EXPERIMENTING WITH THE COURSE 'A CULTURAL HISTORY OF BRITAIN' IN A HUNGARIAN COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

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Antecedents

Until the 1990s training students of English at tertiary level automatically meant training teachers of English, as it was taken for granted that they all wanted to become teachers, and in spite of some reforms there has been little change in this respect up to the present day, though in the past decade it has become even more obvious than before that the majority of English graduates do not wish to be teachers. I find it a luxury to treat and train all students as future teachers.

Although some kind of credit system was introduced everywhere in the middle of the 90s resulting in the division of courses into voluntary and compulsory, the content of the required courses has not changed much in relation to the earlier system. Two main fields still dominate the training of students of English: literature and linguistics. These two areas have always been overrepresented; students take one or more courses in linguistics or literature almost every term, while history, civilisation and other subjects are restricted to one term in most institutions. It seems to me that even in the two major fields there has been a shift from the practical to the theoretical. While earlier descriptive grammar prevailed, which helped to improve the students' command of English, recently there has been more and more theoretical linguistics, which is less useful for the average student.

One of the reasons why literature was so important in the past was that it is the 'carrier' of the language and if we choose the right pieces of literature, they can help enrich students' vocabulary and facilitate the correct use of the language. Another reason for the importance of literature was that for decades after the second world war there were no opportunities to travel to English-speaking countries, there were no audio-visual aids until the seventies and no English-language television channels until the nineties; thus the only means of being exposed to and learning the language were through the teacher and the written word. And although the situation has changed immeasurably over the last few decades, this process has not been accompanied by a restructuring of course content and the importance afforded to particular subjects.

I can also see 'a force of inertia' in this phenomenon. As students' training had focussed on the fields of linguistics and literature, when they in

turn became teachers or lecturers, they also continued to cultivate these areas, not having the competence/knowledge to cover other areas. There have, of course, always been a few exceptional personalities who have tried to educate their students in other fields of culture within the framework of their literature course. When speaking eg about romanticism, these lecturers have also analysed paintings, music, etc of this period besides the literary works. However, they were exceptions to the rule. For the majority of teachers it was more comfortable to speak only of literature in a literature seminar or lecture, as it needed less knowledge in other fields of culture.

Besides short history courses and an ever decreasing number of seminars serving the enhancement of language skills, the only remaining opportunity to say something about British (or American) culture was the one-term course in British (American) civilisation, although this was mainly dedicated to the contemporary political, legal, education, etc system in Britain (or the USA). Earlier books entitled 'British Civilisation' very often discussed modern Britain exclusively, and devoted just one chapter, if any, to the arts or similar cultural topics. Similar books today tend not to use the word 'civilisation', yet they follow the same approach, even if they do contain a chapter on history.

The instruction of 'A Cultural History of Britain' was unthinkable in the past, though there were such initiatives in other departments. In the German department of my college it has always been natural to have separate modern and historical *Landeskunde* courses. Similarly, there is a noticeable difference in books published about various countries on this subject matter. I have never seen a book (in English) with the title 'An English/British Cultural History', though there are titles on Hungarian and German cultural history. This difference is difficult to explain, and as a representative of the publisher Thames and Hudson told me at the Budapest Book Festival a few weeks ago, this is an obvious gap in their publishing activity.

In the middle of the 1990s, with the advent of optional courses, institutions of Hungarian higher education had the opportunity to introduce courses also on English arts and culture. We sometimes also succeeded in changing optionals into required courses after a time, but the proportion of these new courses is still negligible. While English literature courses may comprise five or more terms, the history of the whole of English culture is given only one term in our institution.

This phenomenon of inertia survives amid obvious signs of change. Many students do not want to work as 'teachers of English language and literature', as their diploma officially used to call and still often calls the graduates. Many of them simply want to improve their English in higher

education, an idea against which some tutors protest, saying it is not the duty of higher education. Our graduates want to work in all walks of life, using their English as guides, translators, interpreters, etc or work for a (foreign) firm which demands that employees be proficient in at least one foreign tongue. Under these changed circumstances maintaining the dominance of linguistics and literature is difficult to justify. What these young people need most is better language skills and more information about the English-speaking countries. If you travel as a tourist, a businessman, or a guide in England or if you receive English-speaking guests in your country, understanding and awareness of your culture or getting to know their culture can be far more important than knowing various literary or linguistic theories.

What is 'culture'?

