and 279 were at the end of the 2nd grade. There was also a question about the amount of time the students had studied English (see Table 2).

From the data presented in Table 2, it can be observed that the scope of the length of learning English among the students of upper secondary schools is very wide, which indicates that they began learning English at different ages. Some started from kindergarten, which results in 13 to 15 years of learning English, and others started in the lower secondary school, which results in 4 or 5 years of learning English. Over 50 % of all the students (288) have been learning English for 10 or 11 years, which shows that they are experienced learners of the language.

Table 2
Length of learning English language

Length of learning English	Number of students	Percentage
4 years	1	0.2
5 years	3	0.6
6 years	6	1
7 years	22	4
8 years	32	6
9 years	48	9
10 years	149	27
11 years	139	25
12 years	95	17
13 years	31	6
14 years	17	3
15 years	7	1.2
Total	550	100

3. Questionnaire

The students were provided with a questionnaire in Polish concerning phrasal verbs. The students were asked to give a definition of phrasal verbs and then to indicate how important the knowledge of phrasal verbs was. Depending on their answers, the students were requested to state the reasons for either the importance or unimportance of phrasal verbs.

The questionnaire which the students filled in is presented in Appendix 1 and its English translation in Appendix 2.

4. Results

4.1. Question 1

At the beginning, the students were asked to provide a definition of phrasal verbs. Out of 550 students, 507 (92 %) presented their definitions of phrasal verbs and 41 (7 %) did not. Their

answers have been grouped into 5 categories. The results are presented in Table 3.

Table 3
Definitions of phrasal verbs given by the respondents

Definitions of phrasal verbs	Number of students	Percentage
Phrases which consist of two words (a verb and a particle/ preposition) and which mean something different from the meanings of the particular words	241	44
Phrases which consist of two words (a verb and a particle/ preposition)	169	31
Phrases which mean something different from the particular words included in them	72	13
No definitione	41	7
Other definitions	27	5
Total	550	100

The results show that nearly half of the students (44 %) gave an adequate definition of phrasal verbs by focusing on the two most significant aspects: first that they usually consist of two words (a verb and a particle) and second that they have a meaning different from the meanings of the separate words. Despite the lack of knowledge of linguistic terminology, these 241 students gave an adequate and relatively precise definition of phrasal verbs, which shows that they understood what phrasal verbs were.

The next two groups provided partial definitions of phrasal verbs focusing on two different aspects of the multi-word verbs. 169 students (31 %) explained that these are phrases usually consisting of two different words (a verb and particle or a preposition), whereas 72 students (13 %) focused on the different meanings. 41 students (7 %) did not give any answer and 27

students (5 %) provided other definitions of phrasal verbs.

Those who did not offer any definition of phrasal verbs, either left a blank space or wrote an explanation that they do not know what the expression means. The results are presented in Table 4.

Table 4

No phrasal verb definition

No definition of phrasal verbs	Number of students	Percentage
blank space	34	83
"I don't know"	5	12
"I don't remember"	1	2.5
"It's hard to explain"	1	2.5
Total	41	100

From the above figures, 34 out of 41 surveyed students (83 %) did not write any definition and left a blank space. This may not stem from the students' lack of concept knowledge, but rather from the lack of linguistic terminology knowledge. The reason could be the students' problems with defining abstract terms. Five students (12 %) directly wrote that they do not know what phrasal verbs are, one student wrote that he or she "did not remember" and another wrote that phrasal verbs "are hard to explain".

Taking the length of time spent learning English into consideration, it might appear astounding that seven students could not provide a simple definition of phrasal verbs. Since most students have been learning the language for over six years, they must have encountered phrasal verbs many times in their education and, it can be assumed, they should be able to explain, using simple words, what they are.

The least numerous group (27 respondents) are those who gave other definitions of phrasal verbs. The information they gave is true but their explanations do not include important features of phrasal verbs. The students' answers are presented in Table 5.

Table 5

Other explanations of phrasal verbs given by the respondents

Other explanations of phrasal verbs	Number of students	Percentage
Expressions used in colloquial language	12	44
Verbs that cannot be translated directly into Polish	4	15
Informal replacement of formal words	2	7.5
Colloquial expressions which facilitate communication	2	7.5
Verbal expressions which describe actions easily and generally more precisely than ordinary verbs	2	7.5
Part of the lexicon	1	3.7
Verbs used daily which enrich the lexicon	1	3.7
Figurative expressions	1	3.7
Words used together that do not have a logical explanation	1	3.7
Expressions that are drudgery to learn	1	3.7
Total	27	100

Most of the answers presented above provide a vague description of what phrasal verbs are. They contain accurate observations, but do not define what these verbs are. The last two explanations are slightly different. The one saying that phrasal verbs are "words used together that do not have a logical explanation" may be recognized as lacking in precision. The last one which states that they are "expressions that are drudgery to learn" may be treated as a playful description which may indicate the student's intention of avoiding a serious definition of phrasal verbs.

4.2. Question 2

The second question concerned the significance of phrasal verbs. The students were asked to decide how important the knowledge of phrasal verbs was. They could choose on a scale from 1 to 5, with 1 meaning that phrasal verbs are unimportant and 5 meaning that they are of great importance. The results are presented in Table 6 and Figure 1.

Table 6

The importance of phrasal verbs according to the students

Knowing phrasal verbs is…	Number of students	Percentage
unimportant	3	0.5
of little importance	12	2
of average importance	91	16.5
quite important	307	56
very important	137	25
Total	550	100

The survey reveals that the majority of the students (97 %) claim that knowing phrasal verbs is of at least average importance. The students are aware of the fact that phrasal verbs are significant in English. The biggest group are those students who think that knowing phrasal verbs is quite important (56 %). Only 15 students out of 550 (nearly 3 %) state that phrasal verbs are of little or no importance. The reasons for such choices appear in the answers to the next questions of the survey which are analysed below.
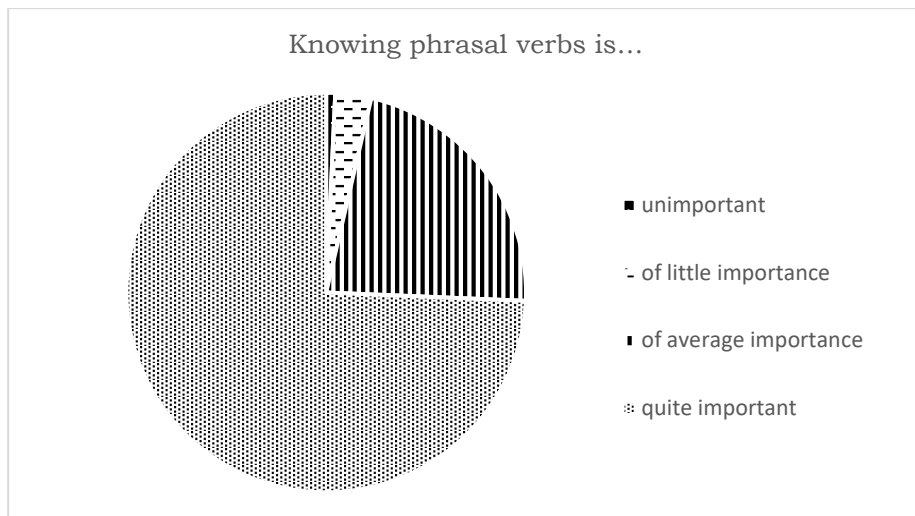
Figure 1

The importance of phrasal verbs according to the students

4.3. Question 3

Question 3 was addressed to those students who, in the previous question (number 2), stated that phrasal verbs are important. The respondents were requested to explain why they perceived phrasal verbs to be a vital part of English by choosing one or more provided answers. Table 7 and Figure 2 show the students' answers to this question.

Analysing the data, it can be seen that 26 % of the students' answers refer to improving general language skills. The students selected the facilitation of natural communication with foreigners almost as frequently as the previous answer (24 %). It emphasized that the students were aware of the significance of phrasal verbs in communication, especially with native speakers, since they used phrasal verbs on a daily basis. Facilitating listening and reading comprehension was virtually equally important (respectively 18 % and 17 % of all the provided answers). The least significant reason chosen by the students was the facilitation of informal electronic communication with foreigners. Taking into account the figures above, it seems that phrasal

verbs are needed when oral communication with foreigners arises, since it requires instant understanding of the interlocutor. In reading and writing, the instant skill of understanding phrasal verbs seems to be less important, which may stem from the fact that students have time to check the meanings of unknown phrasal verbs and no immediate reply is needed.

There were 163 students (30 %) who marked all the answers showing that phrasal verbs are needed in every aspect of language use mentioned.

Table 7

Reasons for the importance of phrasal
verbs according to the students

| The knowledge of phrasal verbs…	Number of answers	Percentage of answers	Percentage of students
improves language skills	446	26	81
facilitates natural communication with foreigners	420	24	76
facilitates understanding of listening	315	18	57
facilitates understanding of texts (books, articles)	285	17	52
facilitates informal electronic communication with foreigners	260	15	47
Total	1726	100	
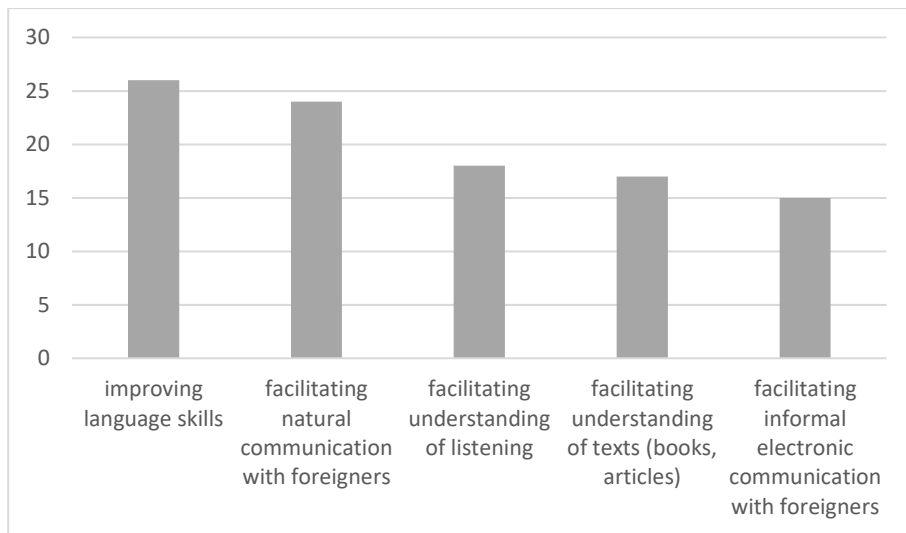
Figure 2
Reasons for the importance of phrasal
verbs according to the students

4.4. Question 4

Question 4 was for those students who indicated in question 2 that phrasal verbs are of little or no importance. The students were asked to choose the statements they agreed with and, if possible, present their own reasons for the unimportance of phrasal verbs. However, in the analysis of the data, it was apparent that the question was also answered by the students who claimed that phrasal verbs are significant. Although only 15 students out of 550 stated that phrasal verbs are of little or no importance (see 4.2), the inquiry about the reasons for the unimportance of phrasal verbs was answered by 62 students (see Table 8). This may stem from two factors. Firstly, it might be the result of the students' inattention while filling in the questionnaire as they might not have noticed that the question should have been answered only by those who had marked that phrasal verbs were not vital to them. Secondly, it might be the result of the ambiguous attitude of the students towards this linguistic unit. Although they understood that phrasal verbs are import-

ant since they are widely used, they also noticed that the multi-word verbs are not indispensably necessary for them to use English freely.

Table 8

The number of students explaining why
knowing phrasal verbs is unimportant

Knowing phrasal verbs is…	Number of students	Number of students explaining the unimportance of phrasal verbs
unimportant	3	3
of little importance	12	12
of average importance	91	35
quite important	307	10
very important	137	2
Total	550	62

All of the students who marked phrasal verbs as unimportant provided explanations for their choice. However, as previously mentioned, those who perceived phrasal verbs as quite important also indicated their explanations for their unimportance. It may be surprising that almost 40 % (35 out of 91) of the students who claimed that phrasal verbs are of average importance also indicated statements showing why these multi-word verbs are not that crucial. Additionally, there are two students out of the 137 who marked phrasal verbs as very important and then answered the question concerning the unimportance of phrasal verbs.

Table 9 and Figure 3 show the students' reasons for the unimportance of learning phrasal verbs.

Table 9

Reasons indicating unimportance of learning
phrasal verbs according to the students

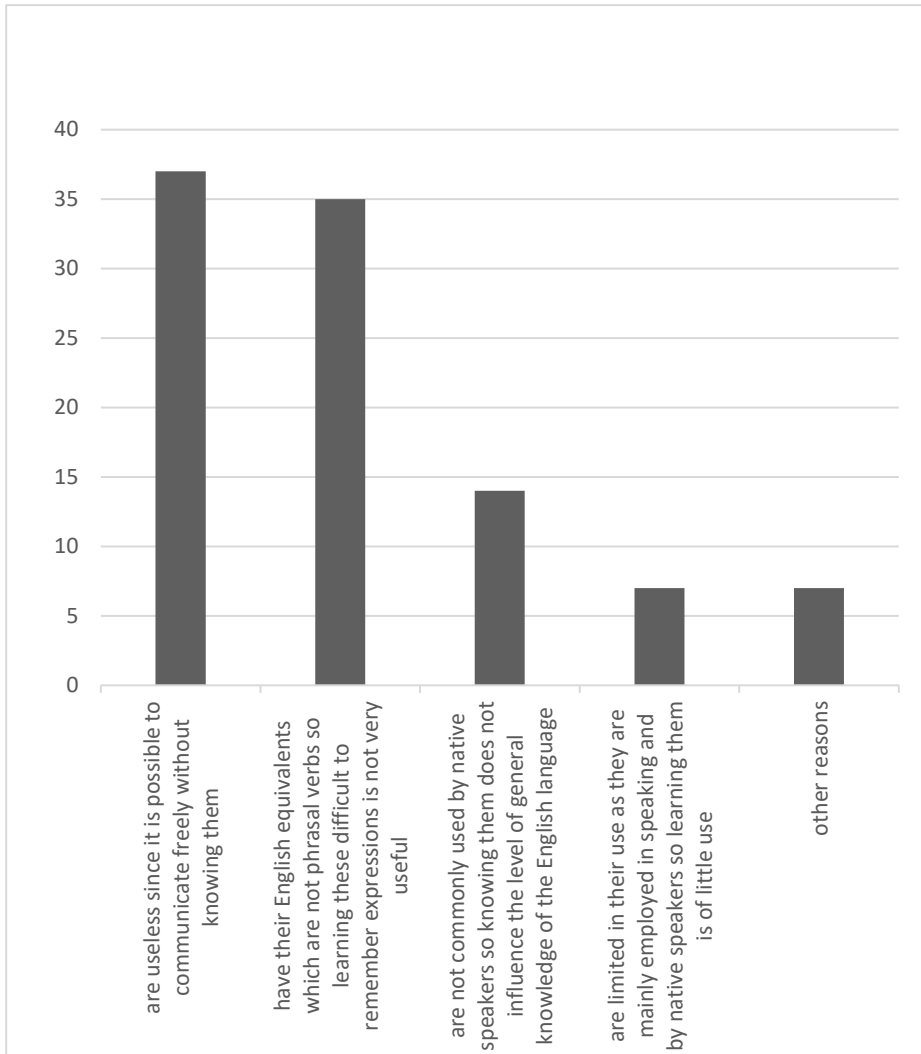| The knowledge of phrasal verbs is unimportant because phrasal verbs…	Number of answers	Percentage of answers	Percentage of students
are useless since it is possible to communicate freely without knowing them	36	37	6.5
have their English equivalents which are not phrasal verbs so learning these difficult to remember expressions is not very useful	34	35	6.2
are not commonly used by native speakers so knowing them does not influence the level of general knowledge of the English language	13	14	2.4
are limited in their use as they are mainly employed in speaking and by native speakers so learning them is of little use	7	7	1.3
other reasons	7	7	1.3
Total	97	100	100

Figure 3
Reasons for the unimportance of learning
phrasal verbs according to the students

The 62 surveyed students who answered question 4 ("If you think that the knowledge of phrasal verbs is unimportant, choose one of the statements below or give your own expla-nation") provided 97 answers. The survey shows that among all

the answers provided by the students who indicated learning phrasal verbs as negligible or of average importance, 72 % of the students' answers referred to the possibility of communicating in English without any restrictions when phrasal verbs are unknown and to the existence of many equivalents in English so that phrasal verbs are not necessary. 14 % of the students' replies concerned phrasal verbs not being widely used by native speakers so knowledge of them is futile, and 7 % of the responses were connected with the limited use of phrasal verbs, which made learning them useless. There were also students who provided their own reasons for not needing to learn phrasal verbs. Their answers are presented in Table 10.

Table 10

Reasons indicating unimportance of learning
phrasal verbs according to the students

Students' own explanations of little importance of learning phrasal verbs	Number of students
There are too many phrasal verbs and it is difficult to remember them.	3
Phrasal verbs are extremely hard to learn, remember and use.	2
People will finally discover their meanings on their own and will start using them.	1
There is too much learning for the final result.	1
They are mainly used by native speakers, they help in communication but they are not indispensable.	1
I do not focus on what kind of verb it is, I just use it.	1
Total	9

The given responses show that the students found numerous phrasal verbs difficult to learn and remember. They seemed to feel discouraged from making an effort to memorise phrasal verbs since they have other English equivalents which can be used instead.

Although the students understood that phrasal verbs are important since they are widely used, the students also noticed that the multi-word verbs are not indispensable in order to use English freely.

5. Conclusions

The students of upper secondary schools in Gdańsk provided sufficient material to analyse the approach to these difficult multi-word verbs.

It can be observed that out of all the surveyed students, the majority were able to provide a correct and generally coherent definition of phrasal verbs focused on their main characteristic features. This shows that the students know what this language unit looks like and would be able to distinguish it from other types of English expressions. As far as analysing the significance of phrasal verbs, 97 % of the students responded that phrasal verbs are an important part of their command of English for a variety of reasons, which included improving their personal language skills and facilitating communication with foreigners. Although the students were aware that phrasal verbs usually have one-word English equivalents and that they could communicate with other people without knowing phrasal verbs, the English learners saw that mastering phrasal verbs is essential in order to reach a higher level of language competence. Being aware that phrasal verbs "are notoriously difficult for non-native learners to acquire" (Gardner and Davis 2007: 340) it is of crucial importance for teachers and ELT specialists to facilitate the students' process of acquiring them. Multi-word verbs should be presented in a clear, well-organized and memorable way with the help of meaningful tasks so that students will become regular users of these demanding lexical units.

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Appendix 1
Phrasal verb survey in Polish for
students learning English at level B2

Ankieta dla uczniów uczących się języka angielskiego
na poziomie B2 (upper-intermediate) dotycząca
czasowników frazowych (phrasal verbs)

Płeć: K / M
W której klasie jesteś? ....
Z jakiego podręcznika się uczysz? (podaj tytuł)..................................
....
Ile lat uczysz się języka angielskiego? ....

1. Co to są czasowniki frazowe (phrasal verbs)?
....
....
....

2. W jakim stopniu, w skali od 1 do 5, uznałbyś/uznałabyś znajomość
   czasowników frazowych za ważną dla znajomości języka angiel-
   skiego:
   1 – nieważna,
   2 – mało ważna,
   3 – średnio ważna,
   4 – dość ważna,
   5 – bardzo ważna.

3. Jeżeli uważasz, że znajomość czasowników frazowych jest ważna,
   wybierz stwierdzenia, z którym się zgadzasz. Znajomość czasowni-
   ków frazowych:
   a) ułatwia naturalną komunikację z obcokrajowcem,
   b) ułatwia rozumienie tekstu czytanego (czytanie książek, artyku-
      łów z gazet),
   c) ułatwia rozumienie tekstu słuchanego (multimedia, słuchanie
      muzyki, wiadomości),
   d) ułatwia nieformalną komunikację elektroniczną,
   e) zwiększa sprawność językową.

4. Jeżeli uważasz, że znajomość czasowników frazowych jest nie-
   ważna, wybierz stwierdzenia, z którymi się zgadzasz. Czasowniki

frazowe:
a) mają w języku angielskim swoje odpowiedniki niebędące czasow-
   nikami frazowymi, więc uczenie się ich jest mało przydatne,
b) są niepotrzebne, gdyż również bez ich znajomości można swo-
   bodnie posługiwać się językiem angielskim,
c) to czasowniki rzadko stosowane przez rodzimych użytkowników
   języka angielskiego (np. Brytyjczyków, Amerykanów), więc ich
   znajomość nie wpływa na poziom ogólnej wiedzy języka angiel-
   skiego,
d) czasowniki frazowe mają ograniczone zastosowanie (są używane
   głównie w mowie), więc uczenie się ich jest mało przydatne,
e) inne (proszę podać swoją propozycję)
....
....

Appendix 2
Phrasal verb survey in English for
students learning English at level B2

Gender: F/M
What grade are you ? ....
What coursebook do you use? (give the title, please) ....
....
How long have you been learning English? ....

1. What are phrasal verbs?
....
....
....

2. To what extent, in range from 1 to 5, do you consider knowing
   phrasal verbs as important?
   1 – unimportant,
   2 – of little importance,
   3 – of average importance,
   4 – quite important,
   5 – very important.

3. If you think that knowledge of phrasal verbs is important, choose
   a statement or statements which you agree with. The knowledge of
   phrasal verbs:

(a) facilitates natural communication with foreigners,
(b) facilitates understanding of texts (reading books, newspapers),
(c) facilitates understanding listening (multimedia, listening to music or news),
(d) facilitates informal electronic communication,
(e) improves language skills.

4. If you think that the knowledge of phrasal verbs is unimportant, choose a statement or statements which you agree with. Phrasal verbs:
(a) have their English equivalents which are not phrasal verbs so learning this difficult to remember expressions is not very useful,
(b) are useless since it is possible to communicate freely in English without knowing them,
(c) are not commonly used by native speakers so knowing them does not influence the level of general knowledge of the English language,
(d) are limited in their use as they are mainly employed in speaking and by native speakers so learning them is of little use,
(e) other reasons (give your own suggestions)

....
....

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ACADEMIC TEACHING

Self-mention in argumentative essays written by pre-service teachers of English

OLEKSANDR KAPRANOV

Abstract

This article presents and discusses a study that aims at establishing how self-mentions are used by pre-service teachers of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in their argumentative essay writing. The study examined a corpus of argumentative essays written on a range of topics in EFL didactics by a group of pre-service EFL teachers (hereafter – participants). The corpus involved two rounds of argumentative essays written by the participants and their respective controls (non-teacher EFL students). The frequency of self-mentions in the corpus was analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (IBM 2011) in terms of raw values, and the computer program WordSmith (Scott 2008) as normalised data per 1000 words. The results of the quantitative analysis revealed that the frequency of the self-mention we decreased, whereas the frequency of the self-mention I increased in the second round of essays. These findings and their linguo-didactic implications are further discussed in the article.

Keywords

Używanie pierwszej osoby w rozprawkach argumentacyjnych pisanych przez studentów kształcących się na nauczycieli języka angielskiego

Abstrakt

Artykuł ten przedstawia badania, które mają na celu pokazać, jak studenci – przyszli nauczyciele języka angielskiego jako języka obcego (dalej nazywani uczestnikami) – używają pierwszej osoby w rozprawkach argumentacyjnych. Badaniom poddano zbiór rozprawek argumentacyjnych poruszających różne tematy. Zbiór ten obejmował dwie serie rozprawek argumentacyjnych napisanych przez uczestników oraz przez studentów niekształcących się na nauczycieli języka angielskiego. Częstotliwość pisania w pierwszej osobie została przeanalizowana za pomocą programu do statystycznej analizy danych (Statistical Package for Social Sciences IBM 2011) w zakresie wartości surowych oraz za pomocą programu WordSmith (Scott 2008) w zakresie danych znormalizowanych. Wyniki analizy ilościowej ukazały, że częstotliwość użycia *we* 'my' zmalała, podczas gdy częstotliwość użycia *I* 'ja' wzrosła w drugiej serii pisania rozprawek. Te ustalenia oraz ich językowo-dydaktyczne implikacje zostały omówione w artykule.

Słowa kluczowe

rozprawka argumentacyjna, angielski jako język obcy, pisanie w pierwszej osobie

1. Introduction

This article presents and discusses a study that aims at establishing how self-mention is used by pre-service teachers of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in their argumentative essay writing. According to Hyland (1990: 68), an "argumentative essay is defined by its purpose which is to persuade the reader of the correctness of a central statement". Typically, argumentative essays involve such genre characteristics as the main argument, the counter-argument, and conclusions (Hyland 1990: 68, Yoon 2020). The focus of the present study is on how self-

mention is employed in argumentative essay writing by pre-service EFL teachers. This study is informed by the definition of self-mention proposed by Hyland (2001), who regards it as such lexical means as "the first person pronouns *I, me, my, we, us,* and *our*" (Hyland 2001: 211) that constitute one of the pivotal metadiscursive features of academic writing in English which contributes to the writer's authorial presence in an academic text (Hyland 2002: 1110). Following Hyland (2020: 35), the authorial presence in academic writing involves "the extent writers choose to intrude into a text using first person pronouns". Seen as a manifestation of authorial presence, self-mention is theorised to be one of the discursive devices that are involved in the author's stance, i.e. the author's point/points of view in relation to the academic text and its readership (Hyland 2005a, 2005b).

From a theoretical perspective, the present investigation feeds into a well-researched domain of discourse studies that regard self-mention in conjunction with the authorial stance (Davies and Harré 1990) and identity (Ivanič 1998), as well as the discursive expression of self (Mühlhäusler and Harré 1990). In harmony with a seminal publication by Ivanič (1998), the literature points to several representations of authorial identities that are manifested via the self-mention *I,* for instance, *I* as a representative, a guide, an architect, a recounter of research processes, an opinion-holder, and an originator (Mc-Grath 2016, Tang and John 1999, Wang and Nelson 2012). Seen through the framework of discourse studies, the construal of self-mention is deemed to involve social and cultural aspects of discursive practices (Fairclough 1992, Fløttum 2012). As far as social aspects of discursive practices are concerned, Fløttum (2012) indicates that discursive practices of employing self-mentions are influenced by the genre-related social conventions of a given discourse community. For instance, self-mention tends to be implicit in the academic discourse of the so-called "hard" sciences, whereas it appears to be explicit in the current academic discourse in humanities (Fløttum 2012). Another variable that is involved in the use of self-mention in academic discourse is manifested by cultural aspects of discursive practices (Fair-

clough 1992). The underlying idea of this assumption is associ-
ated with the notion of academic discourse as a culturally situ-
ated activity (Castelló and Iñesta 2012: 179). The influence of
culture on the discursive use of self-mention can be illustrated
by the Anglo-Saxon academic culture that is characterised by
the explicit use of self-mention in the first person singular (Wang
and Nelson 2012). In contrast, however, Slavic academic writers
"rarely use the first-person singular for self-mention and typi-
cally use authorial plural (e.g., we) even in the cases of single
authorship as a sign of authorial modesty" (Grigoriev and Soko-
lova 2019: 424).

Whereas the present investigation is related to a broader the-
oretical framework of discourse studies (Davies and Harré 1990,
Fairclough 1992, Fløttum 2012, Ivanič 1998), its focus involves
an applied linguistic perspective (see Hyland 2020). Informed by
the applied linguistic approach towards self-mention (Hyland
2001), this study aims at discovering new knowledge about how
self-mentions are employed by a group of pre-service EFL teach-
ers (hereafter participants) in two rounds of argumentative es-
says written in academic English. The need for establishing how
the participants use self-mention in their argumentative essays
is explained by a fairly recent interest in EFL students' genre
awareness, academic voice, stance and self-mention, respec-
tively (Helms-Park and Stapleton 2003, Hyland and Shaw 2016,
Monsen and Rørvik 2017, Negretti and Kuteeva 2011, Szczy-
głowska 2020, Walková 2019, Yoon 2017, Zhao 2013). Given
that academic writing is a critical skill for pre-service EFL teach-
ers to master (Zhang and Zhan 2020), it seems logical to assume
that the use of self-mentions in academic writing by pre-service
EFL teachers merits further research. Currently, however, little
is known about the discursive means of self-mention in aca-
demic writing produced by pre-service EFL teachers (Nijakow-
ska 2013, Torres and Alieto 2019). Moreover, there is insuffi-
cient state-of-the-art research that focuses on self-mention in
argumentative essays written by pre-service EFL teachers (Ab-
delrahim and Abdelrahim 2020, Alward 2019). Assuming that
research on self-mention in argumentative essays by pre-service

EFL teachers is underrepresented in the literature, the present study seeks to explore the following two research questions:

RQ1: What is the frequency of self-mentions in a series of argumentative essays written by a group of pre-service EFL teachers?

RQ2: Would there be quantitative differences in the frequency of self-mentions in a series of argumentative essays written by a group of pre-service EFL teachers and their controls (non-teacher EFL students)?

Prior to answering the aforementioned research questions, I will outline the construal of self-mention in academic discourse in section 2. Then, the review of the literature associated with self-mention in academic writing in EFL settings will be given in section 3. Next, the present study will be introduced and discussed in section 4 of the article. Finally, the article will be concluded with the summary of the major findings of the study and their linguo-didactic implications.

2. Self-mention in academic discourse

The construal of self-mention in academic discourse has been thoroughly researched in numerous studies associated with academic writing, academic discourse, and EFL teaching and learning (Abdelrahim and Abdelrahim 2020, Alward 2019, Çandarlı, Bayyurt and Martı 2015, Fløttum 2005, Hyland 2001, Helms-Park and Stapleton 2003, Ivanič 1998, Monsen and Rørvik 2017, Szczygłowska 2020, Walková 2019, Yoon 2017, Zareva 2013). Self-mention in academic writing is defined as "the use of first person pronouns and possessive adjectives to present propositional, affective and interpersonal information" (Hyland 2005b: 181). The current attention to the construal of self-mention in the literature could be accounted for by the contrast it forms to a traditional view of academic discourse as "'objective' and deprived of traces left by the author or by other

voices" (Fløttum 2005: 35). The traditional view implies that self-mention in academic writing is often avoided. Hyland (2003) expands upon this argument by contending that

> The avoidance of self-mention is also supported by those who stress the persuasive authority of impersonality, a means of maximizing the writer's credibility by emphasising objectivity and the collective responsibility of academic endeavour (e.g., Lachowicz, 1981: 111). "Objectivity" in the expression of ideas can thus mean removing oneself from one's arguments and allowing the research to speak directly to the reader in an unmediated way. For this reason, many style manuals and textbooks recommend avoiding personal pronouns in favor of a more anonymous persona. (Hyland 2003: 252)

However, it could be argued that any piece of academic discourse bears the mark of its author, whose presence is manifested by means of self-mention expressions associated with the author's identity (Szczygłowska 2020: 73). In this regard, Zareva (2013) notes that the author's identity is explicitly revealed by the use of first person pronouns and the determiner *my*, which are conceptualised as "probably the most prominent way of making identity roles visible in discourse" (Zareva 2013: 73). This observation is echoed by Fløttum (2005: 30), who argues that "first person pronouns, metadiscourse and hedging are examples of *explicit* manifestation of the self" which allows for the identification of the authorial presence. According to Hyland (2003), the use of personal pronouns as a discursive means of explicit self-mention is not fortuitous. It could be regarded as a conscious strategy, which

> [...] not only allows writers to clarify the goal and direction of their papers, but also to align themselves with their main position, giving a strong indication of where they stand in relation to the issue under discussion. Once again, this explicitly foregrounds the writer's distinctive contribution and commitment to his or her position. This explicitly persuasive use of self-mention is most obvious where it is used to summarise a viewpoint or make a knowledge claim. (Hyland 2003: 258)

It follows that self-mention as a form of manifesting authorial identity plays a crucial role in mediating the relationship between the writer and the audience in academic discourse (Hyland 2003). This assumption is supported by Thompson, Morton and Storch (2016: 139), who argue that the need to establish an authorial identity is critical in academic discourse. In accordance with Hyland (2003), the use of self-mention in academic discourse demonstrates the authors' familiarity with the rhetorical conventions in their disciplines. Additionally, self-mention in academic discourse facilitates the acknowledgement of the reader's presence (Hyland 2005a), thus contributing to the positive reception of the academic writing. Following Hyland's approach (2008), it appears possible to regard self-mention as a means of creating a shared discursive space between the author and the reader, since it "sets up a dialogue between equals in which the potential point of view of the reader is woven into the fabric of the argument" (Hyland 2005a: 98).

The present study is embedded in Hyland's (2001, 2002, 2003, 2005a, 2005b, 2008) view of self-mentions as a part of the authorial presence that "concerns the extent to which the writer chooses to project himself or herself into the text" (Hyland 2008: 7). In an academic text, self-mentions are involved in the projection of authorial presence upon the following elements: i) statements of purpose, ii) results and claims, and iii) presentation and discussion of the argument (Hyland 2002). It should be mentioned that the authorial presence is comprised of self-mentions, hedges, boosters, and attitude markers, whose use represents a conscious choice on the part of an academic writer to adopt a particular stance and genre-appropriate identity (Hyland 2005b: 181). In line with Hyland (2005b), it is argued in the current literature that self-mentions pertain to interactional metadiscourse that function to secure the reader's attention and focus in the text (Ho and Li 2018, Szczygłowska 2020, Walková 2019). From this perspective, self-mention reflects "the degree of author presence in terms of the incidence of first person pronouns and possessives" (Hyland and Tse 2004: 170). To reiterate, self-mentions involve the academic writer's use of first

person pronouns and possessive adjectives to present proposi-
tional, affective and interpersonal information in order to impart
"how they stand in relation to their arguments, their discipline,
and their readers" (Hyland 2005b: 181).

3. Self-mention in academic writing in
EFL settings: Literature review

As outlined in section 2 of the article, self-mention is a construal
that is amply elucidated in the literature associated with aca-
demic writing in English (Fløttum 2012, Hyland 2001, Ivanič
1998, McGrath 2016, Szczygłowska 2020, Walková 2019) and
applied linguistics (Abdelrahim and Abdelrahim 2020, Alward
2019, Çandarlı, Bayyurt and Martı 2015, Helms-Park and Sta-
pleton 2003, Ho and Li 2018, Monsen and Rørvik 2017,
Veličković and Jeremić 2020, Yoon 2017, Zareva 2013, Zhao
2013). The meta-analysis of the literature seems to suggest two
contrastive approaches to self-mention in academic writing in
EFL settings. The first approach is indicative of self-mention as
a genre-dependent element of authorial identity that should be
taught to an EFL student writer (Abdelrahim and Abdelrahim
2020, Alward 2019, Çandarlı, Bayyurt and Martı 2015, Ho and
Li 2018, Monsen and Rørvik 2017, Veličković and Jeremić 2020,
Zareva 2013). Another approach is suggestive of the epiphenom-
enal role of self-mention as a discursive feature, since it does
not seem to correlate with the quality of academic writing in EFL
settings and, subsequently, does not need to be taught (Helms-
Park and Stapleton 2003, Yoon 2017, Zhao 2013).

It is inferred from the studies conducted by Abdelrahim and
Abdelrahim (2020), Ho and Li (2018), Monsen and Rørvik (2017),
Veličković and Jeremić (2020), and Zareva (2013) that self-men-
tions are involved in the authorial identity of an EFL student
writer in terms of the genre convention of academic writing. Spe-
cifically, Zareva (2013) analyses the self-mentions *I, me, my* in
the corpus of written and oral presentations in order to discover
how the use of these self-mentions is influenced by the genre
conventions of academic English. Zareva (2013) has established

that self-mentions are used by EFL student writers to be able to project their authorial identity upon the genre of academic writing. Zareva (2013) indicates that self-mentions seem to be associated with the following roles of authorial identities, e.g. i) genre roles typical of academic writing, ii) socially-motivated roles, and iii) speech event roles. Additionally, it is inferred from Zareva (2013) that instructional attention to the teaching of self-mention in EFL settings would be desirable.

Similarly to Zareva (2013), Abdelrahim and Abdelrahim (2020) argue that self-mention and other discursive features should be taught explicitly. This argument is supported by the study carried out by Ho and Li (2018), who indicate that self-mentions constitute a frequent metadiscursive feature in academic writing by EFL student writers. Subsequently, Ho and Li (2018: 65) posit that "direct and explicit teaching and learning of metadiscourse should be introduced and encouraged at secondary education and at the early stage of tertiary education". Concurrently with this assumption, Ho and Li (2018) suggest that self-mentions seem to pertain to the authorial identity of an EFL student writer.

The study conducted by Veličković and Jeremić (2020) seems to support Abdelrahim and Abdelrahim (2020), and Ho and Li (2018) by claiming that genre-appropriate use of self-mentions should be addressed in teaching academic writing to EFL student writers. However, in contrast to Ho and Li (2018), Veličković and Jeremić (2020) have found that the participants in their study used explicit self-mentions in moderation. Instead, the participants in the study maintained the overall objective tone of academic essays by means of minimising self-mentions and making frequent use of indefinite and impersonal constructions in combination with the passive voice (Veličković and Jeremić 2020). Analogously to Veličković and Jeremić (2020), Çandarlı, Bayyurt and Martı (2015) demonstrated that *I* as a self-mention is nearly absent in the corpus of argumentative essays written by Turkish L1 EFL student writers. In particular, Çandarlı, Bayyurt and Martı (2015) reported that there were no instances of *I* in the majority of argumentative essays written by

the participants in that study. These findings are interpreted by Çandarlı, Bayyurt and Martı (2015) as the Turkish L1 EFL student writers' avoidance of *I* in their academic writing in English. Whereas Çandarlı, Bayyurt and Martı (2015), and Veličković and Jeremić (2020), respectively, point to the moderate use of self-mentions by the EFL student writers, Alward (2019) reports an excessive use of self-mentions expressed by the first person pronouns in argumentative writing by Arabic L1 EFL student writers. However, the overuse is argued to correlate with the proficiency levels, e.g. EFL student writers at a high proficiency level tend to use first person pronouns less than the students at the beginner and intermediate proficiency levels. The findings reported by Alward (2019) are commensurate with the results of the quantitative analysis in the study conducted by Monsen and Rørvik (2017). Notably, Monsen and Rørvik (2017) indicate that the participants in their study extensively employ *I* and *we* in academic writing in English.

In contrast to the aforementioned studies, Zhao (2013), Yoon (2017), Helms-Park and Stapleton (2003) suggest that self-mention as an aspect of the authorial voice is epiphenomenal in academic writing by EFL students. In particular, Helms-Park and Stapleton (2003) argue that the author's presence, which is manifested by self-mentions and other discursive means, does not correlate with the quality of the EFL student writing. Helms-Park and Stapleton (2003) suggest that self-mentions are of little consequences to the quality of EFL writing, since

> there may not be a connection between the linguistic and rhetorical devices commonly associated with individualized voice (e.g., first person singular or intensifiers) and the quality of writing, at least within some genres and at some levels of writing proficiency. (Helms-Park and Stapleton 2003: 245)

Helms-Park and Stapleton's (2003) observation is echoed by Zhao (2013), who measures the authorial voice in argumentative writing by Chinese L1 EFL student writers. Whilst the authorial self-mention in the corpus of argumentative essays is

interpreted by Zhao (2013) as the writer's voice and presence, she concurs with Helms-Park and Stapleton (2003) that these construals tend to be impressionistic and challenging to quantify. Notably, Yoon (2017) arrives at similar conclusions by means of studying self-mentions and authorial voice in the corpus of argumentative essays written by Greek L1 EFL student writers. In the study by Yoon (2017), the quantity and diversity of the authorial voice are examined by means of the Authorial Voice Analyzer (AVA), a computer program that is based on the categories from Hyland's (2002) authorial voice model. Yoon (2017) suggests that whilst self-mentions contribute to the authorial voice strength, there is a weak correlation between the authorial voice and essay quality.

As evident from the literature review, there is a burgeoning line of research in applied linguistics and EFL studies that examines the use of self-mention in argumentative essays written by EFL student writers (Alward 2019, Çandarlı, Bayyurt and Martı 2015, Ho and Li 2018, Helms-Park and Stapleton 2003, Zhao 2013). Whereas the focus on self-mention in argumentative essay writing appears to be an extensively researched agenda (Helms-Park and Stapleton 2003), there is little research that aims at establishing how self-mentions are used in argumentative essays written by pre-service EFL teachers. Moreover, there are no state-of-the-art studies that aim at contrasting the use of self-mentions in argumentative essays written by pre-service EFL teachers and non-teacher EFL students at the same level of EFL proficiency. In the following section of the article, I will present and discuss the study which seeks to address this under-researched issue.