'Culture' is a very difficult concept as there is no fixed meaning as such; being used to designate different things by different people. The Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary gives the following definitions for the most important meanings from the point of view of our topic:

1. the customs and beliefs, art, way of life and social organization of a particular country or group
2. art, music, literature, etc thought of as a group
3. the beliefs and attitudes about sth that people in a particular group or organization share

To simplify it a bit, 'culture' is used typically in everyday language either to refer to the 'high' arts (music, painting, literature, etc) or in a wider sense to describe the way of life of a particular people, tribe, country, etc. (For example how they entertain themselves, govern themselves, eat, etc.) This latter meaning covers such a wide area that it would be hopeless to speak about all those aspects of culture throughout the centuries, especially within the present time limits. Even reducing our topic to the 'high' arts is a great challenge. It is, however, a practical need. If you travel abroad or you receive foreign guests and if you (or your guests) have certain cultural needs, you must have some knowledge of architecture, painting, music, theatre, etc. For example on visiting an English cathedral town it is unlikely that anyone, with even minimum cultural needs, will miss visiting the cathedral, but unless you have some previous knowledge and vocabulary in the field of cathedral architecture and architectural styles, you may easily miss seeing the best parts of the building complex and you may not be able

to judge the quality of the architecture, or you may even have such basic practical problems that you won't be able to understand the local guide or a brochure.

Similarly, I have often seen Hungarians in trouble if a foreigner asks them: 'Can you tell me where I can listen to traditional Hungarian music?' or 'Can you recommend some good Hungarian folk music records?'. The majority of Hungarian students (and, unfortunately, of the whole population) have no idea what authentic Hungarian folk music is, where you can hear such music or what records to recommend to foreigners.

When teaching culture we have to restrict our attention to certain periods, certain achievements and certain artists because of its scope and, if possible, we should draw parallels with our own culture. We cannot afford what teachers of literature often can, that is they dedicate a whole term to each of the past few centuries. Fortunately (or unfortunately) the various fields of English arts had highlights in certain periods, but English artists did not continuously produce high quality works of art throughout the centuries. In this way we can concentrate on those periods when the English excelled in some field, not only from the point of view of their own art history, but from a European perspective as well. And at least briefly we should compare their achievements with ours. I often see teachers reaching the wrong conclusion that is, as a result of English being the number one language in the world today, they suppose that the cultural achievements of the English have also been outstanding throughout the centuries. But just as it is the case in other countries, the various fields of culture may have flourished in different periods, or works of arts of certain periods may have simply not survived. While one of the greatest achievements of English arts was Medieval – especially Gothic cathedral – architecture, almost the whole of Medieval painting and a great deal of Medieval sculpture are no longer extant. Our countries in Middle Europe may have excelled in other fields of culture, we have no reason to feel culturally inferior to the English. This is true of both folk and high art.

Why is 'cultural history' needed?

In the past students used to study only 'history', which very often comprises only the description of political and military events throughout the centuries, full of names of rulers, politicians, military commanders. Students are asked to remember a lot of dates of battles, treaties, beginnings and ends of reigns of kings and queens. Though these events and personalities often had a decisive influence on their age (eg think of the influence of Henry VIII's private life on the story of the Church of

England), I often find it more important and interesting to look at how the conditions for ordinary and richer people have changed during these centuries. It seems that it is easier to make most people accept the necessity of teaching some art history than get them to recognise the importance of historical changes in people's everyday life. (So 'culture' in a broader sense.) The taken-for-granted aspects of today's society, that is that both boys and girls can be educated at all levels, that we can have gas heating in our homes, that in more developed countries each family member can have a room of his or her own, etc go unquestioned by students, but some of these things may not have been natural even when our parents were young, not to speak of earlier centuries. The right to privacy was unknown in the Middle Ages even among the wealthy. My students are always surprised when they hear that the lord of a medieval castle often had to tolerate soldiers passing through his bedroom when the changing of the guard took place in the tower. There are a lot of other things in the fields of hygiene, housing, education, entertainment, etc which sound quite shocking when we look at them in the light of other centuries, even decades.

One would not believe in how many different ways the successive waves of different invading peoples and their culture have influenced the present cultures of the British Isles. The invasions of the Celts, Romans, Anglo-Saxons, Vikings, Normans, etc should not only be treated as historical events, but as the arrivals of new types of culture, which have had a lasting impact on the culture of the population of the British Isles eversince. (And very often on that of North America: just as Hungarian folk music has survived best outside Hungary, in Transylvania, one of the best places to study authentic Irish folk music is Newfoundland in Canada.)

The problem of the students' previous knowledge and cultural level

When studying the arts or other fields of culture of another country one needs some basic knowledge of one's native culture and vocabulary in one's native language. The latter was recognised by compilers of entrance exam tests, and for several consecutive years examinees had to explain the meanings of Hungarian words in an otherwise English test. If you have poor vocabulary in a certain field in your native language, you are not likely to have a rich one in a foreign language. Though it might occasionally happen that you learn the foreign word for a concept earlier than the native one, it is far more common that you know the word first in your native tongue, and then in the foreign language. When I started to teach my first introductory courses on English painting and architecture in the mid 90s, I supposed that my students would be familiar with the Hungarian words for the most

essential parts of a church and I would only have to teach the English equivalents, but soon I realized that even the native words were unknown to many of them. Later some seminar groups also suggested that I should take them to the cathedral of our town and show these things and give the Hungarian words. These visits proved very useful, because they learnt the basics of church architecture in both languages, plus they had a guided tour of our cathedral which many of them would never have had without this opportunity.

Here I have to remark that in the past decade there has been a gradual decline in the academic level of students coming into higher education. We anticipated this to a certain extent, as a lot of teachers of Russian had to be retrained as English teachers and more and more students were admitted to an ever growing number of universities and colleges, not only in the field of English, but in other majors as well. There is a general feeling that students are not as well-educated in secondary schools today as they used to be, many of them drop out during the first year in college (about half of the students of English) and the 'production line' mentality in higher education does not help in maintaining quality education, indeed many institutions have become 'diploma factories'.

I tested the cultural level of my students before they started my courses in the mid 90s, and at the beginning of this term I made a similar survey. I found it important to ask questions on both their knowledge of Hungarian culture, about their understanding of general concepts, and about what they have heard about British culture so far. As I like to compare not only high arts, but also the folk arts of Hungary, Great Britain and Ireland, the test included a few questions about Hungarian folk culture. Similarly, as I commenced an optional course on British music this term, I wondered what they had heard about it earlier. The results are rather shocking, as you can see in the following section, and it is a hopeless task to attempt to fill in the gaps in one term within one course. I often feel that I should promote their knowledge of Hungarian culture at least as much as British. It is more shameful not to be aware of our own culture than that of another country, on the other hand I must not forget that I'm training students of English. I need to find a balance.

Here are the results of the survey:

A survey among first- and second-year college students of English about their knowledge of Hungarian and English culture and history

(35 full- and part-time students in three different groups have been asked.)

Questions about Hungarian folk culture:

1.	**What ethnographical regions do you know in historical Hungary?** 0 good guess: 9 1 good guess: 4 2 good guesses: 1o more than two: 12	**Comments:** Geographical regions (Transylvania, Upper Hungary) are often mixed up with ethnographical ones.
2.	**Where are Kalotaszeg and Mezőség?** (A possible answer is: Kalotaszeg is between Cluj and Hunadeora; Mezőség is between Cluj and Reghin) students who have no idea: 25 some idea about either of the two: 9 students who knew both: 1	Many of those who tried to guess the location of these two very important ethnographical regions at all located them in today's Slovakia or Hungary, although they are in Romania.
3.	**What is a folk song?** (The most common criteria in Hungary: composer unknown, inherited from generation to generation, surviving in variations both in time and in different dialects, typically the product of villages, etc) an approximately good definition: 17 some idea about the concept: 17 no idea: 1	It seems the students had some basic education in this field from secondary school. There are essential differences in the interpretation of this concept in different countries.
4.	**Who is Zoltán Kallós?** (An expected answer: The most important Hungarian folklorist of our day, who lives in Cluj and has excelled mainly in collecting folk songs and ballads.) students who know of him: 11 those who have not heard of him: 24	Even those who know of him write only 'folk song collector'. (In this field his importance can be compared only to that of Bartók and Kodály. He is compiler and editor of many books and records.)

Questions about students' knowledge of British history and arts:
(Note: these students have already had an introductory course to British history and culture during their first term.)

5.	**When were the stone-, bronze- and iron ages?** good guess: 0	No comment. (Some say the iron age was in the Middle Ages.)