4. The present study

The present study was a part of a larger research project that sought to explore the use of micro-discursive means, such as discourse markers, in argumentative essay writing produced by pre-service teachers of English (see Kapranov 2019). The study was contextualised within a university course in EFL didactics that was offered at a regional university in Norway. The course design involved an overview of EFL didactics for pre-service EFL teachers. The course, however, was open to non-teacher students enrolled in a yearlong course in English. The course in EFL didactics was based on the book *English Teaching Strategies* written by Drew and Sørheim (2016).

The course in EFL didactics involved two rounds of argumentative essay writing, the first round of essays (further in the article – E1) and the second round of essays (henceforth – E2). Each argumentative essay was expected to be approximately 1200 words in length. During the course, the students were explicitly taught the principles of argumentative essay writing that addressed genre characteristics, structure, academic vocabulary associated with academic writing in English, and the use of micro-discursive elements in the essay writing, such as discourse markers, boosters and hedges, and self-mentions. Whereas written feedback was provided by the course teacher after the first round of essays (E1), the second round of essays (E2) was meant to be written by the students without any direct involvement of the course teacher. It was assumed that the students would transfer their essay writing skills that they acquired during their E1 writing to their E2 writing.

Given that the course involved the teacher's feedback on E1 and the expectations that the feedback would be transferred to E2, it would be relevant to explore whether or not there would be changes in the use of self-mentions contrasted between these two rounds of essays. The study further presented in the article addressed this scientific query. In addition, the present study involved two specific research questions, which were mentioned in the introduction: (i) the frequency of self-mention employed

by the participants in their argumentative essays and (ii) possible quantitative differences in the frequency of self-mentions in argumentative essays written by the participants (pre-service EFL teachers) and the control group that was composed of non-teacher EFL students.

4.1. Participants

In total, ten participants and ten controls took part in the study that was conducted at a regional university in Norway. The group of participants was composed of eight females and two males, mean age = 24 y.o., standard deviation (SD) = 9. All of the participants, as well as the control group, attended the course in EFL didactics at the same university. The controls were matched with the participants in terms of their gender and age demographics, so that the control group consisted of eight females and two males, mean age 26 y.o. (SD = 6.7). Based upon the participants' and controls' secondary school leaving certificates, their English proficiency was estimated to be B1/B2 level according to the "Common European Framework of Reference for Languages" (Council of Europe 2011). There were no English L1 speakers among the participants and their respective controls. The participants and controls signed a consent form allowing the author of the article to use their argumentative essays for scientific purposes. To ensure confidentiality, the real names of the participants were coded as P1, P2, …, and P10 (i.e., the Participant and the number). The identical procedure was applied to the controls, whose real names were coded as C1, C2, …, and C10, respectively.

4.2. Procedure and method

The following procedure was used in the study. First, the participants and their controls were provided with the essay template and detailed instructions on how to write an argumentative essay. The template involved a series of moves that were expected in a typical argumentative essay, e.g. the main argu-

ment, the counter-argument, and conclusions (Hyland 1990). After the participants and their controls attended several seminars on argumentative essay writing, they were asked to write the first round of essays, E1, on a topic in EFL didactics within the time frame of one month. The participants and the control group received detailed written feedback from the course teacher as far as the content and the form of the essay were concerned. Thereafter, the participants and their respective controls were instructed to write the second round of essays, E2. Analogously to E1, E2 had to be on a topic in EFL didactics and had to be written in academic English. As with E1, the E2s were expected to be completed within one month.

Methodologically, the present study was based upon the definition of self-mention formulated by Hyland (2001), who posited that self-mentions were represented by "the first person pronouns *I, me, my, we, us,* and *our*" (Hyland 2001: 211) that were employed by an academic writer to persuade the readers and to create a sense of the authorial presence (Hyland 2005a, 2008). Informed by Hyland's (2001) definition of self-mention, the following forms of self-mention were considered in the study: *I, me, my, mine, we, our, ours,* and *us.*

The methodology of data analysis involved the following steps. First, the instances of self-mention were manually identified by the author of the article in the participants' and controls' essays (E1 and E2, respectively). Those instances were converted into numerical representations and computed in the Statistical Package for Social Sciences, or SPSS (IBM 2011) as raw data, i.e. no cut-off was used and no normalisation was applied to the data. The means and standard deviations of self-mentions were computed in SPSS (IBM 2011) per group. Third, E1 and E2, respectively, were processed in the computer program WordSmith (Scott 2008) in order to establish the frequency of self-mentions per 1000 words per group.

4.3. Corpus

The corpus of the present study was comprised of E1 and E2 (with a total number of words in all essays = 48,652) written by the participants and their controls, respectively. The descriptive statistics involving means (M) and standard deviations (SD) were computed in SPSS and summarised in Table 1.

Table 1

The descriptive statistics of the corpus

N	Descriptive Statistics	Participants	Controls
1	Total number of words in E1	13,324	10,263
2	M words in E1	1,322	1,291
3	SD in E1	116	120
4	Total number of words in E2	12,219	12,846
5	M words in E2	1,222	1,386
6	SD in E2	247	381

4.4. Results

In total, 169 self-mentions were identified in the first round of essays (N = 66 in E1 written by the participants and N = 103 in E1 written by the controls, respectively) and 144 instances of self-mention in the second round of essays (N = 68 in E2 written by the participants and N = 76 in E2 written by the controls). The results of the analysis of the raw data (i.e., non-normalised data) in SPSS (IBM 2011) are presented in Table 2. The results include means (M) and standard deviations (SD) per group in the two rounds of argumentative essays.

The normalised frequency of self-mentions per 1000 words that was computed by means of using the software program WordSmith (Scott 2008) is summarised in Table 3.

Table 2

Means and standard deviations of
self-mentions as non-normalised data

N	Self-Mention	Participants in E1	Controls in E1	Participants in E2	Controls in E2
1	I	M 4.1 (SD 3.2)	M 5.9 (SD 2.1)	M 4.3 (SD 2.8)	M 5.6 (SD 3.4)
2	Me	M 0 (SD 0)	M 0 (SD 0)	M 0 (SD 0)	M 0 (SD 0)
3	My	M 1.5 (SD 0.9)	M 2 (SD 0.7)	M 2 (SD 0.7)	M 1.2 (SD 0.4)
4	Mine	M 0 (SD 0)	M 0 (SD 0)	M 0 (SD 0)	M 0 (SD 0)
5	We	M 5 (SD 2.9)	M 5.7 (SD 4.2)	M 2.8 (SD 1.3)	M 2.6 (SD 1.5)
6	Our	M 1 (SD 0)	M 1 (SD 0)	M 1 (SD 0)	M 0 (SD 0)
7	Ours	M 0 (SD 0)	M 0 (SD 0)	M 0 (SD 0)	M 0 (SD 0)
8	Us	M 0 (SD 0)	M 1.5 (SD 0.5)	M 1 (SD 0)	M 0 (SD 0)

Table 3

The frequency of self-mentions as
normalised data per 1000 words

N	Self-Mention	Participants in E1	Controls in E1	Participants in E2	Controls in E2
1	I	0.4 %	0.5 %	0.4 %	0.6 %
2	Me	0	0	0	0
3	My	0.1 %	0.1 %	0.1 %	0.1 %
4	Mine	0	0	0	0
5	We	0.5 %	0.5 %	0.2 %	0.3 %
6	Our	0.01 %	0.01 %	0.01 %	0
7	Ours	0	0	0	0
8	Us	0	0.01 %	0.01 %	0

4.5. Discussion

As previously mentioned in the introduction, the present study involves two research questions that are associated with (i) the frequency of self-mentions in the participants' argumentative essays (RQ1) and (ii) the quantitative differences in the frequency of self-mentions in argumentative essays written by the participants and their controls (RQ2). These research questions will be addressed in detail in the subsections 4.5.1 and 4.5.2 of this article. In addition, I will discuss the changes in the participants' use of self-mentions contrasted between the two rounds of essays (E1 and E2) in subsection 4.5.1.

4.5.1. The frequency of self-mentions in the participants' argumentative essays

As far as the first research question is concerned, the results of the data analysis indicate that the most frequent self-mention in the participants' E1 is *we* (Mean = 5, standard deviation = 2.9, the normalised frequency per 1000 words = 0.5 %), whereas in E2 the participants make the most frequent use of the self-mention *I* (Mean = 4.3, standard deviation = 2.8, the normalised frequency per 1000 words = 0.4 %). These findings are illustrated by Figure 1.
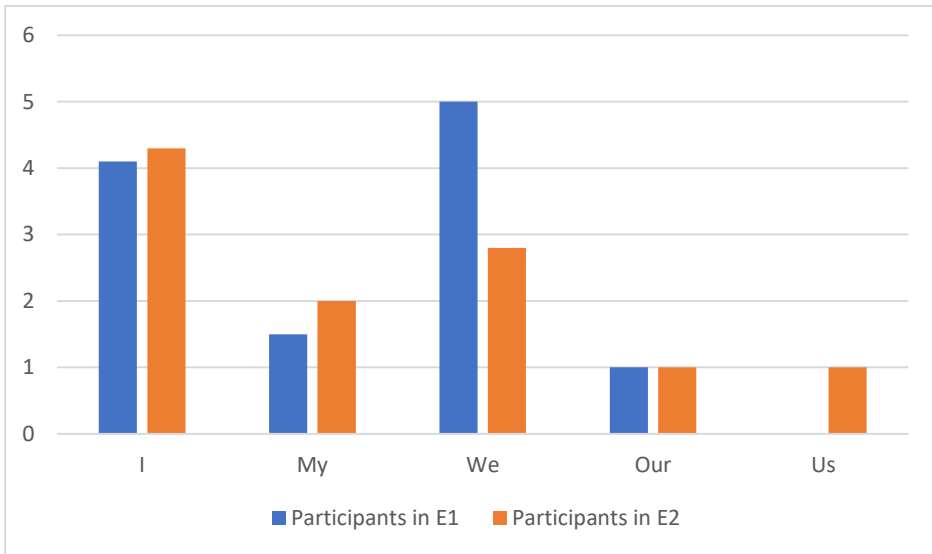
Figure 1
The participants' self-mentions in E1 and E2

The application of the paired sample t-test reveals that the self-mention *I* is similarly distributed between E1 and E2. Specifically, the results of the t-test indicate that the difference of the distribution of *I* was not significant at $p < 0.05$ [$t(1) = -0.63$, $p = .30$]. Analogously to the self-mention *I*, the results of the paired sample t-test indicated that the distribution of the self-mention *we* was similar in E1 and E2. Namely, the results of the t-test were not significant at $p < 0.05$ [$t(1) = -0.64$, $p = .29$]. In addition, the results of the data analysis revealed that the self-mentions *me*, *mine*, and *ours* were not used by the participants in all rounds of argumentative essay writing.

A possible explanation of the frequent use of the self-mention *we* in E1 by the participants (see Figure 1 and Tables 2 – 3) could be offered by the suggestion that they use *we* as an index of the formal register of the English language. The possibility of this explanation is supported by the participants' essays, where they seek to present a credible and formal authorial voice, as illustrated by excerpt (1) below:

(1) *The initial task in this essay was receptive skills versus productive skills in English as a Foreign Language (EFL). However, **we** believe that these two skills cannot be taught without each other. They complement each other by giving different aspects of the language and that the best solution for the students is a fine balance between the two skills.* (Participant P4)

It follows from (1) that the self-mention *we* is embedded in the formal narrative that is associated with the presentation of the main argument in the essay. The self-mention *we* appears to be concomitant with the participant's attempt to render the main argument in the formal register of the English language. In this regard, it should be reiterated that Hyland (2002) refers to the self-mention *we* as a manifestation of the authorial presence that excludes the reader, thus imparting to the writer a sense of authority and credibility. Presumably, the frequent use of *we* by the participants in E1 serves the purpose of authority and/or credibility in the sense posited by Hyland (2002).

Whereas the results of the data analysis indicate that *we* is the most frequently used self-mention in E1, the distribution of this self-mention among the participants' E1 was not uniform, as exemplified by Figure 2.
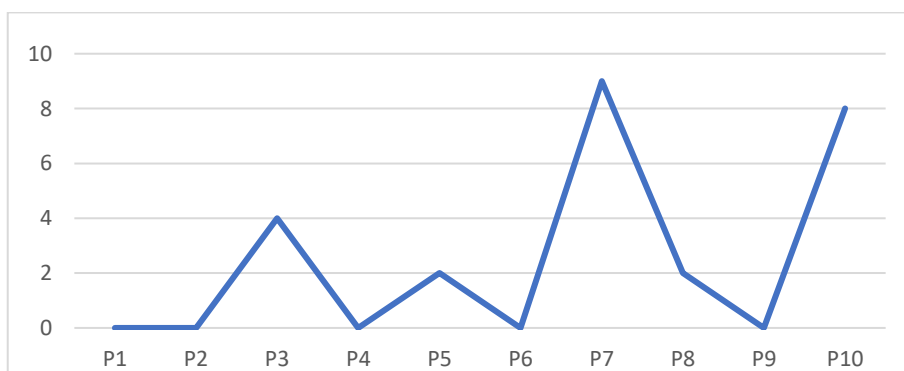
Figure 2
The distribution of the self-mention
we in the participants' E1

As evident from Figure 2, the use of *we was* within the range from N = 0 in the essays written by participants P1, P4, P6 and P9 to N = 9 in the essay written by P7. Similarly, the self-mention *we* was not equally distributed in the participants' E2 essays. These findings are in line with the recent literature (Monsen and Rørvik 2017) that reports an uneven distribution of self-mentions in the corpus of essays produced by EFL student writers. Specifically, Monsen and Rørvik (2017) indicate that Norwegian L1 EFL students vary the use of self-mentions so that

> some are used infrequently by a few writers, while at the other end of the scale we find pronouns used by most of the writers, if not always very frequently. Briefly, the most infrequently used pronouns are 'my', 'your', 'us', 'own', and 'ourselves', whereas the most frequently used are the first-person pronouns 'I' and 'we'. (Monsen and Rørvik 2017: 98)

The findings in the present study seem to support the investigation conducted by Monsen and Rørvik (2017). However, in contrast to Monsen and Rørvik (2017), the novel finding in the present investigation involves the following. Whilst *we* was the most frequent self-mention in the participants' E1, it was less frequent in E2 (see Tables 2 – 3). In E2, the most frequent self-mention appears to be *I* (Mean = 4.3, standard deviation = 2.8, the normalised value per 1000 words = 0.4 %).

A possible explanation for the increased frequency of the self-mention *I* in the participants' E2s could be a tendency to employ a more neutral and, perhaps, more colloquial register of the English language in the second round of essays. This suggestion seems to be supported by multiple instances of the participants' use of the less formal register of English in contrast to E1, as exemplified by excerpt (2):

(2)   *There are many different ideologies behind the why, how and when these skills should be obtained. Another thing **I** cannot ignore is how they should be compared to each other. **I** believe that throughout the previous centuries many changes have taken place and they have influenced many points of view.*

> *I* *don't believe however that the opinions represented in this essay are conclusive and are the sole truths.* **My** *opinion is* **my** *own and it is possible that it will change when new developments and new information will be presented in the future.* **I** *believe the main argument with which this essay started is insufficient and just plain wrong.* (P1)

As observed in (2), the presence of the self-mention *I* appears to be embedded in a seemingly less academically rigorous narrative that is characterised by the participant's reflections, rather than a well-structured and logical argument. Stylistically, (2) could be classified as a neutral and, presumably, colloquial piece of writing due to the contractions, unnecessary and repetitive foregrounding of the authorial voice that appears to be explicitly subjective, e.g. "**my** opinion is **my** own" and "**I** believe", respectively. Notably, the frequency of the self-mention *I* increases concurrently with the more frequent use of *my* in E2, in contrast to E1, as seen in Figure 3.
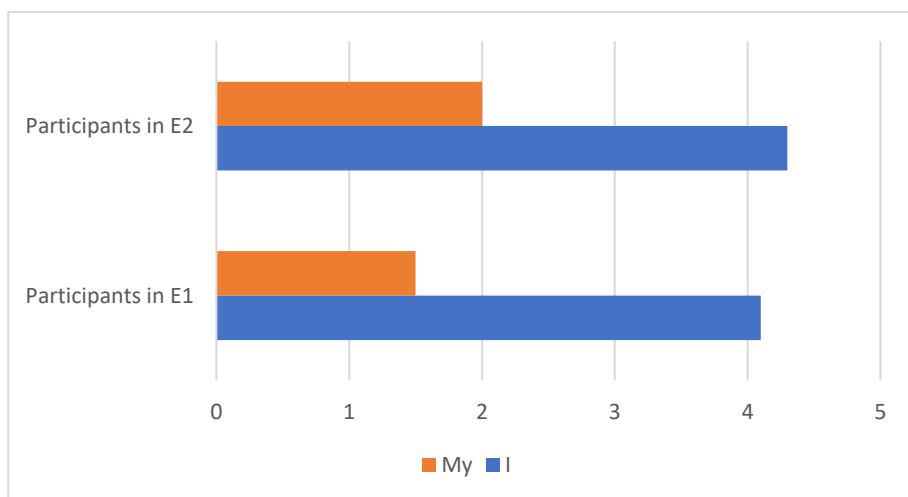
Figure 3

The frequency of the participants' use of
the self-mentions *I* and *my* in E1 and E2

It could be assumed that the increased frequency of the self-mentions *I* and *my* in E2 imparts a more personal and reflective tonality to the participants' essays. This assumption is further illustrated by excerpt (3). In (3), we can observe the co-occurrence of the self-mentions *I* and *my:*

(3)   *With the end of the essay at hand,* **I** *hope* **I** *have managed to persuade some of the readers to agree with* **my** *point of view on the topic. Furthermore,* **I** *respect the opinions of those that disagree with the essay's purpose.* (C4)

The assumption concerning a personal and reflective tonality in the participants' E2 has been supported by the post-hoc qualitative content analysis. The post-hoc analysis indicates that the participants tended to use personal reflections more liberally in E2 in comparison to E1. Arguably, reflective discourse facilitates a more ample use of *I* at the expense of other discursive means of explicit self-mention. If this observation holds true, then it is possible to assume that the change of the most frequent self-mention from *we* to *I* is concomitant with the change of the discursive space represented by an argumentative essay to that of the reflective essay, or, at least, a hybrid discursive space that could be referred to as an argumentative essay with elements of reflection. This observation could be further illustrated by excerpt (4) taken from the participant's E2:

(4)   *When* **I** *taught English at the primary school where* **I** *worked* **I** *could see that a lot of pupils have different kinds of interest, some pupils wanted to write the words and other pupils wanted to speak. When* **I** *mixed the groups with pupils who wanted to write and with pupils who liked to speak English* **I** *gave them subjects where they could first talk about the subject and after that they could write about it.* (P8)

In (4), the participant provides a piece of anecdotal evidence which is related to the teaching practice. The participant uses *I* in order to give an account of events that happened during the teaching practice rather than elaborating upon the argument.

Arguably, the discursive function of the self-mention *I* in (4) is associated with the participant's personal narrative. It seems to be referring to the participant's role as narrator and less to that of an academic writer who is engaged in a logical and well-structured argument, which is expected in a typical argumentative essay (Hyland 1990). Following this line of reasoning, it would be logical to assume that self-mentions, such as *I*, are indirectly involved in the authorial roles and discursive spaces which these roles reflect (Ivanič 1998).

Consequently, by means of the frequently used self-mention *I,* the participants divert from an argumentative discursive space to that of a reflective discursive space. In other words, the participants seem to deviate from the typical genre conventions associated with an argumentative essay which involves a main argument, a counter-argument, and conclusions (Hyland 1990). Arguably, the participants override one or several of the genre-related conventions of argumentative essay writing ("argument – counter-argument – conclusions") by employing reflective writing, which is marked by the frequently used self-mention *I*. The diversion from the argumentative discursive space to reflective discourse could be assumed to be related to the quality of EFL student writing. This assumption is evocative of the contention made by Helms-Park and Stapleton (2003), who argue that the use of self-mentions might provide an index of the quality of EFL student writing.

4.5.2. The quantitative differences in the frequency of self-mentions in argumentative essays written by the participants and their controls

The second research question in this study seeks to establish whether or not there are quantitative differences in the frequency of self-mentions in the corpus of essays written by the participants and their controls. In conjunction with this research question, the application of the one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) to the means presented in Table 2 reveals that there are no statistically significant differences in the frequency

of self-mentions used by the participants and the control group, given that the analysis has not yielded statistically significant results at $p < 0.05$ [$F(3; 36) = 0.90$, $p = 0.45$]. This finding could be taken to indicate that self-mentions are similarly distributed in the corpus of E1 and E2 written by the participants and the control group, as illustrated by Figure 4.
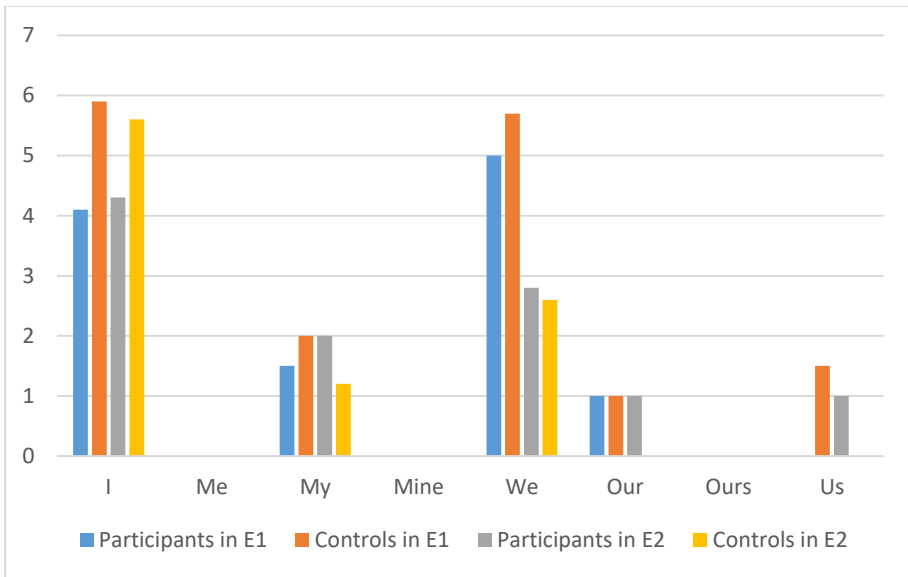
Figure 4
The distribution self-mentions in E1 and E2

It follows from Figure 4 and Tables 2 – 3 that in addition to the similarly distributed self-mentions *I*, *my*, *we*, *our* and *us*, the participants and their controls did not employ such self-mentions as *me*, *mine* and *ours*. This finding seems to reinforce the similarity between the groups of participants and controls as far as the use of the self-mentions in the corpus is concerned. If there is no statistically significant difference in the use of self-mentions by the participants (pre-service teachers of English), and their controls, (non-teacher students), then it could be argued that the use of self-mentions does not seem to correlate

with the participants' future teaching profession. It could be assumed that the use of self-mentions in the present corpus is dependent upon the level of EFL proficiency rather than the participants' and controls' university major. In this regard, it should be reiterated that the participants and their respective controls are considered to be on the B1 or B2 level of English proficiency according to the "Common European Framework of Reference for Languages" (Council of Europe, 2011). Obviously, the assumption referring to the influence of the participants' and controls' proficiency levels in English upon the use of self-mentions should be verified in another study that involves a substantial number of participants and, perhaps, a more representative corpus of essays.

In addition to the common level of proficiency in the English language, the similarities in the use of self-mentions by the participants and the control group might be explained by the impact of the Norwegian language, the common L1, upon the strategy of using self-mentions in academic writing in English. In this regard, Monsen and Rørvik (2017) have established that whereas self-mention in academic writing in Norwegian is typically represented by such self-mentions as *vi* (English: we) and *man* (English: one, they, it), the first person singular pronoun *jeg* (English: I) is also frequent in their corpus. Presumably, the compilation of a parallel English-Norwegian corpus associated with self-mentions in academic writing would be necessary to elucidate this observation in a more profound manner. Within the context of the present study, however, it does not seem possible to establish whether or not the participants and their respective controls transferred the use of self-mentions from Norwegian into their argumentative writing in English.

As far as the second research question in this study is concerned, it should be noted that the frequencies of the self-mentions in both in E1 and E2 are relatively low irrespective of whether or not the essays were written by the participants or their controls. For instance, let us consider the mean values of the self-mention *I* in the corpus, which are 4.1 (participants) and 5.9 (controls) in E1, and 4.3 (participants) and 5.6 (controls) in

E2. Following the study conducted by Monsen and Rørvik (2017: 98), the aforementioned means can be described as low, since the frequency of the self-mention *I* is reported by Monsen and Rørvik (2017) to be a mean = 7, SD = 7.2, minimum = 0, maximum = 24 in the corpus of eight academic essays written by Norwegian L1 EFL student writers.

   Taking into account the prior literature (Monsen and Rørvik 2017), I argue that the mean values of self-mentions in the present study can hardly be regarded as high. Consequently, I assume that the self-mentions in this study are neither excessive nor overused by the participants and the control group. On the contrary, the normalised and raw frequency of the self-mentions in the corpus are indicative of the modest use of these discursive means (see Tables 2 – 3). These findings are in line with the prior studies conducted by Çandarlı, Bayyurt and Martı (2015) and Veličković and Jeremić (2020), respectively. Whilst these findings could not be referred to as the avoidance of self-mentions in the sense postulated by Çandarlı, Bayyurt and Martı (2015), they are reflective of the participants' and controls' frugal use of self-mentions. These findings seem to support the study conducted by Veličković and Jeremić (2020), where a relatively low frequency of the occurrence of *I* has been reported. However, the present findings stand in contrast to the study by Alward (2019), who notes the overuse of the self-mention *I* in academic writing by EFL student writers.

5. Conclusions

The study presented in this article sought to elucidate the use of self-mention in two rounds of argumentative essays on EFL didactics written by the group of participants (pre-service EFL teachers) and their controls (non-teacher students). The corpus of the participants' and controls' essays was analysed in order to establish the frequencies of self-mentions as normalised and non-normalised values. The results of the quantitative analysis in SPSS (IBM 2011) and WordSmith (Scott 2008) revealed that the most frequent self-mention in the first round of essays (E1),

was the first person plural pronoun *we*. It was found to be similarly distributed in the essays written by the participants and their respective controls. In contrast to E1, the participants and the control group appeared to prefer the use of the first person singular pronoun *I* in the second round of essays. In this regard, it should be mentioned that no statistically significant differences were found between the groups of participants and controls as far as the use of the self-mentions *I* and *we* were concerned. That finding was taken to indicate that the participants and their controls employed self-mentions in a similar manner in their argumentative essay writing.

The results of the data analysis revealed that the participants experienced a change in the self-mentions that they frequently used in the rounds of argumentative essay writing (*we* in E1 and *I* E2, respectively). The change was concomitant with the participants' shift from logically presented and rigorous argumentative writing in E1 to more reflective writing in E2. A possible explanation for that change could be the fact that in the course structure, E1 was planned to involve feedback from the course teacher, whereas E2 was meant to be written by the participants and controls without the teacher's feedback. Presumably, in a less controlled environment of E2 writing, the participants and their respective controls involuntarily shifted the focus from the argumentative essay scheme "argument – counter-argument – conclusions" to a reflective discursive space with elements of argumentation. Arguably, the shift in discursive spaces was concomitant with the participants' and controls' preferences for the self-mention *I*. Based upon the results of the data analysis, it seemed possible to conclude that the EFL student writers' choices of self-mentions reflected their peculiar authorial voices and strategies that were associated with (i) a typical argumentative essay scheme in the first round of essays and (ii) a reflective essay with elements of argumentation in the second round of essays. Obviously, these conclusions should be treated with caution, since the study only involved a small corpus of essays and a limited number of participants (N = 20 in total).

Summarising the present findings, it is possible to offer the following linguo-didactic suggestions. First, given that academic writing can be considered to constitute an integral part of teacher education (Kapranov 2020, Monsen and Rørvik 2017, Shrestha 2020), the use of self-mention in academic writing should be explicitly taught to EFL student writers. Arguably, EFL student writers could benefit from the instructional approach to academic writing that regards self-mentions as an index of genre-appropriate conventions of writing in English. Second, the use of self-mentions should be taught to EFL student writers in conjunction with a parallel corpus of self-mentions found in academic writing in their first language (L1). Presumably, the use of the parallel corpora would facilitate EFL student writers' awareness of discursive means of self-mentions prevalent both in English and in their L1.

Acknowledgements

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TRANSLATION STUDIES

Strategies in the translation of
the narrative in *Pillars of Eternity*

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Abstract

The present article is devoted to the translation of the narrative in the RPG game entitled *Pillars of Eternity*. The narrative of the game comprises texts such as the main story, dialogs, journals, books, poems and item lore. Since these texts are essentially literary in nature, they require a creative and covert approach to translation supplemented by local semantic, syntactic, and pragmatic strategies. The article examines the texts shaping the narrative and the strategies which conspire to achieve the ultimate goal of the narrative: player immersion in the game world.

Key words

Strategie tłumaczenia narracji w grze *Pillars of Eternity*

Abstrakt

Niniejszy artykuł jest poświęcony tłumaczeniu narracji w grze z gatunku RPG pod tytułem *Pillars of Eternity*. W skład narracji gry wchodzą teksty takie jak główna fabuła, dialogi, dzienniki, książki, wiersze i historie przedmiotów. Ponieważ są to teksty zasadniczo literackie, wymagają one kreatywnego i niejawnego podejścia do tłumaczenia uzupełnionego o semantyczne, syntaktyczne i pragmatyczne strategie lokalne. W artykule zbadano teksty kształtujące narrację gry oraz wykorzystane do ich tłumaczenia strategie, które zmierzają do osiągnięcia ostatecznego celu narracji: zanurzenia gracza w świecie gry.

Słowa kluczowe

lokalizacja gier, tłumaczenie gier, RPG, narracja, kreatywny przekład, niejawny przekład, strategie przekładowe

1. Introduction

Pillars of Eternity is a classic role-playing game released in 2015 by Paradox Interactive. Like other complex RPG productions, *Pillars of Eternity* contains an extensive and multifarious narrative. The narrative is composed of in-game texts that pertain to the game lore as opposed to the game mechanics or the game interface (Nawrocka 2019). The character of these texts is diegetic because they are part of the game world (Mangiron and O'Hagan 2013). Their function is expressive since they are essentially literary texts but also informative (Reiss 1971/2000) since they are focused on "imparting certain information in a dramatic manner" (Mangiron and O'Hagan 2013: 155).

That being said, the present article seeks to explore the kinds of texts in *Pillars of Eternity* which shape the narrative and the strategies that were used in their translation as well as how those strategies allow the ultimate goal of the narrative to be achieved, that is, player immersion in the game world.

2. The characteristics of the narrative

Role-playing games such as *Pillars of Eternity* rely heavily on "telling a story through character dialogue, in-game cut scenes, and books, notes, or other props found in the game world" (Chandler 2005: 139-140, Mangiron and O'Hagan 2013). In *Pillars of Eternity,* the narrative encompasses such texts as the main story, dialogs, journals, books, poems and stories behind unique items. From a taxonomic perspective, the narrative comprises three kinds of texts: narrative texts, dialogues and poems.

Narrative texts in games are "literary passages used to engage the player in the game world or to a new level within the game. They contextualize and provide information about the game story, including a backstory" (Mangiron and O'Hagan 2013: 155). They often display formal and literary style and the translator is expected to be fluent in the target language and employ the appropriate register and style (Mangiron and O'Hagan 2013).

The function of dialogs is to "provide information and elicit a certain action by the player" (Mangiron and O'Hagan 2013: 156). Dialogs constitute speech in written form, often displaying a colloquial style. The translator is usually expected to employ a casual register and conversational style (Mangiron and O'Hagan 2013). In RPG games, interactive conversations can follow many different paths and the player usually has a few answer options, which are not easy for the translator to follow unless they are provided with a dialogue tree (Bernal-Merino 2015). Moreover, some dialogs in games can be voiced, in which case lip-synching may be required.

The epitome of literariness in games, poems (if present) constitute flavor texts, which enhance the appeal of the game world. They can take the form of a traditional poem or song, ballad etc. They usually display rhyme and are heavily form-focused. Preserving the poetic form of these texts is more important than their content, which can be loosely translated or, more pertinently, transcreated (Mangiron and O'Hagan 2013).

In the most general terms, the aim of the narrative in games is player immersion in the game world comparable to that of the source game. The global strategy employed in order to meet this goal is target-oriented covert translation (House 1997), in which the appeal of the target text is more important than its correspondence to the source text. The translation is covert in order to create the illusion that the given game has been originally designed for a particular locale. In other words, the text of the game should not "feel" like a translation and should be maximally natural and stylistically adequate. Only by fulfilling these conditions can suspension of disbelief be possible and the game world can achieve credibility.

Additionally, since these texts are literary and were themselves born in a creative process, they invite a creative approach to translation (Nawrocka 2019). An approach of this sort could be treated as a method allowing the translator to reach covertness of the translation and fulfill the expressive-informative function of the narrative. Last, but not least, the covert strategy and creative method can be supplemented by local strategies, which constitute specific purposeful procedures aimed at achieving an attractive and naturally flowing text.

3. Translation strategies

Chesterman (1997) proposes that local strategies be divided into semantic, syntactic and pragmatic approaches. These are presented briefly in the tables below.

Table 1
Semantic strategies (Chesterman 1997)

Synonymy	Selecting not the obvious equivalent but a synonym or near-synonym.
Antonymy	Selecting an antonym and combining it with a negation element.
Hyponymy	Shifts within the hyponymy relation: – ST superordinate into TT hyponym

	– ST hyponym into TT superordinate – ST hyponym X into TT hyponym Y
Converses	Expressing the same state of affairs from opposing viewpoints (ex. buy and sell).
Abstraction change	Choosing a more abstract or more concrete level.
Distribution change	Change in distribution over more items (expansion) or fewer items (compression)
Emphasis change	Reduction or alteration in emphasis or thematic focus.
Paraphrase	Content translated loosely, freely or under-translated. Lexemes ignored for the sake of pragmatic meaning at a higher level.
Trope change	Changes in translating figurative expressions: – ST trope X into TT trope X (non-identical) – ST trope X into TT trope Y (different trope) – ST trope X into TT trope ∅ (no trope)
Other semantic changes	Other modulations (ex. change of physical sense or deictic direction).

Table 2

Syntactic strategies (Chesterman 1997)

Literal translation	Translation maximally close to ST form but still grammatical.
Loan, calque	Deliberate choice of borrowing of individual items or syntax.
Transposition	Change in word-class (ex. noun to verb, adjective to adverb).
Unit shift	Shift in unit (morpheme, word, phrase, clause, sentence, paragraph).
Phrase structure change	A number of changes at the level of the phrase, including number, definiteness and modification in the noun phrase, person, tense and mood of the verb phrase.
Clause structure change	Changes in the structure of the clause in terms of its constituent phrases.

Sentence structure change	Affects the structure of the sentence-unit (ex. change in main-clause and sub-clause status, change of sub-clause type).
Cohesion change	Affects intra-textual reference, ellipsis, substitution, pronominalization and repetition, the use of connectors.
Level shift	Shift from one level to another (phonology, morphology, syntax and lexis).
Scheme change	Changes in parallelism, repetition, alliteration, metrical rhythm: – ST scheme X into TT scheme X – ST scheme X into TT scheme Y – ST scheme X into TT scheme Ø

Table 3
Pragmatic strategies (Chesterman 1997)

Cultural filtering	Naturalization, domestication or adaptation. SL items, particularly culture-specific items, are translated as cultural or functional equivalents.
Explicitness change	Change either towards more explicitness (explicitation) or more implicitness (implicitation).
Information change	Either the addition of new (non-inferable) information, which is deemed to be relevant to the TT readership, or omission of ST information deemed to be irrelevant.
Interpersonal change	Alteration in the formality level, the degree of emotiveness and involvement, the level of technical lexis and anything that involves a change in the relationship between text/ author and reader.
Illocutionary change	Changes in speech act usually linked with other strategies. Changing the mood of the verb from indicative to imperative (from statement to request).
Coherence change	Coherence changes have to do with the logical arrangement of information in the text at the ideational level.

Partial translation	Any kind of partial translation, such as summary translation, transcription, translation of the sounds only and the like.
Visibility change	Change in the status of authorial presence or to the overt intrusion or foregrounding of the translatorial presence. For example the translator's footnotes.
Transediting	Radical re-editing of badly written original texts. Includes drastic re-ordering, rewriting at a more general level than other strategies.
Other pragmatic changes	For example layout changes.

4. The main story

The main story is usually presented through a series of narrative texts and in *Pillars of Eternity* it is divided into Acts. Such texts are also often accompanied by a short film (cut scene). The text below is the introduction to *Pillars of Eternity*.

Five wagons grope blindly for the path on a starless night, **their master glancing** ever upward to the skies for assurance that he is on the right course, **a dim lantern his only** protection against the encroaching darkness.	Pośród bezgwiezdnej nocy karawana pięciu krytych wozów po omacku **toczy się** szlakiem. Przewodnik wciąż **zerka** na niebo, szukając potwierdzenia, że jest na dobrej drodze. **Jedynie nikłe światło latarni chroni** go przed wszechogarniającą ciemnością.
But the skies bring no comfort, **shining** no light, **betraying** no hint of what they know.	Niebo nie przynosi jednak pocieszenia – pozostaje **ciemne** i **niechętne** do dzielenia się wskazówkami.
The caravan carries travellers bound for the frontier hamlet of Gilded Vale, **you among them,** where a local lord has offered	**Jedziesz** karawaną z podróżnymi zmierzającymi do przygranicznej wioski, Złoconej Doliny. Tamtejszy włodarz zaoferował

| land and wealth to settlers from abroad looking for a fresh start. | ziemię i bogactwo zagranicznym osadnikom, pragnącym rozpocząć nowe życie. |
| **You** have taken suddenly ill, sweating and shivering, and one of the other travellers signals for the caravan master to stop on your behalf. He pulls up just in time to avoid plowing into the trunk of a fallen tree that bars the way ahead. **You** will go no further tonight. | W pewnym momencie **zaczynasz** się źle czuć – zalewa cię pot i masz dreszcze. Jeden z towarzyszy podróży daje znać przewodnikowi, żeby się zatrzymał. Wóz staje w ostatniej chwili, ledwie unikając zderzenia z pniem drzewa leżącym w poprzek drogi. Tej nocy dalej już nie **pojedziecie**. |

In the text above, the first sentence has been divided into three, which constitutes a sentence structure change. The structure of the English sentence is characteristic for English literary descriptions ("their master glancing…", "a dim lantern his only protection…"), but not for Polish ones. In the Polish version, the description concerns what is happening. There are three subjects and three predicates ("karawana toczy się", "przewodnik zerka", "światło latarni chroni") The division into three sentences seems to be a good solution, allowing the translator to avoid an erroneous syntactic calque.

In the second paragraph there is a transposition. The English sentence uses present participles: "shining", "betraying", which in the Polish version have been rendered using adjectives – "ciemne" (dark) and "niechętne" (unwilling). There is also antonymy. The English "shining no light", which contains a negation, has been rendered in the target text with a single adjective "ciemne".

In the third sentence, one can also observe a typically English syntax – an intrusion "you among them". This sentence has also been divided in the translation, which is a sentence structure change. There is also a change in the subject of the sentence. In the source text, the subject is the caravan, while in the translation it is "you" (ty). It is also worth mentioning that "you" is here

translated as "ty" (singular) and elsewhere as "wy" (plural), depending on the context. This procedure is an explicitation, as the source text does not indicate whether a plural or a singular *you* is meant, but this is done in the translation. This change, however, stems from the difference between the grammar of the Polish and English languages.

5. Dialogs

In the dialog below, four people are quarrelling near the tavern in Gilded Vale. One of them is Aloth, a character that can join the player's team, and the others are angry townspeople. The player can choose to help Aloth or choose not to interfere. As can be seen below, *Pillars of Eternity* dialogs contain stage directions, short descriptions of what is happening and descriptions of the speaker's behaviour. The dialogs proper are contained within quotation marks. Another element of dialogs in RPG games are answer options that the player chooses from, thus making a decision that may influence the world of the game.

Aloth – "I meant no offense. Let's put this matter to rest over a round, shall we? My treat"	**Aloth** – „Nie chciałem nikogo obrazić. Zapomnijmy o tym przy napitku, dobrze? Ja stawiam."
Angry Townswoman – *The others, two folk men and an elven woman, don't look convinced.* *The woman crosses her arms.* "Hoping to soothe our pride with a few Aedyre coppers, eh?" *She spits at his feet.* "We don't need your coin." 1: "What's going on?" 2: [Say nothing.]	**Rozgniewana mieszkanka** – *Pozostali – dwoje ludzi i elfka – nie wyglądają na przekonanych.* *Kobieta krzyżuje ramiona na piersi.* „Chcesz kupić naszą dumę aedyrskimi miedziakami, co?" *Pluje mu pod nogi.* „Nie potrzebujemy twojej miedzi." 1: „Co się tu dzieje?" 2: „[Zachowaj milczenie.] 3: „Uspokójcie się wszyscy. To na pewno jakieś nieporozumienie."