	acceptable guess: 0 no idea: 35	
6.	**Approximately how long and when was Stonehenge built and who were the builders?** good guess: 0 some vague idea: 6 no idea or a totally wrong guess: 29	Though Stonehenge was finished by appr. 1500 BC and the Celts arrived in Britain only in appr. 800 BC, the most common guess is that it was built by the Celts (Druids).
7.	**Who were the Celts and when did their culture flourish in Britain?** **c**orrect answer: 0 some idea: 11 no or completely wrong idea: 24	Most students who write anything at all consider them to have been the original population of the British Isles.
8.	**What are the origins of the Vikings and the Normans? Is their any racial relationship between them?** correct answer: 6 some idea: 8 no idea: 21	Most students do not realize their common Germanic origin and the fact that the Vikings who settled down in Normandy were called Normans. Many students consider the Normans simply 'French'.
9.	**What is a cathedral**? (answer: the church of a(n arch)bishop) correct answer: 2 no idea: 33	Common misbeliefs are connected with the size or style of the church.
10.	**Name some English cathedrals.** students who can't name any cathedral: 7 1 cathedral is named: 15 2 cathedrals are named: 11 more than two: 2	St Paul's seems to be the best-known, which is followed by Durham, York and Canterbury. Westminster Abbey is often mistaken for a cathedral.
11.	**Which English painters have you heard about and can you name some of his paintings?** none: 20 1 painter – no painting: 2 1 painter – 1 painting: 0 2 painters – no painting: 13 2 or more painters – some paintings: 0	Not a single English painting was named.
12.	**Name some English composers and some of their compositions:**	Only one piece of music was mentioned altogether. (Though

	none: 21 1 composer, no composition: 7 1 composer, 1 composition: 1 2 composers, no composition: 5 2 composers, 1 or 2 compositions: 0 3 composers: 1	there must be some students of music among them.)
13.	**Do you know foreign composers who were active in England?** none: 22 one: 4 two: 6 three: 3	Haendel, Haydn, Mendelsohn are the typical answers, but it is again striking that the majority cannot mention a single one.

Conclusions

The findings of the survey are disappointing and justify my earlier impressions. While I try not to forget in my classes that I am teaching English arts or cultural history, it is often unavoidable to draw parallels between our countries, and mention facts about our own culture or clarify basic concepts. To give an example: if you try to teach something about the folk music of the British Isles, you have to make it clear that this concept does not have the same meaning there. You can see records where the title says 'Celtic music' or 'Irish folk music', while the contents make it clear that some of the songs were composed a few years ago by persons whose names are given. This is in direct contrast to the Hungarian interpretation of the word 'folk music' (similarly to folk songs, tales, ballads, etc), which stands for a genre where the author must be unknown and there cannot be just one 'authentic' version of the song, the score of which the composer may have published in a printed form. Or taking another example, 'folk architecture' means village architecture in Hungary, while in Britain it depends on the qualification of the designer of the building whether a house is an example of folk (vernacular) or polite architecture, whether it is in a village or in the suburb of a town. Unless we clarify the meaning of these categories in the countries or cultures concerned it is very difficult to go into details on the topic. But for this purpose we need points of references, preferably some knowledge of our own culture.

Perhaps at this point I can make a personal remark. Many of my colleagues are astonished when they hear for the first time that although I am originally a teacher of German and English, in recent years I have done a lot of journalism in the field of Hungarian folk arts, what is more, last year a volume of my interviews with folk singers and musicians was published in Budapest. I think there is no contradiction between being interested in your own culture and teaching another. What is more you cannot really know

another nation's culture without being able to compare it to others, preferably to your own, or the other way round. I have heard from some folk musicians that they deliberately started to learn Romanian fiddle playing to see the difference, and in this way to be able to tell what is typical of the Hungarian fiddle style. And this is true about many aspects of life. People who have never been to other countries (or not to many) like to claim that their country is the most beautiful. We could say with some irony that a lack of knowledge fosters self-assurance, but as my grandfather used to say: 'Half-educated people are the most dangerous ones.' Unless we know the culture of other nations we have no right to claim that ours is the best. But I also find the opposite of this behaviour dangerous. It is fashionable these days among young people to admire everything that comes from England or the USA, while they often have no idea about the values of their own culture. I think the cultural heritage of Central or Eastern European countries is not inferior to that of Western Europe, not to mention America.

As I mentioned above, at the moment I am trying to find the right proportions within the framework of existing courses, but the longer I teach art or cultural history the more I am convinced about the need for some comparative cultural studies so that the young generation should be able to judge things according to their real value.

It is accidental that I am writing about these problems on the very first day of Hungary being a member state of the European Union and this new situation merely gives emphasis to the need for understanding between cultures, and to the necessity of communication between representatives of various countries and cultures. And what we need is not just understanding the present institutional, political, financial, etc systems, but also the historical and cultural antecedents of these in order to be able to appreciate the diversity and cultural colourfulness of our world.

WHAT SHOULD A NON-NATIVE SPEAKER OF ENGLISH BE AWARE OF WHEN WRITING IN ENGLISH FOR ACADEMIC PURPOSES?