3: "Everyone calm down. Whatever this is about, I'm sure it's an overreaction." 4: "Ooh, a fight!"	4: „Ooo, rozróba!"
Angry Townsman – *One of the other men points at the hooded elf. His eyes are red from drink, but his gaze is focused.* "Mocking us even while he shelters in our village. Just goes to show you what these fancy Aedyre manners are worth." "We don't take to that kind of treatment. Not from foreigners, and 'specially not from Aedyrans."	**Rozgniewany mieszkaniec** – *Jeden z mężczyzn wskazuje na zakapturzonego elfa. Oczy ma zaczerwienione od alkoholu, ale spojrzenie skupione.* „Drwi sobie z nas, chociaż daliśmy mu schronienie. Widać, ile warte są te słynne aedyrskie maniery." „Nie życzymy sobie takiego traktowania ze strony cudzoziemców. Zwłaszcza z Aedyru."
Angry Townsman – *The second man thrusts his chin at the elf. He stinks of sour ale.* "Go on. Say it again. I'm itching for an excuse."	**Rozgniewany mieszkaniec** – *Drugi mężczyzna nachyla się do elfa. Śmierdzi kwaśnym piwem.* „No już. Powtórz to. Brakuje mi dobrej wymówki."
Aloth – "Fye, you're itching for the kindling touch of your sister, ye coxfither."	**Aloth** – „Tfu, raczej brak ci miłego dotyku twojej siostry, kaprawcze."
Angry Townsman – *A collective cry of outrage rises from the three locals. The second man snarls.* "I'll cut that barrel-licking tongue out of your head!"	**Rozgniewany mieszkaniec** – *Cała trójka jednocześnie krzyczy z oburzenia. Drugi mężczyzna parska.* „Wytnę mu ten zafajdany język z gęby!"
Aloth – *Horror and shock paint themselves across the elven man's face in broad, hasty strokes.* "This is a misunderstanding. I didn't say..." *He frowns and swallows.* "...whatever it is you think I said."	**Aloth** – *Wyraźny szok i przerażenie pojawiają się na twarzy elfa.* „To nieporozumienie. „Nie powiedziałem..." *Marszczy brwi i przełyka.* „...tego, co wam się wydawało."

He plants his feet. Something surly and raw flickers through his eyes. "We've nye quarrel."	*Staje w rozkroku. W jego oczach pojawia się swada i zaciętość.* „Nie ma co się kłócić."

Written dialogs in games, as in literature, imitate spoken language although they are presented in written form. One of the key features of translating dialogs is reaching naturalness and credibility. The utterances must fit the particular situation and the character saying them. Using colloquial and non-standard language is a frequent occurrence.

For this reason, dialogs often contain exclamations. In the dialogue above, exclamations can be found in the following expressions: "Hoping to soothe our pride with a few Aedyre coppers, eh?"; "Ooh, a fight!"; "Fye, you're itching for the kindling touch of your sister, ye coxfither." The first one ("eh?") expresses a request for a confirmation and has been translated as "co?". The second one ("Ooh") expresses surprise and has been translated as "Ooo". The third one ("Fye") is an archaic expression stemming from Middle English (yourdictionary.com, "fye"). It means regret or reproach and has been translated using the exclamation "Tfu" imitating the action of spitting in Polish, which seems to be a successful equivalent. There is also the expression "shall we" presenting a suggestion. It has been translated as "dobrze?", which is not a literal translation, but a phrase equally common in spoken language. Ergo, synonymy has been employed.

Dialogs in games, as mentioned above, can also contain non-standard language varieties. The exclamation "Fye" is just one example. Apart from that, there is the archaic "ye" instead of you ("Fye, you're itching for the kindling touch of your sister, ye coxfither."), "specially" instead of "especially" and "nye" instead of "no" ("We've nye quarrel."). In the translation, there is no equivalent for the pronoun "ye". There is however the expression "kaprawcze". The expression "'specially" has been translated with a standard "zwłaszcza". "We've nye quarrel" has been translated as "Nie ma co się kłócić". Thus, there is a change in

register from non-standard into standard language (interper-
sonal change).

It is also important to note that stylization is sometimes an
element of a particular character's idiolect. As can be seen in
the example above, it is mainly Aloth who uses non-standard
language. The expressions "coxfither" and "barrel licking" are
non-standard and they have been rendered creatively as
"kaprawcze" and "zafajdane". "Kaprawiec" is defined as talking
"with resentment about a person having ill eyes" (sjp.pwn.pl,
"kaprawiec"). "Zafajdany" in turn is an informal expression
meaning "evoking somebody's resentment or contempt"
(sjp.pwn.pl, "zafajdany"). What is visible in the dialog is an effort
on the part of the translator to make the utterances display an
informal register. While some elements have been standardized,
the translator compensates for this elsewhere, for example by
using the archaic "napitek" for a drink.

One of the features of informal language is the use of idioms.
In the dialog above, there are idiomatic expressions such as:
"My treat"," Let's put this matter to rest", "soothe our pride",
and "I'm itching for an excuse". Such expressions rarely have
a literal rendering. The first has been translated as "Ja sta-
wiam", the second – "Zapomnijmy o tym", the third – "kupić
naszą dumę" and the last as "brakuje mi dobrej wymówki".
Hence it is visible that the translator aimed at equivalence on
a higher level than that of single words (Baker 1992), namely on
the level of the whole phrase (clause) and the strategy employed
here is paraphrase. There is also an expression "Just goes to
show" translated as "widać", which displays distribution change
and a unit shift from a phrase into a single word.

6. The journal

The text below comes from the player's journal. The journal con-
tains summaries of quests and hints concerning further actions.
In *Pillars of Eternity* the journal is divided into Quests, Journal,
Cyclopedia and Notes. The Quests section is divided into Main

Quests, Quests and Tasks. Below there is a quest called The Long Hunt.

The Long Hunt	Długie Łowy
Sagani, a dwarf from the southern island of Naasitaq, has come to the Dyrwood searching for the reincarnation of Persoq, an elder from her village. **She's been journeying for five years now.**	Sagani, krasnoludzka kobieta z południowej wyspy Naasitaq, przybyła do Jelenioborza w poszukiwaniu nowego wcielenia Persoqa - członka starszyzny jej wioski. **Poszukuje go już od pięciu lat.**
The other villagers gave her Persoq's adra figurine, which contains a piece of his soul. **She's** been using it to track him, but it's gotten harder to pinpoint his location as she's gotten closer. When she learned that I'm a Watcher, she asked for my help.	Mieszkańcy wioski dali jej adrową figurkę, która zawiera fragment duszy Persoqa. **Sagani** używa jej, by go wytropić, ale im bliżej celu, tym trudniej go odnaleźć. Kiedy dowiedziała się, że jestem **Widzącą**, poprosiła mnie o pomoc.
When Sagani is traveling with me, my unique sensitivities will allow me to see traces of **where** Persoq - or whoever he is now - **has been.**	**W towarzystwie Sagani,** moje szczególne umiejętności pozwolą mi ujrzeć wskazówki odnośnie **miejsca pobytu** Persoqa - lub jego obecnego wcielenia.
Travel to the cliffs you saw in the vision.	**Udaj się na urwiska widziane w wizji.**
When I **examined** the bear statuette, I **felt** as though I **were standing** atop cliffs overlooking the water. Persoq - whoever he is now - must be here.	Kiedy **zbadałam** figurkę niedźwiedzia, **poczułam** się, jakbym **stała** na krawędzi urwiska, na wysokich klifach nad wodą. Persoq - kimkolwiek teraz jest - musi tam być.
The breeze smelled salty. These cliffs are near the ocean.	W powietrzu dało się wyczuć sól. Te klify muszą być blisko oceanu.

In the text above, first of all it is necessary to note that the player character's female gender has been taken into account ("zbadałam", "poczułam się", "jakbym stała", "jestem Widzącą"). This means that the localization project included gender options, a very good practice since otherwise there would be a necessity to "work around" gender (providing a universal translation), which is a considerable hindrance and can negatively impact the naturalness of texts.

The first sentence has been translated literally but the result is grammatically and stylistically acceptable. In the sentence "She's been journeying for five years now" ("Poszukuje go już od pięciu lat") there is a change in the grammatical tense from present perfect into present, which is a phrase structure change. At the same time, this is a typical strategy since the Polish language does not have a present perfect tense. In the translation of "She's been using it to track him" ("Sagani używa jej, by go wytropić") apart from a tense change there is also a change in cohesion since, instead of a pronoun, the Polish version uses the name.

The sentence "Travel to the cliffs you saw in the vision" ("Udaj się na urwiska widziane w wizji") constitutes a hint of what the protagonist should do to complete the quest. Such interposition in journals is typically translated in the imperative, which stems from software localization standards (Microsoft Styleguide 2020).

In the sentence "When Sagani is traveling with me, my unique sensitivities will allow me to see traces of where Persoq - or whoever he is now - has been" ("W towarzystwie Sagani, moje szczególne umiejętności pozwolą mi ujrzeć wskazówki odnośnie miejsca pobytu Persoqa - lub jego obecnego wcielenia") there are two transpositions. The first one is the change from a verb (travelling with me) into a noun (w towarzystwie), and the second is from a verb (has been) into a noun phrase (miejsce pobytu).

7. Books

Books in RPG games contain texts that enrich the game world. They can describe the history of the world or, for example, the existing factions. Reading such books is optional for the player and is not necessary to complete different quests.[1] If read, however, they can enhance player immersion. The fragment below comes from a book called Crucible Knight.

Development of a Crucible Knight, Part 1: Lower Ranks Value: 16cp	Rozwój Rycerzy Tygla. Część I. Stopnie niższe Wartość: 16 SzM
In recent years, the Knights of the Crucible has evolved as a group. **No longer concentrating solely on blacksmithing or combat training, they've adjusted their focus to help initiates develop their souls as well as their bodies.** From initiation there is a well-defined path to the top of the order.	W ostatnich latach Rycerze Tygla urośli w siłę. **Przestali skupiać się jedynie na kowalstwie i szkoleniu bojowym, zwracając uwagę także na ciało i ducha nowicjuszy.** Ścieżka prowadząca na szczyt zakonu jest ściśle określona.
Squire	Giermek
When a candidate shows sufficient prowess in blacksmithing (or, recently, at least the drive and potential), he is accepted into the order as a Squire. Once **he is part** of the order, training begins immediately. **Lessons are divided into two main sections - Body, commanded by the Lord Marshal and Soul, overseen by the Grand Crucilar.** At	Jeśli kandydat wykazuje wystarczającą sprawność w kowalstwie (a ostatnimi czasy - przynajmniej potencjał i chęci), przyjmowany jest do zakonu w charakterze giermka. Po **wstąpieniu** natychmiast rozpoczyna szkolenie. **Nauczanie podzielono na dwie sekcje - Ciała (sekcja Lorda Marszałka) i Ducha (sekcja Wielkiego Krucylariusza). Na**

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[1] There are also books related to the plot and quests, but these tend to be shorter than the books containing the lore of the game.

| this point in their progression the only uniform the squire is allowed is a simple cloth uniform displaying the Knights' colors. [...] | tym poziomie obowiązującym strojem giermka jest prosta szata w barwach zakonu. [...] |

The fragment "No longer concentrating solely on blacksmithing or combat training, they've adjusted their focus to help initiates develop their souls as well as their bodies" involves a sentence structure change in the translation. In the English version in the first clause there is a present participle ("no longer concentrating"), which makes it a subordinate clause. In the Polish version there is a predicate there ("przestali skupiać się"), which makes it the main clause. In the second clause, the situation is reversed: the English version contains a predicate of the main clause ("they've adjusted"), while the Polish version has a present participle ("zwracając uwagę").

In the translation "Once he is part of the order, training begins immediately" ("Po wstąpieniu natychmiast rozpoczyna szkolenie") there is a transposition into a noun ("wstąpieniu") and a unit shift. Translating "lessons" as "nauczanie" is an example of synonymy. In this sentence in the Polish version there are brackets, which are absent in the original, so a change in the clause structure can be observed. The expression "At this point in their progression" is translated as "Na tym poziomie", which is a paraphrase and simultaneously a distribution change and a unit shift since "poziom" is an equivalent of "point in their progression". In the next part of this sentence "the only uniform the squire is allowed is a simple cloth uniform displaying the Knights' colors" which is translated as "obowiązującym strojem giermka jest prosta szata w barwach zakonu" one can see a phrase structure change from a verb in passive voice ("is allowed") into a participle ("obowiązujący"). In the source text there is also a repetition, which has not been copied into the translation because Polish stylistics do not "like" such repetitions. The removal of the repetition is not only a stylistic

procedure but also a cohesion change. The expression "display-ing the Knights' colors" has been paraphrased as "w barwach zakonu", where the participle has been replaced with a preposi-tion "w", which is a transposition.

8. Poems

The poem below comes from one of the quests and is an inscrip-tion on a sword called the Grey Sleeper (Szary Śpiący). The poem consists of the main inscription and four further fragments, which appear on it in the progression of the quest of the same title.

The main inscription:

> *"'Tis a traitor's fate to sleep and never rest*
> *Whilst knowledge of his deed stays lodged within his breast.*
> *But earnest penance heals the sorrowful man*
> *And worthy actions stay the executioner's hand."*

> *„Taki już los zdrajcy, że snu spokojnego nie zazna,*
> *Póki czyny niecne tkwią mu w sercu, jak drzazga,*
> *Jeno żal i pokuta szczera ból ten uśmierzają,*
> *Zaś katowski miecz uczynki godne wstrzymają."*

In the fragment above, no exact end rhymes can be seen in ei-ther the English or the Polish versions. The particular verses also have a similar length. There is a metaphor "Whilst knowledge of his deed stays lodged within his breast", where the memory of the deeds is not as much in the mind as in the heart. In the Polish version there is a trope change, since this meta-phor is slightly different ("czyny niecne tkwią mu w sercu") and a simile has been added ("jak drzazga"). In the translation there is also an addition of the adjective "niecne", which is an explic-itation since the "meanness" of the deeds was inferable in the source text but not directly expressed. In the English version it is penance that heals a "sorrowful man", while in the Polish text the pain is simply healed ("ból ten uśmierzają"). In the English

version, the "executioner's hand" is restrained while in the translation it is the executioner's sword. These are examples of paraphrases and information changes in a poem. What is also visible is an effort to achieve natural collocations in the target version, which is in line with the basic principle of covert translation.

Further inscription 1:

> *"Seek the whirling agent made of copper, adra, stone*
> *Awaken first your essence so that you may atone."*
>
> *„Znajdź przyrząd wirujący – z kamienia, adry, miedzi,*
> *Na drogę odkupienia wstąpisz, gdy esencję twą wznieci."*

In this fragment there are also end rhymes. "Whirling agent" has been translated as "przyrząd wirujący", which constitutes synonymy. Adra, a fictional material, has been loaned into the Polish text and inflected in a standard manner. In the translation of the second line there is a change in the order of the elements of the clause (clause structure change). Additionally, in the Polish version a metaphor is added ("droga odkupienia"), suggesting that penance is a way that can be followed as an equivalent for the verb "atone", which is a trope change. The verb "awaken" has been translated as "wznieci", which is also synonymy.

Further inscription 2:

> *"Find the sun-kissed hillocks where the dead folk sleep.*
> *Rest beside their wasting flesh; inspect what dreams you reap."*
>
> *„Pagórek słońcem ogrzany, umarłych miejsce snu.*
> *Spójrz na ich liche truchła – uronisz łezkę tu."*

In this fragment there are also end rhymes. In the first verse there is a metaphor the "sun-kissed hillocks", in which the sun is compared to a person who is "kissing" the hills. This meta-

phor has been omitted and changed into a description in Polish ("pagórek słońcem ogrzany"), which is a trope change into no trope. Moreover, in the Polish version there is just one hill (change of information). In the English version there is a verb "rest beside", while in the translation "look at" ("spójrz na"), which is a loose paraphrase and change of information. "Wasting flesh" translated as "liche truchła" is also a paraphrase. A major change can be observed towards the end of the fragment. "Inspect what dreams you reap" has been loosely translated as "uronisz łezkę tu". "To reap dreams" is a metaphor about treating the collected dreams as a harvest. This metaphor has not been preserved in the translation (no trope) and has been replaced with an idiomatic phrase "uronić łezkę", which constitutes a loose paraphrase and a change of information.

Further inscription 3:

> *"Fingers of the world, adra strong and whole*
> *Kneel before the pillars, bring order to your soul."*

> *„Adrowe pałace z głębin, co nic ich nie rozkruszy,*
> *Uklęknij przy kolumnach, znajdź ukojenie duszy.”*

In this fragment there are end rhymes as well, which are exact this time. The first verse is very loosely translated. "Fingers of the world" is a metaphor ascribing fingers to the world, which is a personification. This metaphor has been skipped (no trope) and replaced by an expression "adrowe pałace z głębin". The depths ("głębiny") were not present in the source text. The expression "adra strong and whole" has been rendered as "co ich nie rozkruszy", which is also a paraphrase. A translation closer to the original can be found in the second verse. "Uklęknij przy kolumnach" is practically a literal translation of "Kneel before the pillars". "Bring order to your soul" translated as "znajdź ukojenie duszy" is also a paraphrase but not a relatively distant one.

Further inscription 4:

> *A penance now complete, a burden now a gift;*
> *Keep this weapon at your side to remind you of your shrift."*
>
> *Pokuty nadszedł kres, a brzemię darem jest;*
> *U boku klingę noś dla przypomnienia otrzymanego rozgrzesze-*
> *nia."*

In the last fragment in the Polish version there are double rhymes: internal and end rhymes. The first verse is rendered quite faithfully. In the second verse "weapon" has been replaced with "blade" ("klinga"), which is a metonymy since a blade is part of a weapon. "To remind you" has been translated as "dla przypomnienia", which constitutes a transposition from a verb to a noun. "Shrift" is literally the penance received, while absolution is received for penance. Both nouns are related to confession, which is their hyperonym, but they are not identical. Hence, this is an example of a change from hyponym X into hyponym Y.

9. Item lore

In RPG games it is common to supplement more powerful unique items with stories. These stories, like the books and poems, enhance the game world and contribute to the game's atmosphere. One such item is the bow called Borresaine.

Borresaine	Borresaine
The dwarven clan of Langmyhr dwelt in the wilds of Naasitaq, **hunting game and surviving off of the harsh land.** Summers were brief and winters difficult, but the winter of 2562 AI was one of the hardest in the tribe's long history. **A mighty**	Krasnoludzki klan Langmyhr zamieszkiwał puszcze Naasitaqu, **żyjąc z tego, co udało im się złowić.** Lata zawsze były krótkie, a zimy surowe, chociaż zima roku 2562 AI była jedną z najcięższych w historii klanu. **Nieopodal zaczął**

snow leopard had established territory nearby, scaring off much of the game near the village, by Fonauton the hunters were returning with little more than rabbits, and the winter freeze was nigh. A dozen of the best hunters stuck out across the tundra, determined to hunt the great cat.	**grasować groźny lampart śnieżny, odstraszając okoliczną zwierzynę. W miesiącu Fonauton myśliwi nie byli w stanie upolować nic większego od królika, a nadchodziły zimowe mrozy.** Dwunastu najlepszych łowców wyruszyło więc w tundrę, z zadaniem ubicia wielkiego kota.
The beast was craftier than they'd **planned**, and by Iniverno, half of the hunters and most of their hunting foxes had been slain without so much as wounding the leopard. **Desperate and furious, one of the hunters crafted a bow from the bones of her slain fox.** As her remaining companions looked on, it seemed that **all of her rage was channelled into the weapon while she carved and shaped it**. **Her work completed, she set off and tracked the beast to its lair.** Once she'd killed **it**, she decorated her bow with its teeth as a reminder of the deed and of the long and tragic hunt. **Now black with age and use**, this bow is nevertheless fierce to behold. It's studded with the teeth of a large cat, and **the notches curve in tight spirals**.	Bestia okazała się sprytniejsza niż **myśleli**. Zanim nadszedł miesiąc Iniverno, połowa myśliwych i większość ich myśliwskich lisów zginęła, nawet nie zraniwszy lamparta. **Jedna z łowczyń w desperacji i gniewie wykonała z kości swojego zabitego lisa łuk.** Jej ocaleli towarzysze patrzyli, jak **cały gniew skupiała w tworzonej przez siebie broni. Kiedy skończyła, ruszyła do legowiska bestii**. Po zabiciu **lamparta**, przyozdobiła swój łuk jego zębami dla upamiętnienia tego czynu i długiego, tragicznego polowania. **Poczerniały od wieloletniego używania** łuk ten nadal stanowi imponujący widok. Nabijany jest zębami wielkiego kota i **zdobiony wyrytymi, ciasnymi spiralami**.

In the first sentence of the description there is a paraphrase and implicitation. In the translation there is no "hunting game" or "harsh land". There is an expression "żyjąc z tego, co udało im

się złowić". The third sentence in the translation has been divided into two, which is a sentence structure change. The expression "much of" related to game has been omitted as has "near" relating to the village. In both of these examples, one can observe an implicitation, since in the translation these pieces of information are left to be inferable. In the following sentence, "stuck out" has been translated as "wyruszyli" which is a synonymy. In the translation of "determined" as "z zadaniem" there is a unit shift from an adjective into a noun phrase. Translating "hunt" as "ubić" can be seen as synonymy where the synonym is archaic.

In the next sentence, "planned" has been rendered as "myśleli" (a paraphrase) to achieve naturalness in the Polish version. In the target version there is again a division into two sentences. The following sentence has an initial adnominal ("Desperate and furious, one of the hunters crafted a bow from the bones of her slain fox"), which is a common stylistic device found in English descriptive texts. Such adnominals are much rarer in the Polish language and their transference into the Polish text may result in an erroneous calque. Moving the subject to the initial position in the sentence is frequently the procedure used to avoid an erroneous calque, as can be observed in this case: "Jedna z łowczyń w desperacji i gniewie wykonała z kości swojego zabitego lisa łuk".

In the following sentence, there is a change from passive voice "all of her rage was channeled into the weapon" into active voice – "cały gniew skupiała w tworzonej przez siebie broni" (phrase structure change). There is also an implicitation here since in the source text there are the expressions "while she carved and shaped it", which in Polish have been rendered merely with "tworzonej przez siebie". Simultaneously, this is hyponymy, since the verbs "carve" and "shape" are methods of "creating".

In a further fragment "Her work completed, she set off and tracked the beast to its lair" there is a change from passive voice into active voice: "Kiedy skończyła" (phrase structure change), as well as a paraphrase and implicitation, since in the Polish version there is no mentioning of tracking the beast. There is

only the information that the huntress went to the beast's lair. In the next sentence there is cohesion change, since the English "Once she'd killed it" is translated as "Po zabiciu lamparta". It is also a transposition from the verb "kill" into the noun "zabicie".

In the sentence before the last, an initial adnominal can be found in both the English and Polish versions. This is an example where using the initial adnominal does *not* result in objectionable translation: "Poczerniały od wieloletniego używania łuk ten nadal stanowi imponujący widok". In this sentence there are also two paraphrases: "with age and use" has been paraphrased as "od wieloletniego używania" and "is nevertheless fierce to behold" as "nadal stanowi imponujący widok". In the last sentence there is a change from active voice ("the notches curve in tight spirals") into a past participle ("zdobiony wyrytymi, ciasnymi spiralami"), which is a phrase structure change.

10. Conclusion

Not all of Chesterman's strategies were observed in the analysed fragments, but the ones that were identified have clearly been aimed at achieving an appropriate style and good readability in the Polish version of the narrative, which are paramount to its success. The observed semantic strategies encompassed synonymy, antonymy, hyponymy, distribution change, paraphrase and trope change. Syntactic strategies such as change of phrase, clause or sentence structure, as well as transposition and unit shift allowed the translators to avoid erroneous syntactic calques. Literal translation was employed whenever the grammar and style of the sentence remained acceptable. There were also changes of cohesion and an example of a loan. The pragmatic strategies observed included explicitness change, information change and interpersonal change.

As far as translating narrative texts in the form of a second or third person narration, the most important goal was achieving a literary style and conveying the main story and backstories in a dramatic manner. As far as dialogs are concerned, the key

goal was achieving naturalness and credibility in the characters' utterances through colloquial and non-standard language among other techniques, while stage directions provided additional information about the characters' behaviour. In the poem described in this paper it was necessary to maintain rhyme, poetic character and its tropes such as metaphor and metonymy, even if they were transformed.

All things considered, the local strategies employed by the translators of *Pillars of Eternity* were aimed at conforming to the norms of the Polish language as well as the expectations of the Polish gamer community. Chesterman calls this motivation a "desire to conform to the expectancy norms of the target-language community" (1997: 113). Gamers expect narratives that do not draw their attention to the text for the wrong reasons (Mangiron and O'Hagan 2013) such as errors of various kinds. They expect immersion and a gripping story. Even though it would seem that the latter is to a large extent dependent on the source game, the game's translation plays a pivotal role in communicating that story to the target players.

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CULTURAL STUDIES

The seven deadly sins:
Images of pride and transience[1]

JERZY LIMON

Abstract

The aim of this paper is to look at the works of William Shakespeare and the seven deadly sins from the perspective of painting. The seven deadly sins include pride, greed, wrath, envy, lust, gluttony and sloth. The paper presents, among others, an analysis of the painting by Hieronymus Bosch with that very title – *The Seven Deadly Things and the Four Last Things*, with reference to such works by Shakespeare as *A Comedy of Errors*, *Richard III* or *Twelfth Night*.

Keywords

seven deadly sins, William Shakespeare, images, Hieronymus Bosch, *The Seven Deadly Things and the Four Last Things*

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[1] This paper is part of Chapter 1 of the monograph entitled *Szekspir: Siedem grzechów głównych (z zarazą w tle)* (Limon, in preparation) planned to be published by Słowo/Obraz/Terytoria in 2021. The paper has been translated into English by David Malcolm.

Siedem grzechów głównych:
# Obrazy dumy i przemijania

Abstrakt

Celem tego artykułu jest spojrzenie na twórczość Williama Szekspira i siedem grzechów głównych z przez pryzmat malarstwa. Owych siedem grzechów to pycha, zawiść, chciwość, gniew, rozwiązłość (nieczystość), obżarstwo (łakomstwo) i lenistwo. Artykuł przedstawia m.in. analizę obrazu Hieronima Boscha *Siedem grzechów głównych i cztery rzeczy ostateczne*, z odniesieniami do takich dzieł Szekspira jak *Komedia omyłek*, *Ryszard III* czy też *Wieczór Trzech Króli*.

Słowa kluczowe

siedem grzechów głównych, William Shakespeare, obrazy, Hieronim Bosch, *Siedem grzechów głównych i cztery rzeczy ostateczne*

One of the best known and, at the same time, intriguing works that illustrate the seven deadly sins is somewhat earlier than "our" period (from around 1500). It is the painting by Hieronymus Bosch with that very title – *The Seven Deadly Things and the Four Last Things*. The central circle of the painting is flanked by four small tondi located in the corners of the rectangular picture, which remind us of what is most important, of what threatens us if we give way to sins, for those remain with us after death until the Final Judgment itself. Those are the "Last Things". The tondo on the lower left-hand side is a summation of the seven sins, shown in hell. Each of the sins is designated as such by the artist, so that there be no doubt. Beginning from the top and moving in a clockwise direction, we see there: envy, anger, greed, pride, lust, and gluttony; however, the artist places sloth – as if it were the sun for all the others – in the centre of this miniature. Higher, on the left-hand side, in another rosette, we see the death of a human being, to whom the last rites are being administered.
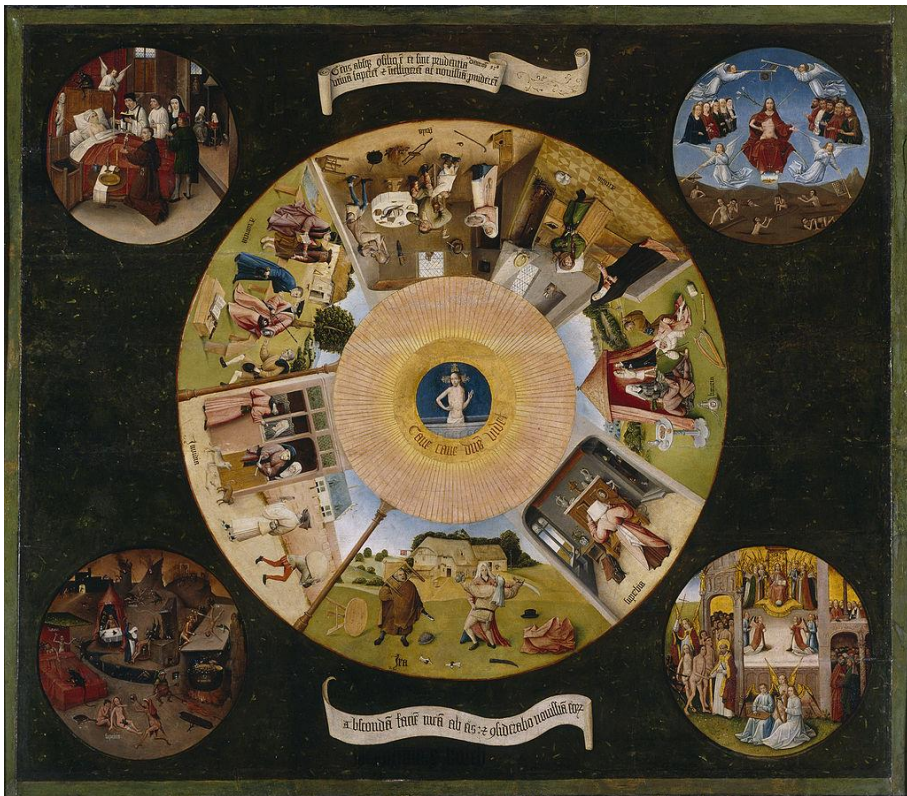
The Seven Deadly Things and the Four Last Things
by Hieronymus Bosch, www.museodelprado.es, Public Domain

Death has come for him, as one can see on the left, while an angel and a demon – visible by the bedhead – wait for his soul. Members of the family sit in the next room and play cards. They are like Roman soldiers playing dice in medieval and Renaissance pictures showing the Crucifixion. In medieval painting, the moment of death is also depicted, the moment when the soul departs from the person. The soul is usually in the shape of a miniature of a naked human body. In the Renaissance this image is almost completely absent.

On the opposite side, at the top, is a scene of resurrection, presided over by Christ. Angels blow triumphal horns. Seated on a throne, Christ shows the wounds from the nails in his hands. He suffered for us. At his sides sit saints and prophets.

Below, the naked souls of the resurrected emerge from their graves. Below, there is the scene of the Last Judgment. The heavenly music of the angels plays; to the left, the arisen souls stand in a queue to enter Heaven, but several are borne off by a visible black demon. In Shakespeare's *A Comedy of Errors*, Dromio, too, speaks of Satan who carries off souls to hell. The Lord God sits on a throne surrounded by angels; His legs are supported on the globe of this world. To the right stand the Fathers of the Church and prophets.

The central picture is made up of seven panels in which the painter has placed the seven deadly sins in a somewhat different sequence (they will be discussed in later chapters of this study). The circular shape in the centre of the painting refers to the middle of a shield, or to the rosette or the Eye of God; right at the centre, we see Him, as He emerges from the grave, as He is resurrected. Under this shape is the inscription *Cave cave d[omi]n[u]s videt* (Beware, beware, the Lord sees). All the moralists of the epoch recall this. God sees and, as it becomes necessary, He intervenes in human affairs, sending down warnings or punishments (for example, floods or plagues). "I have seen thine adulteries, and thy neighings, the lewdness of thy whoredom, and thine abominations on the hills in the fields" (Jeremiah 13.27). In Shakespeare's *Richard III*, mention is made of "All-seeing heaven" and God is named "All-seer". We must therefore recall the Last Judgment, since without such mindfulness, eternal damnation awaits us. On the scrolls above and below, on phylacteries, we find biblical *sententiae* from Deuteronomy (32.28-29): "For they are a nation void of counsel, Neither is there any understanding in them," and "O that they were wise, that they understood this, That they would consider their latter end!" The suspicion arises that, according to the artist, the sins of people, or, more broadly, of humanity, result from a lack of prudence, and perhaps more commonly from folly. In many works of art and literature, it is, in fact, folly that is marked as the source of pride, envy, anger, and the other deadly sins and that, thus, leads us on to eternal damnation. "Foolery, sir, does walk about the orb like the sun; it shines everywhere,"

declares Feste, the Fool, in *Twelfth Night*. In a broader context, along with greed, it often leads us to the cataclysms of war.

Let us now pass to the Golden Age and to a picture by Edward Collier, a Dutch painter of the second half of the seventeenth century. It is a good example not just of a baroque still-life, but also of an encoding of meanings that go beyond what is obvious. It is true that it has already been discussed and described by art historians, but placing it in literary and theatrical contexts throws – I would argue – new light on it, and along with that I would like to suggest a new understanding of the time when the picture was created, of the causes of its creation, and of the newly forged relations with its receiver. Both fields, art and literature (and theatre too), mutually illuminate each other, and, thus, produce a new quality of understanding. From the start, I would like to make the reservation that in my descriptions of works of art I do not concentrate on their purely painterly values, but rather on their anecdotal and allegorical message, and on the rules governing their various encodings. Art of this period advances the contexts and codes for its own interpretation, and like the prompter in the theatre it whispers how it wishes to be read, and its message is often close to the themes touched on in contemporary literature and emblem creation. The prompter also indicates certain features that – as I have already mentioned – entitle us to speak of its theatricality. An accumulation of *vanitas*-centred elements, which emphasize the futility and transience of life, is also contrasted with its fixing in the picture (within the picture), a fixing that extends life or at least offers hope for its extension. The illusory impression may be that the burning candle in the picture will not go out, in contrast to the candle in the foreground, "outside the picture," as it were, which ultimately will burn down. Once a person is dead, only objects remain, but also the memory recorded in them. In various compositional configurations, these elements are repeated in numerous pictures of the time, including those of Collier. Thanks to him some moment in time "lives" on, if there is someone who is able to interpret these records of memory, and who can enter into a dialogue with them. Later, when even memory vanishes,

the objects remain, of course dead and still themselves, torn from their original meanings. This strengthens a feeling of the futility and pathos of existence. But in still-life, it is not a matter of the fate of the individual.

In its own way, the Polish term for still-life "martwa natura" (literally, dead nature), adopted from the French *nature morte*, appears internally inconsistent: for example, flowers, as long as they do not wilt, cannot be called "martwe" (dead). The English term "still-life," taken from the Dutch *stil-leven*, is not completely satisfactory either: it means a "frozen/motionless life," as if the objects were still alive, captured before death (that would fit better with a human portrait). This can be explained in yet another way: the objects presented are "frozen," since they are not in movement. But then why does one not say of portraits that they are "martwe" (dead)? A "dead portrait" sounds completely rational. Perhaps because a portrait, in an even more obvious way than a still-life, wishes to come alive, to become our interlocutor, longs to initiate a dialogue: usually, it looks at us in the expectation that there will be contact between us. It wants to say something about itself. It counts on an alignment of times, a revival of life, a record in someone's memory. In this sense, it is not "martwe" (dead); it comes alive in our reception of it. Hence the need for a heightened degree of mimesis in the portrait in the period of which we are writing. It is supposed to be "as if alive". It is an actor who – like a character in medieval morality plays – introduces him/herself and speak his/her monologue. The figure in the portrait speaks of the happiness of love or the bitterness of old age, of grief at the loss of a loved one and of maternal happiness. But the figure does not give a soliloquy, which an actor speaks in isolation (like Hamlet), when there is no one onstage, but rather a monologue, which always has an addressee. And it is even more different: when Hamlet gives a soliloquy, we are dealing with a theatrical convention. We understand that the prince is not necessarily in the habit of speaking aloud to himself and that his words are not a sign of speech in the created, fictional world; there is silence there and that is why no one hears them, even if other actors

accompany him onstage. The actor speaks, not the character. The words indicate thought processes and not verbal utterances. That is why other characters cannot hear them, ontologically separate as they are, and distant in time from the actor. The words, which only we, the spectators, hear, become thereby (and via a convention that we know) a sign of a state of mind, of emotional tensions, and not a real utterance. Thus, the denoted time is not that of the actor's utterance: if the utterance lasts, let us say, a minute, that may mean a sleepless night in the created, fictional world. It also becomes quite clear that the addressee of this type of utterance is not some other fictional character, but the spectator alone. By employing this convention Shakespeare signals that it is not Hamlet who is speaking to us, but – through the actor – he himself. In this way he enters into a direct dialogue with us.

In the Harry Potter films, portraits have the ability to speak, to conduct a dialogue with living beings: this is shown in a literal way. It is possible through magic. In the case of painting, works also speak, but differently, soundlessly, because their phonic qualities are held in pigment. However, they do not need magic to speak. But in a portrait we do not see an actor who would play a character, but the character him/herself, transferred into another dimension. Instead of the time of a living actor on the stage (which is a permanent feature of theatre), we have the time of the picture as a material object, time that accords with the time our watches and calendars show (for example, forty years). And in this picture, the time of which runs at its own pace, a figure from the past is shown, a figure who signals that he/she wishes to be read in our present, that he/she has something to say of him/herself and the world. And in this way, two times come together, deepening the effect of theatricality. Indeed, often the words of the figure are inscribed on the canvas or on the frame, as, for example, in the portrait of Margaret, the wife of Jan van Eyck, where we read: "My husband Johannes completed me [the portrait] in the year 1439 on 17 June, at the age of thirty-three". (We can also see a note from the painter – "As I can".) Margaret looks straight at the spectator.

Portrait of Margaret van Eyck by Jan van Eyck,
Groeningemuseum, Bruges, Public Domain

It is different in paintings in which the figures shown do not
signal an awareness that someone is looking at them. In this,
they are similar to actors who in this way let us know that the
figures they play are in a different space and at a different time.
This analogy increases the theatricality of the painting. We ob-
serve figures caught in private situations, often ones full of ten-
sion and threat (scenes of violence or murder), and even in inti-
mate ones. Scenes of childhood and scenes of death. Brawls and

drunkenness. Battles and slaughters of the innocents. But someone shows us these: as in the theatre we are aware (leaving aside the naïve spectator) that someone is exhibiting this to us on the stage, the space of which is marked by the frame of the picture. The painter also wishes us to receive this two-dimensional scene as a three-dimensional one, just, indeed, as in the theatre. Hence the tendency towards mimetic representation, *trompe l'œil*, and linear perspective (also called painterly perspective) that creates the illusion of depth (the picture's frame may support that depth). Painters reveal that it is possible to speak of human beings without representing them, without their visible participation, by "set-design" alone and by accessories, just as in the forms of the current "teatr plastyczny" (theatre of visual form), which takes place without actors. Painterly set-design, known as still-life, makes it possible to create meaning that goes far beyond "what is visible". They do not apply to any concrete individual, but to the generality – they are universal.

From life: as I have remarked, in the objects that we leave behind us, memory is inscribed, a kind of personal code, one known to family, friends, those close to us, but that memory fades. On my desk, I keep my father's spoon from his time as a partisan in the War, made out of the wing of a shot-down Messerschmitt. My father still remembered who made it, when, and under what circumstances, who shot down the plane, but when he died, the memory died too. If this spoon were placed today in a picture, it would after some time become just shape and colour, chiaroscuro, drained of the meanings that I have mentioned. But in the remaining composition it may – in relation to the other components of the picture – take on new meanings that it never had before. It might be, for example, a spoon from the Last Supper, or from Marian Kołodziej's concentration camp drawings, or one in the "kitchen" still-lifes of Kiejstut Bereźnicki. The chair that I sit in as I write these words comes from my father's bachelor days. I know nothing more about it. If only objects survive, as a meaningful shade or a reflection of someone's life, even so the meaning drains from them at some point.

Unless they turn up in a glass case in a museum and are appropriately described there.

At a recent exhibition in the USA, a restored picture entitled *The Paston Treasure* from around 1665 was shown (more about this painting later), which is mainly a still-life. That may sound whimsical, but that is what the picture is like: besides many objects, it contains human figures, and thus is not a traditional still-life. In addition, in the exhibition several of the surviving original objects from the family collection were exhibited, precisely those that centuries ago the painter put on the canvas. One can see them preserved on canvas and in their actual shape almost 400 years later. Two ontologies and two times continually tempt the viewer's gaze. Paradoxically, this real object and this painted one are, in fact, contemporary. But they age differently and mean something different (their contexts are different); the real ones have a history of their own. The confrontation is interesting: the real object that exists here and now, and its image fixed on canvas.

In any event, in Collier's painting we see a multitude of objects, via which the painter talks to us, configuring his utterance in the composition. Exploiting the objects, he attempts to give them new meanings, awakening their mutual relations, in which one defines the other. So that we may perceive these relations, he hints to us (by perspective) where we are to stand in order that our perception be the fullest; he directs our gaze through intensity of light, colours, and shapes. He creates equivalence among objects. This is like in the theatre – creators of a performance wish to direct our perception, and suggest to us what in a given image we are to pay attention to: to this end, they apply changing intensities of light and other techniques of showing. Of course, these only achieve their aim on condition that someone perceives those suggestions, and also knows the meaning that is encoded in them. Light can have various sources: natural ones (the sun coming through a window), artificial ones (candles, torches), and heavenly ones (the sign of Christ, treated as *lux mundi*: for example, the self-illuminating cradle in Bethlehem in a painting by Rembrandt).

The painter constructs his/her utterances without words; at most printed or hand-written words are, in reality, painted. But the exhortations of contemporary connoisseurs to painters that they "paint words" are well-known, in the sense of words articulated phonically. In the miniature painting of the great philosopher Francis Bacon, a Latin inscription is to be seen: *Si tabula daretur digna animum mallem* (It would be preferable if a worthy painting could present his mind). An attempt at such pre-coding can be called transmutation, thanks to which the picture "speaks". That is possible because of the composition. It is the composition and selection of figures and objects that mean that all the objects and figures in the picture enter into closer or more distant relations to one another, and this creates meaning. This also reveals the rules of the art of painting, just as every artistically refined presentation in the theatre is also a demonstration of the rules of the theatre. The esthetics of the work is contained in this, that is, in the exposure of rules that justify its emergence in its given shape. If we cannot find and understand these rules, the work ceases to be art for us, and becomes rather a mere daub, kitsch, a misunderstanding. This principle applies to all types of art (although it may cease to obtain in a "post-esthetic" epoch). In the case of Collier's painting, we are dealing with a composition the meanings of which relate to human ontological issues, as well as to axiology and eschatology. The great poet and playwright Ben Jonson, friend of Shakespeare, calls theatrical sets, already changeable in the court theatre, "speaking pictures".

A lack of composition, that is, of mutual clear relations of elements that can be seen, a lack of the organization of materials according to the rules of art, leads to a situation in which objects are not capable of creating new meanings and the old ones have lost theirs. Without compositional links, they cannot go beyond literalness. They remain objects in themselves, but in their configuration chaos and chance predominate. One can demonstrate the difference by looking at an amateur painting or a still-life in which there is no message, or one that is incomplete, imperfect: in it there are, indeed, numerous objects "in

themselves," with recognizable functional uses, but compositionally they do not enter into meaningful relations, although a skilled painter could successfully place them in such a composition. That he/she does not do so, attests to clumsiness or to the fact that the artist had another task: let us assume that he/she had received a commission to show an inventory. For example, in somewhat later English painting of the eighteenth-century, we encounter pictures showing nouveau-riche families, grown-ups and children, festively attired, sitting on the grass before a splendid, palace-like family home, and before them we see proudly laid out on blankets on the grass silver plates and cutlery. A composition like this aims to show what can be seen: achieved success, goods, and wealth. Pride is reflected in the family silver. Often the proud owner of the estate lays out works of art on the grass: he wishes to show himself to be a connoisseur of art, an educated person of refined taste. Of course, we can interpret this as a condemnation of the sin of pride and greed, but for certain that was not the intention of the artist and his/her patrons.

The Paston Treasure, Public Domain

A quite different example is offered by the weirdly composed *Paston Treasure* (1665), which I mentioned above. It shows a small part of a collection of exotic and valuable objects belonging to the English family of Sir Robert Paston (the artist is an anonymous Dutch painter).

The painter indeed did all he could to give the inventory the features of work that says something in addition to that, but the entirety rather recalls a stall at a flea-market. Spike Bucklow argues that Sir Robert personally supervised the process of the painting's creation – hence the whimsical nature of its composition in conjunction with the perfection of painterly technique. It was not the painter who determined the arrangement. There is also a suggestion that the Black servant on the left-hand side is arranging the objects: he holds yet another one in his hand. It is as if, as Shakespeare said, the objects shown here are words without "order," that is, without rules; Bucklow himself, author of a book about this one picture, acknowledges that they look like a collection of objects cast ashore from a shipwreck, exhibited, in addition, in contradictory relations in terms of dimensions (compare the giant lute with seated girl and the lobster behind her). Several objects are repeated (four nautilus shells!). Even if we see there objects from which one could build a *vanitas*-focused still-life – a globe, a clock, nautilus shells, a lute, musical instruments, an hourglass, symbolic flowers, fruits, a curtain, and an extinguished candle – the painter has not made out of these a coherent composition that signifies this. The objects stand, one behind the other, on a rectangular table; they are seen somewhat from above. They appear like the scattered words of a sonnet. The curtain does not reveal the picture, but is its background. The light is scattered evenly over all the objects, which seem to be together, but are, in fact, separate. A further example of chaos in the composition of figural painting can be seen in the painting by Cornelis (son) and Herman (father) Saftleven depicting the family of Godard van Reede van Nederhorst. The picture shows Godard's first wife, who died in childbirth, along with the child who also died, and, at the same time, his new wife, surviving children, and relatives. The principle behind the picture was to show grief for the dead. The

mourners stand in various poses, while two children in the fore-
ground are at play. But some whimsical features of the picture
are striking. For example the dead new-born baby has clearly
grown, and the women in the painting's third plane look like
giantesses. The shaking of temporal unity, of perspective, of pro-
portion, and of overall dimensions indicates that – despite mi-
metic features – this is not a picture "taken from nature," but
rather testimony to recollection, imagination, and emotion (the
dead child has "grown," since it would have been like that if it
had lived at the time the picture was painted).

   As opposed to this, the picture by Collier discussed above is
a thought-out composition. Even if we cannot reproduce from
the picture who left behind these selected objects (one can
doubt, in fact, if they belonged to one person), we recognize uni-
versal motifs: a reminder of transience, the fragility of life, of the
inevitable. Expectantly, the painter looks at us from the minia-
ture at the foot of the picture. As John Donne, the great poet of
the period (and a preacher too) said, even if the objects that ac-
company us through life are not moveable, unfortunately, in re-
lation to them, we ourselves are "moveables"; nothing in life is
stable or eternal (from his sermon in honour of the deceased Sir
William Cockayne, 1626). However, let us begin our entry into
the painting from the drawn curtain on the left-hand side, which
in this case has primarily a compositional function; it "diverts"
the light, making it fall on the objects that the artist wishes to
show us (in painting the curtain appears from the mid-sixteenth
century). We see light reflected in several places. This achieves
a theatrical effect, as if the curtain revealed to us a scene from
life, or perhaps, in fact, from the prop-room of life, where – as
Shakespeare says – we play out our brief part, full of sound and
fury, and then no one hears of us afterwards. The "poor player"
has left the stage, removes his make-up, and we are looking at
the set. The curtain appears in many pictures of the time, in-
cluding the largest, by Rembrandt or Vermeer: after having been
drawn back, it exposes, as in the theatre, a scene from some-
one's life, or what is left behind afterwards.

In several cases it is a small curtain hung before the picture on display, which was a custom in Dutch homes. The picture was protected in this way from light and dust. It was looked at on special occasions. However, if a curtain appears in a painting, the effect is somewhat different than in the theatre, for we are dealing with a picture within a picture, but the observer may have the impression that the picture is just canvas behind an opened curtain, as in Rembrandt's famous *Holy Family*. What is outside and in front becomes somehow more real, as if belonging to the receiver's reality. Among other reasons, this happens because along with figures in the foreground, we simultaneously look at the picture "from within". This creates the illusion of simultaneity, the alignment of our presents. We also see a picture with a curtain in *Woman Reading a Letter* by Gabriel Mets and in *The Eavesdropper* by Nicolaes Maes (Rembrandt's pupil), in which practically the entire picture is the "interior," except perhaps for the frame and part of a chair and some tall closet with a jug to the right. The artist's joke is that that jug is identical with the one in the picture "within," behind the curtain, where it is part of a small still-life arrangement. In this way, the same object appears to exist simultaneously in two ontologies. This is also signaled by the temporal hiatus between the foreground and the second "interior" level (which on the surface must be earlier). This increases the theatricality of what we see even more. The same is true of the Pastons' picture discussed above and the real objects "taken from the canvas" that accompanied the exhibition. Let us also note that the very frame of a painting, besides its ability to define the picture, has the function of a "window," suggesting that we are observing a fragment of the real world which extends beyond it. This is often emphasized by a "cut" part of a figure, piece of furniture, or landscape depicted at the side of a work (Wright 2019). Often Renaissance frames were painted, creating the illusion of a real one, which emphasized its inseparability.

One also comes across a "portrait in a portrait," in which the person depicted opens a curtain to reveal the portrait of someone else. This also implies a doubling of time (the portrait in the portrait is "earlier"). These were betrothal or posthumous images, the latter showing the departure of the loved one from the real world (in which the person in the foreground remains) into another ontological level, from the time of life to a timelessness fixed in colour, or to put it differently, a transition from the three dimensions of the living person – for that is how the figure in the portrait wishes to be read – to the two dimensions of the portrait. Let us notice, however, that in the picture presented here, the foreground figure, too, is behind the drawn curtain. That figure looks at us, not at the portrait in the portrait, that is, he notices our presence and the fact that we are looking at him. The woman in the "interior" portrait also seems to look at us. If she too "is alive," then we have a "betrothal" picture and not a posthumous one. The man's pose indicates this, his arm resting on his hip and his stuck-out elbow were a general sign of pride and even of conceit. It signals that the man is proud of the woman, whom he has acquired for himself. That is why he places her in the Facebook of those times. Let us note that two painted figures belonging – it is implied – to a different time and space, regard us simultaneously, penetrating our present. This creates a fictional situation in which our gazes can meet in a present time that is also fictional. This is also possible only in the theatre. Thus, as a side effect, a theatricality emerges through the picture.

However, no actors are to be seen on the stage of still-lifes; all that remains of them are stage sets, or parts of them, to be precise, props, sometimes parts of costumes. In this theatrical props store of life, there remain the objects that gave life sense: they filled it out with material content; they imparted pleasure, satisfaction; they were a source of pride and even of conceit. They led into temptation or they reminded people of eternal life. They were witnesses of important events in a person's or a family's life, in other words, to those belonging to *kairos*, the Greek name for a fortunate time (distinguished from *chronos*). Thus,

a still-life is literally dead, since the owner or the user of the accumulated objects is absent, and for certain no longer walks the earth. What is left of him or her is, in its way, a will, inventory, or testimony to the meanings that the person ascribed to life. It constitutes a form of memory of a person, whose history is inscribed in objects, old décor, although we are no longer in a position to decipher that history. It is also a record of the painter's memory and sensitivity. On the surface, it is the artist's utterance, and not a precise recreation of the history of someone's life. Perhaps it is even a proof of the impossibility of that recreation, which disposes one to allegorical interpretations of human fate, of Everyman. It also constitutes a form of the record of memory, but here we mean of the artist's memory. Perhaps a more certain form than the chipped base of the column that can be seen centrally in the painting's background. It holds up the invisible architrave of an invisible building. It is a synecdoche of what cannot be seen. It is possible that it is a fragment of a columbarium or a temple. In painting, the column is usually a symbol of loyalty and power. It can also be a symbol of antiquity, of the passage of time. As in the theatre, it implies the continuation of the presented fragment of life outside the frame of "the eye". It wants to be a metonomy of it. WHITHER?

In the art of the early modern period we have more theatrical elements. Alongside the curtain, other illusion-creating devices appear, including *trompe-l'œil*. The technique became possible thanks to the introduction of oil paints; Jan van Eyck, already in the fifteenth century, is usually seen as the first to use them. In the creation of illusion, painters achieved such perfection that they began to play with technique: for example, Cornelius Norbertus Gijsbrechts paints "the other side of the picture" (around 1670), where we see the monochromatic reverse of frame, stretcher, and canvas, even with a number written on a scrap of paper affixed, as if it were giving the order of sale in an auction. The viewer wishes to turn the frame round to see what the picture actually presents. But it presents only the other side, not the front at all. The curtain was pained too in

antiquity: the rivalry in illusion of Parrhasius and Zeuxis was famous. One of them painted a curtain so realistically that the other was deceived and tried to open it to see the picture that was behind. In the seventeenth century, Adriaen van den Venne painted a veristic fly that seems to have settled on his *Fishing for Souls* (the fly implies another time and another space, and is, thus, a metonomy), while Rembrandt's pupils painted gold coins on the floor, which the master himself attempted to pick up, believing them to be real. But in antiquity – it appears – the curtain itself did not bring in a high degree of theatricality, since there were simply none in contemporary theatres. Here in Collier's painting, the curtain is drawn to one side and shows the viewer the space of the "stage" on which – as if it were a set design – a composition of objects appears. The picture becomes a sign of worlds that are not present in it (a distinct space, past time), but, at the same time, it exists in our (the receivers') present. This is just like in the theatre, where the substance of the performance is really real, since the bodies of the living actors constitute that substance, along with real objects, words, light, music, and so on, but they are only bearers of signs of a fictional created world, a world that is not on the stage and cannot be there, since it belongs to past time (or rarely, to future time). One can also come across pictures in which the drawn curtain shows the interior of a theatre, where spectators watch a performance (for example, Abraham Bosse's *Une comédie au Château de Grosbois* from 1644). The "deceit" here is double, since, first, the picture shows theatre within theatre, and, second, because it implies, that audience and spectators do not belong to the world of fiction and its time (past already), but rather they constitute a reality placed in another space and another time (our time, that is that of the "spectators"). That is how the painter would have us read the painting. The invisible prompter whispers to us strategies of reception. Together with the figures in the foreground we watch the performance.

Let us recall, too, that at that time curtains in theatres (in public theatres like "The Globe," there were no curtains) were often painted, sometimes – as in the Court theatre – "for one

time only," integrated with the plot or the allegory of a given performance, whereby one picture revealed and defined a second. Alongside an ability to create illusion, there is even more theatricality in painting: for example, the figure of the "intermediary," who points to the element in the composition to which we should pay attention. The figure's gaze may also be in the nature of ostention: if the figure looks at us, that may signal an implied consciousness of our presence, a desire to start a dialogue. It also signals the consciousness of the given figure of participating in a concrete scene, the capacity for independent movement, gesture. Let us note that the addressee of the ostensive gesture in the picture is not another painted figure; that means that we, the spectators, are the addressees, and, thereby, a consciousness of our existence is contained within the gesture. It is like an utterance on the part of an actor through which he/she establishes direct contact with the audience. Thus, a painted figure is similar to an actor who by means of ostention does not only do what the creators of the production want us to pay attention to, but also marks out the space of theatrical semiosis, in which everything ceases to be itself and becomes a sign of what is absent. It is the same in painting, where the dominant ostensive function is performed by light: differentiated intensities of light direct our gaze. What is most important or is unusual is customarily lit to a greater degree. Colour or chiaroscuro plays a similar function in creating equivalences. It also creates relations among individual elements of the composition, even ones that are spatially distant from each other. One must also remember that both the picture's frame and the stage's frame (the proscenium arch) could be (and, indeed, were) meaningful: it is through their prism that what is framed is seen and interpreted. Further, as in the theatre, objects on canvas cease to mean exclusively themselves, but they become signs of something, something that in a material sense is absent from the picture: in accordance with cultural codes, a skull becomes a sign of death; a cello becomes a woman's body; and an oyster becomes her private parts. A mortar and pestle is a common sign of sexual intercourse. A pouch with coins or jewellery –

either is a sign of the sin of avarice; and wealth in the face of inevitable death becomes a sign of vanity. Soap bubbles mean life's fragility, butterflies are flying souls, ivy is their immortality, and the anemone is death (since it grew from the blood of the dying Adonis).

Theatre has the capacity to bestow meanings on objects, ones that they did not have previously. Including oysters, if we are to stick to the example given above. But they can mean something completely different. In the moving scene in *King Lear* in which Gloucester is blinded, as directed by Robert Ciulli, Gloucester sits with his back to the audience, in front of a refrigerator. Regan opens the refrigerator and takes out champagne and . . . oysters. She stabs one with a fork (Gloucester shudders slightly), and then she swallows it drinking down the juice. One eye is gone. A mouthful of champagne. Then the actions are repeated. And the second eye is swallowed (Gloucester shudders again). Champagne. Shocking and, at the same time, theatrical. Let us pay attention to the scenic power of this sequence of actions: oysters, which we eat alive, become the sign of human eyes, and their consumption becomes a sign of human cruelty and suffering. Champagne becomes a sign of the torturer's callousness. Fabular meaning is created exclusively by the objects and the actors' gestures.

In painting, too, a change in the semantics of an object is possible. On one hand, the painter draws on cultural codes, for example, from emblem literature, which at that time was, in general, a frequent point of reference for art (also for poetry and drama). On the other hand, however, by virtue of the fact that objects become elements of a composition, they enter into mutual, meaning-generating relations. Through painterly ostention, objects draw near to each other, wander, strike cords with each other, often packed, for example, into a cornucopia, and their spatial relations constitute an important element in building new meanings (let us call these index-relations, resulting from cause-and-effect sequences or spatial proximity). Further, a painting may present a scene of some "history," one known to the receiver from mythology or literature; it builds a story. It is,

of course, one moment captured, as it were, in a camera snapshot (shown mimetically "like in a photograph"), but it frequently has the ability to suggest what has happened and what follows. This is also an index-relation. An unfinished meal, with scraps of food left on plates, unfinished wine in two glasses, in the company of suitably selected objects, the smoking wick of a newly extinguished candle ("out brief candle," Macbeth says), may signify that the persons now no longer visible have certainly gone off to bed, but not to sleep. If one of the glasses is on its side or not emptied, we understand that the persons involved did so in some haste. In a story-related sense, in the theatre we also have a fragment of some history, and what happened before the play begins and what follows when it is over, are only partly designated, left to the viewer's imagination. Of course, in medieval painting, pictures would show in one visual field several such scenes, next to one another, proceeding by leaps, separated in story terms in time and space, which – as in a comic book – the receiver had to link together in order to create a whole.

The introduction of perspective in painting imposed an axis of chronological time, which made this kind of presentation difficult or even quite impossible. Henceforward, cause-and-effect sequence became obligatory, placed along a time axis and in accordance with spatial proximity, in a composition concordant with the scientific rules of perspective. If in a set design by Inigo Jones, a section of ancient Rome is shown in the foreground, and in the distance we see a miniature panorama of London from the Palace of Whitehall, then we are dealing with a metaphor that exploits the rules of perspective in painting: England becomes the heir of the ancient Empire, and Rome is transformed into London, which, thus, becomes a continuation of the values of that ancient Empire – honour, law, valour, culture. Exceptions, however, do occur: for example, seventeenth-century painters were vexed that they could not show an entire story or its fundamental framework. (An example is Titian's *Death of Actaeon* in which Diana is drawing her bow-string and the arrow has already flown.) This means that often a com-

position is, as it were, dismembered into the main picture, which is central, and, surrounding it, lesser scenes, which show various events from the story told. An example is seen in *The Story of the Prodigal Son* by Frans Francken the Younger (1581-1642). Frequently the cause of an event is signaled or the cause of the behavior of the person in a painting. For example, in Gabriel Metsu's *Woman Reading a Letter*, which was mentioned earlier, we see a housewife, who shortly before was busy with household tasks.

The Story of the Prodigal Son
by Frans Francken the Younger,
www.rijksmuseum.nl, Public Domain

Woman Reading a Letter by Gabriel Metsu,
www.rijksmuseum.nl, Public Domain

The sudden entry of a maid bringing a letter means that the tasks have been immediately cast aside, the housewife has leapt up, seized the letter, and immersed herself in reading it. However, we do not see the moment of the servant's entrance or the housewife's leaping up. The picture is steeped in peace. That a moment earlier an abrupt event took place is indicated by the housewife's shoe lying on the floor and the thimble that no one has picked up. This defines the woman's emotional state. We guess that she was clearly waiting for some news from her beloved, who is on a sea voyage. The servant – perhaps at her mistress's request, or perhaps out of curiosity – uncovers a painting on which we can see a ship on a stormy sea. Now she has understood what this picture means to her mistress. But she has not come here to uncover the painting but to sweep, since under her arm she holds a bucket on her hip. She is receiving no instructions and so she does what she wants for the moment: she takes a look at the picture, which creates an equivalence between that and the letter read by her mistress. Thus we imagine that on the sudden entrance of the servant (taken away from other activities) with the letter, the housewife suddenly leaps up, losing one shoe and a thimble, but she does not bother to pick them up as the letter is the most important thing. The servant holds a second letter in her hand, but this one is addressed, as is visible in the painting – and this is a joke on the part of the artist – to the painter himself. This signals his reality in the time and space occupied by the women, who are aware of his presence. It increases the impression that we are witnessing actual events.

One can add that in the period under discussion, a mannerism arouse of inscribing a painting in a setting with buildings, for example from the perspective of narrow streets in a city, often recalling Andrea Palladio's *Teatro Olimpico* (built in 1586) in Vicenza or the set designs of other architects of the period. There are also artists' games with anamorphic perspective (which Shakespeare knew – see *Richard II*). One of the most prominent is Holbein's *The Ambassadors*. Other examples include "perspective boxes" – a combination of "peepshow" and *camera*

obscura, and perhaps also a child's model theatre - which one looks into (from two sides) through a small opening like a keyhole, in order to see the mimetically painted interior of a house. Masters in this type of artwork were Samuel van Hoogstraten and Pieter Janssens Elinga. Thanks to knowledge from the field of optics, of perspective in painting, of the structure of the eye, and of the principles of perception – as well as thanks to utter mastery of painting technique – the illusion was complete; the viewer had the impression that he/she was looking at a real interior through a keyhole. The artists were quite aware of the theatrical effect. For example, in Hoogstraten's work, theatricality is deepened by the demonstrable reaction of a painted dog and cat which clearly perceive the observer (in a box in the collection of the National Gallery in London). The painted illusion provokes amazement and delight to the present day.

We find a globe in many paintings by Collier (and not just in his work), and in the still-life discussed above, one is clearly visible at the back in front of the column. This is to make us realize that the picture does not just relate to the history of an individual, but is of a universal nature; it applies to all people of different cultures. The globe, as a sign of planet Earth, of the "world" conquered by the Netherlands, is also the sign and the name of the "Globe" Theatre in London (built in 1599). It is there that the *teatrum mundi* is played out, where we all play various roles, although they lead – either in comedy or in tragedy – to an end that is the same for each of us. The globe also embodies the topos of *contemptus mundi* (disdain of the world), which functions as a reminder of the vanity of all human desires, deeds, and achievements.

Next to the globe, we see a set of musical pipes; this is a very frequent phallic motif in the iconography of the time (for example, in Frans Hals's *Merrymakers at Shrovetide*, which will be discussed in detail in the chapter on the sin of gluttony). The flaccid bag, the lowered mouth piece, may also indicate impotence, the inevitable indisposition of age. Here it may suggest nostalgically recalled delights of the flesh. To the side, there is a barrel organ with a crank, decorated with a carnation design,

the Latin name for a carnation being "dianthus" or the "flower of God". Thus, there is a reference to Christ and His Passion. In religious paintings, the Mother of God often holds a carnation in her hand. In the Protestant England of Shakespeare's day the Marian associations disappeared, but, in place of that, carnations were often a motif in needlework. According to one medieval legend, the Virgin Mary's teardrops, shed during the Crucifixion, having fallen to the earth, grew in the form of beautiful carnations. Further, in Italian the carnation was referred to as "chiodino" (which gives the Polish "goździk"), which also contains a reference to Our Lord's Sufferings. A somewhat different meaning was given to the flower in northern Europe, where carnations were linked to hopes for marriage and for love. In Collier's painting there is no living flower, but only its "reflection" in the form of ornamentation (a sign of love that has passed?) on a wooden box (a sign of a coffin?); there remain silence and the hope of eternal life. But even if a "living" flower were in the picture, that "life" would be a matter of convention. There is no living human being either – only a "reflection" of the person in objects, in the mirror to life, in that property store. Alongside the carnations on the box of the barrel organ, dandelions are also visible – a symbol of the power of endurance, joy of life, fulfilment of dreams, but also of Our Lord's Sufferings and the Resurrection. On the left-hand side, we see some ivy growing out of and over the composition – the sign of eternal life, the immortality of the soul. Earthly memory is replaced by a sign of eternity, and perhaps of timelessness. The ivy of the cemetery will cover everything. Sound will pass into silence. However, the time of a painting flows differently from that of human life. In *vanitas* paintings we often see clocks that have stopped. At that time, they were luxury items, but basking in wealth has its limit too. We pass from the sphere of life, where time is calibrated, into a timeless eternity. In Shakespeare's play, Henry VI reflects on the time of life as on the periods marked out by a sundial made of a stick.

To carve out dials quaintly, point by point,
Thereby to see the minutes how they run,
How many make the hour full complete;
How many hours bring about the day;
How many days will finish up the year;
How many years a mortal man may live.
(*Henry VI*, Part III, II.v)

Richard II reflects on time in a similar way (V.i). So belief in eternal life remains. To enter it, it is necessary to follow His teachings. Alas, on our road there stand – as Thomas Dekker declares, seven monsters – the deadly sins. Because of that, we cannot seize the fleeting fortunate moment, *kairos* itself, at the right time. Afterwards it is too late. Despite Saint Paul's injunctions to lead a moderate life, maintaining a distance to the temporal.

> **29** But this I say, brethren, the time is short: it remaineth, that both they that have wives be as though they had none;
> **30** And they that weep, as though they wept not; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; and they that buy, as though they possessed not;
> **31** And they that use this world, as not abusing it: for the fashion of this world passeth away. (1 Corinthians 7: 29-31)

The purse at the base of the globe reminds us of the vanity and futility of wealth, which does not protect us against transience. This is a frequent motif in painting (on the other hand, painters delighted in imported and very expensive pigments). To the side, a casket with jewels has the same significance. It also reminds us that salvation cannot be bought. It condemns greed – one of the deadly sins. Beside the casket we see a nautilus shell, which because of its shape was associated with the human skull and, thus, with death, transience, the vanity of earthly life. It is a synecdoche of these. It also delighted people with the curves of its spiral (it is, in fact, one of the natural examples of a Fibonacci spiral). We see how the immediate proximity of objects, purse, casket with jewels, and nautilus shell, creates meaning. It

reveals the tinsel of earthly goods. The exotic nautilus shell of-
ten appears in still-lifes of the period. The skull is more literal.
In *The Merchant of Venice*, Portia declares that she would rather
be married "to a death's-head with a bone in his mouth" than to
the County Palatine. (In emblem literature, we often encounter
skulls with a tibia and a sickle in their teeth.)

In *Hamlet*, the skull of Yorick the jester is an eloquent allu-
sion to the *vanitas* motifs that are present in the painting of the
time. For what, indeed, does material wealth mean in the face
of the vanity of life? Hamlet says:

> That skull had a tongue in it, and could sing once: how the knave
> jowls it to the ground, as if it were Cain's jaw-bone, that did the
> first murder! It might be the pate of a politician, which this ass now
> o'er-reaches; one that would circumvent God, might it not?
> . . . .
> Or of a courtier; which could say "Good morrow, sweet lord! How
> dost thou, good lord?" This might be my lord such-a-one, that
> praised my lord such-a-one's horse, when he meant to beg it; might
> it not?
> . . . .
> Why, e'en so. And now my Lady Worm's, chapless and knocked
> about the mazard with a sexton's spade. Here's fine revolution, an
> we had the trick to see't. Did these bones cost no more the breeding
> but to play at loggets with them? Mine ache to think on't.
> . . . .

There's another. Why may not that be the skull of a lawyer?
Where be his quiddities now, his quillities, his cases, his ten-
ures, and his tricks? Why does he suffer this mad knave now to
knock him about the sconce with a dirty shovel and will not tell
him of his action of battery? Hum, this fellow might be in's time
a great buyer of land, with his statutes, his recognizances, his
fines, his double vouchers, his recoveries. Is this the fine of his
fines and the recovery of his recoveries, to have his fine pate full
of fine dirt? Will his vouchers vouch him no more of his pur-
chases, and double ones too, than the length and breadth of
a pair of indentures? The very conveyances of his lands will

scarcely lie in this box, and must th' inheritor himself have no more, ha? (V.i)

It is not by chance that Hamlet refers to "the first murder": pride, envy, anger, and murder have accompanied humanity from the very start. The first cause of evil was seen to lie in Original Sin. Elsewhere in Shakespeare, Cain is called "the first male child". In Elsinore the whole world is coming apart, and the history of a human being is evil, decay, and worms. *Hamlet* is a triumph of decay over life. The "sweet prince" presents matters thus to Claudius: "Your worm is your only emperor for diet. We fat all creatures else to fat us, and we fat ourselves for maggots. Your fat king and your lean beggar is but variable service—two dishes but to one table. That's the end" (IV.iii). This means that in the face of transience and death, all becomes vanity, the human being too. "What a piece of work is a man, how noble in reason, how infinite in faculties, in form and moving how express and admirable; in action how like an angel, in apprehension how like a god: the beauty of the world, the paragon of animals—and yet, to me, what is this quintessence of dust?" (II.ii). In the dissolution of the body, atoms were not seen, for they were not known yet, but nothingness, at best a "quintessence of dust". In one's lifetime, decay was syphilis.

When Hamlet learns that he holds the skull of Yorick in his hand, the companion of his youthful frolics, this leads the prince to further reflections.

> Here hung those lips that I have kissed I know not how oft. Where be your gibes now? your gambols? Your songs? your flashes of merriment that were wont to set the table on a roar? Not one now to mock your own grinning? Quite chapfallen? Now get you to my lady's chamber, and tell her, let her paint an inch thick, to this favor she must come. (V.i)

Then he turns to Horatio with a rhetorical question. "Dost thou think Alexander looked o' this fashion i' th' earth?" And then he lets his imagination fly and proves that Alexander the Great's ashes could become a bung to plug a barrel. "Alexander died,

Alexander was buried, Alexander returneth to dust; the dust is earth; of earth we make loam; and why of that loam whereto he was converted might they not stop a beer barrel?" (V.i). In *King John*, Prince Henry also sighs for his dead father, saying: "this was now a king and now is clay" (V.vii). And of women's painting their faces, Shakespeare had a well-established, very negative view; Hamlet reproaches Ophelia with "God hath given you one face, and you make yourselves another" (III.i). Other writers of the time said the same.

When the skull itself had become widespread on the stage, the skeleton made its appearance in the theatre (as in the picture discussed below): for example, in *The Tragedy of Hoffman* by Henry Chettle from 1602. The skeleton is in the care of the son of a pirate whose piratical activities have led him to the scaffold. The skeleton is kept in a cave on the headland of Rozewie (*sic*!) and is meant to remind the son of the need to take vengeance. Thus, the skeleton does not so much prompt musings on the fragility of life as prefigure bloody revenge. Here we clearly see two strands of thought: an ontological one and – one might say – an axiological one (the code of honour demanded an act of vengeance if punishment could not touch the miscreant in any other way). In *The Tragedy of Hoffman*, we have a perverse situation, since both father and son are wrongdoers; nonetheless, the revenger uses the arguments of family and ethics to support his ignoble deeds.

In one of the *vanitas* paintings of the time we see a skeleton that has the features of a living person: it stands and is able to gesture, to move hands and fingers (in a symbolic gesture, it extinguishes a candle), and it can keep its balance. It even has its genitals modestly covered. It is, thus, a conventional "anatomy" of a human being, a vision of a person, as it were, in an X-ray, stripped of his/her body, who stares at a still-life, in which, besides many objects linked to human achievement, such as crown, scepter, books, banners, and weapons, but also those linked to human pleasures and at the same time to human frailty, such as playing cards and dice, musical scores and musical instruments, we have as part of the composition skulls, an

hourglass, and a clock. All this is to remind us of the fragility and the vanity of our lives, of time and the inevitability of transience, and since antiquity plucked roses have been linked with death: in ancient Rome, the "Rosalia," the festival of roses, was associated with the cult of the dead. Cesare Ripa notes that the rose is a sign denoting the fragility of our lives, since its blossoms come last, after all other flowers, and yet dies first. That is not actually true, but this is beside the point. The skeleton becomes a sign of the passage of time: it refers to all the dimensions of time – past, present, and future. It is what remains of us. The nakedness of a skeleton, while simultaneously retaining the power of gesture belonging to a living person, places it in a conjectural future (in relation to the scene on display): we understand that the painter here showed a living person (with blood and body), one who stands before us, contemplating objects, extinguishing a candle, etc. However, the skeleton moves us forward, literally showing what remains of the living person. As the moralists remind us, what is pride and arrogance in relation to ourselves in the face of the moment that is given to us? A person lives, relishes tinsel and vanity, not thinking that he or she is given but an instant, and after that, what is sublime, beautiful, what brings pride in relation to others, become but dust, the skeleton we see before us. Towards the end of his famous monologue, Hamlet says:

> Who would fardels bear,
> To grunt and sweat under a weary life,
> But that the dread of something after death,
> The undiscovered country from whose bourn
> No traveler returns. . . .
> Thus conscience does make cowards of us all,
> And thus the native hue of resolution
> Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought,
> And enterprises of great pitch and moment
> With this regard their currents turn awry
> And lose the name of action. (III.i)

Returning to Collier's painting, let us note that a barely visible decorative element on one shell is – as other scholars have noted – a scene showing a dog chasing a deer. Perhaps this points to the pursuit of the human soul by the forces of wickedness – a kind of "everyman" (a morality play with this title survives from around 1400). In turn, the broken strings of the violin suggests an interruption in the course of time (life), in the continuity of being, and they emphasize the fragility of human existence. The silence of the painting is eloquent. The instrument itself, besides obvious meanings (art, beauty), also possessed erotic connotations: its shape led it to be connected with the female body. The bow, in turn, was a frequent phallic symbol. For example, in *Interior with a Cavalier and a Lady* (1685) by Willem van Mieris, we see a fiddle-player has placed his bow between the spread legs of a "lady" who is drinking wine (the upturned glass means that she has already emptied it and wants more). Next to that we see a plate with oysters (vaginal in their meaning, and oysters are also aphrodisiacs). Elsewhere in Shakespeare, we find the following passage:

> You are a fair viol, and your sense the strings
> Who, fingered to make man his lawful music,
> Would draw heaven down and all the gods to hearken;
> But, being played upon before your time,
> Hell only danceth at so harsh a chime.
> Good sooth, I care not for you. (*Pericles* I.i)

In this way, too, in the painting under discussion, what is literal becomes a visual pun and meanings are added that are legible only to those who know the appropriate codes. The interpretation of these creates a thread of understanding between painter and receiver. Those codes were a feature of the thinking of all of the most cosmopolitan Europeans, as a result of which an educated Czech from, let us say, the reign of Rudolf II could go to Paris, Amsterdam, Rome, or London and be able to "read" architecture and art, plans for the layout of palaces or gardens, and even court theatre performed in a foreign language. The

fashion for private collections of curiosities and art had only just begun, but was also a symptom of a new time and the appearance of "gourmets" and connoisseurs of art. One needed to know (as today, one needs to know about wines, which Jan Klata mocks in the Gdańsk performance of *H.* after Shakespeare).

Above the violin is an open volume – the description of a journey to Jerusalem, that is to a place important for both Judaism and Christianity; there is the source of everything, including hope. The strongest shaft of light falls there. The impression is that the rest is sunk in darkness and only the Book remains, since it is the metaphorical source of light, and also of the hope that not all will be swallowed up by darkness. We are invited to think about life after death. But the volume has not been read to the end, for, in any case, life is too short to see and to read all we wish on our journey through life. Death interrupts all our actions, intentions, and plans. Other books also lie on the table. They, too – as they are records of someone's memory – are themselves recorded – as a painting – in the reader's memory. In this way, they live as long as someone reads them. Here we can see an analogy with the picture we are discussing: it, too, is a record of someone's memory, and at the same time it is as if in transmission to us, it is recorded in our memory. On the other side of the volume, we see an overturned lute, and behind that the upper part of an hourglass (invented [?] by the monk Luitprand of Chartres in the eighth century CE). The sand has ceased to run. This also establishes new relations and meanings. The lute, besides the obvious meanings ascribed to musical instruments, also had strong erotic connotations. The Dutch word "luite" meant both a lute and a vagina. In scenes set in brothels, prostitutes very frequently play on the lute. The visual pun is obvious here. In John Marston's *The Dutch Courtesan* (c. 1604), the prostitute Franceschina plays on the lute and sings. In *Much Ado about Nothing* (there is an erotic pun in the title: the word "nothing" also meant female private parts), Hero says to her dance partner that "the lute should be like the case" (II.i). She is thinking about his mask and his face, but for contemporaries the *obscenum* contained in the words "lute" and "case" was

transparent. Thus, erotic games are vanity too, vanity that quickly – along with life itself – passes. In Collier's painting, the hourglass reminds us of this. The lute further recalls another deadly sin – licentiousness. We see how the proximity of appropriately chosen objects, their spatial contiguity, create new meanings. In the same way, the numbers on a clock face change their numerical value depending on whether they are next to a big or a small hand (or both together).

In Collier's painting, we have more instruments with erotic connotations: at the edge of the table-top, below the violin, there lie flutes. Just like pipes, these have phallic connotations. These instruments will play no more. To the side lies an open score; the piece was not played to the end. Overturned goblets lying at the edge of the table recall the fragility of life and transience. No one will raise them now. Art historians have established that the sheet music is that of a concrete piece from a large collection of compositions of Jacob van Eyck, *The Flute's Pleasure Garden* (1646). The score is open at the variation on the piece by Giovanni Gastold "Questa Dolce Sirena," which refers to the mythological sirens who with their wondrous song lured sailors to their doom. This creates an equivalence with Collier's painting: it recalls the seductive "siren," nature with its earthly joys and riches. The sense of hearing, the beauty of music, and the sound of words – a frequent motif in the allegorical painting of the period – are contrasted with the silence of the picture. Our noisy life passes into the silence of death. And here again we see how the compositional proximity of objects marked by allegorical and cultural connotations creates meaning. We are entering into the regions of grand conventionality, the language of art and theatre in the seventeenth century.

The richly decorated cloth and the fabric laid out over the table's surface, which like a border "supports" the entire composition (by colour too, which deviates from the palette of the whole!) – these can mean the splendour and the pride in wealth that someone has attained personally, or indeed a whole country (such as Holland, at that time the richest state in Europe, if not in the whole world). The Dutch were very proud of their

development of international trade (on the other hand, they con-demned pomp and riches), of the variety of goods available in the market (moralists also spoke out against this abundance). Hence a gathering of imported objects (rich floor coverings, car-pets, exotic fruits, and so on) is a frequent feature of pictures of the period. The miniature portrait of a man, which I have men-tioned already, hanging from the table top, is a self-portrait of the artist (in other words a "selfie") holding the tools of his trade, brushes and a palette. Signature and date (a novelty in Dutch painting) was not enough for the artist; he felt the need to show his face. He placed himself on the stage. Perhaps as the promp-ter? In that event, the miniature becomes a sign of the promp-ter's box. It is also an invitation to a dialogue: "It is I who am speaking with you," he seems to say. And what I have to say is my picture, which I give you to interpret. On the left-hand side there is a Latin inscription "Vanitas vanitatum et omnia vaini-tas" ([V]anity of vanities; all is vanity) (Ecclesiastes 1.2). In other pictures, we find other *sententiae*, for example, "pulvis et umbra sumus" (we are but dust and shadow) or "Vita brevis ars longa" (Life is short, art is long). Here, the painter speaks with us on the topic. This is the meaning of his work. In Shakespeare's writing, we also have scenes as if taken from a painting. In *The Merchant of Venice*, the Prince of Morocco, who is taking part in the contest for Portia's hand in marriage, finds in the golden casket a skull with a written scroll in its eye socket; he reads and knows that he has lost (II.vii).

The miniature I have mentioned, however, is a fairly perfidi-ous part of the work, since it is, in principle, a picture within a picture. The invisible artist, who in a material sense is no longer there, looks at us from a counterfeit image, as we look at him painted as a figure in the painting. The painter signals a dialogue, separated by time, and yet taking place here and now. But as long as we look, we are alive, both we who are look-ing and he who is "eternalized," an element in a still-life. He is recorded in our memory; he extends his life span. And so art, as a form of dialogue between someone present and someone ab-sent (and also between a person and God), creates a mechanism

for the transmission of memory, one in which what is living be-
comes dead, while what is dead has the gift of becoming an
event, since it is recorded in the living consciousness, imagina-
tion, and memory of the observer. It is one of the ways of avoid-
ing "the abyss of forgetting," the oblivion that is shown in the
frontispiece of Sir Walter Raleigh's *History of the World.* Faith
and art can give sense to the emptiness of life. This is also the
theme of the beautiful, medieval, and anonymous English poem
Pearl.

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