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1. Introduction

The international proliferation of academic ideas and findings is nowadays almost exclusively done in written academic English. That is why a great number of academic writers from different cultural and language background endeavor to write their academic articles in English. However, some of these articles, although written in the intelligible English, never get published as they are estimated uncommunicative for the international discourse community. The obstacles to an effective international academic communication are understood as the consequences of the different academic rules which operate within parallel discourse communities: writing habits acquired within one's own writing culture are often transferred to the writing in a foreign language and may sound inappropriate for the international academic readership, mostly accustomed to the English academic style. Hence, the aim of this paper is to discuss the nature of these obstacles in order to be of assistance to non-native speakers of English, who are novices in the international academic community, by arousing their awareness of the areas of academic discourse which are the most 'responsible' for building up an effective communication between the writer and his/ her international readership.

2. English academic style compared to other academic styles

An academic style can be best explained as an intellectual style designed for academic purposes and developed under different historical, cultural, social, political and other influences. It incorporates traditional writing values, attitudes and approaches to science, education and knowledge in general. The existence of various writing styles is the reality an academic writer has to face and make an effort to recognize his/her own writing culture among other writing cultures**.**

Based on the article *Academic Writing in Czech and English* by S. Čmejrkova, I shall try to explain the complexity of conditions which underlies the differences in academic writing styles and by reducing them to five, offer a rather simplified account of the causes of their divergences.

The differences in academic styles are often rooted in the school of theoretical linguistics which prevails in a certain writing culture. Thus, Anglo-Saxon linguistics which is based on a pragmatic approach to language and has produced the theory of communication, views the creation of discourse in terms of writer-reader interaction. In contrast to it, the majority of writing cultures of Slavonic origin, including Serbian, have been, for a long time, under the influence of the Prague functional-structuralist school, which neglects the notion of building up the relationship between the writer and his anticipated readership. That is why most of the Slavonic academic styles, 'being aimed at an unknown and distant addressee' (Čmejrkova, op.cit.:143) may sound too formal and aloof to an English academic reader.

In the field of applied linguistics two clearly different attitudes towards writing and discourse composing can be distinguished: according to the Anglo-Saxon writing tradition, writing is a skill which is possible to master after a sufficient amount of practice, while in some other writing traditions, such as, Serbian, it is considered a mere language (stylistic) exercise aimed at encouraging the author's creativity. These attitudes are built in the educational systems and the consequences are evidenced in the way English and non-English academic writers create their discourse. In the same vein, the expectations of good discourse are more evidenced in the educational systems which favour *literacy* to *oracy*, and which place a great deal of emphasis on the techniques of essay writing (Clyne, 1987:74).

It is often said that English academic texts are closer to non-academic ones: they are designed to reach their audience in a smooth and easy way. The writer is the one who is responsible to make his/her writing as readable as possible. However, some academic texts are created according to the writer's belief that it is the reader who has to make an effort in order to infer the meaning of the text. Thus, according to the new language typology suggested by J. Hinds (1981), which distinguishes the languages on the basis of *reader vs. writer responsibility* for comprehending the text, the English academic style is considered the 'writer responsibility' type of style. However, some other languages rely on the 'reader-responsible' type of the writing style, such as, German (Clyne, 1987), Finnish (Mauranen, 1993), Polish (Duszak, 1994), Czech (Čmejrkova, 1996), etc. Also, the Serbian academic writing is more inclined to the 'reader-responsible' than to the 'writer-responsible' way of academic writing (Blagojević, 2001)

Since J. Galtung (1981) has identified four intellectual styles - *saxonic, teutonic, gallic* and *nipponic*, many linguists constantly make efforts to recognize their national writing style in the world's writing milieu.

The Saxonic intellectual style, characterized by linear progression in paragraph development and oriented towards communication with the readers is opposed to, for example, the teutonic intellectual style, which is more monologue-oriented and more tolerant to parallel constructions and digressions in expressions. Galtung notices that Eastern European countries (and Central European, I would say) are greatly influenced by teutonic intellectual style, due to certain historical circumstances. However, the international communication and 'growing internalization of scholarship has led today to considerable leveling on standards on academic writing.....and the differences in academic styles are also alleviated by the escalating use of English as academic lingua franca' (Duszak, 1994:291), which means that the strict division into four intellectual styles and their crucial influences to academic writing is nowadays somehow mitigated.

The cultural attitudes towards certain concepts such as 'politeness' and 'persuasiveness' greatly influence the use of rhetorical strategies by which the writers present their ideas and findings. The English academic rhetoric 'seems to respect the reader's time and effort, while the implicit Finnish rhetoric seems to respect the reader's intelligence, knowledge and privacy' (Mauranen, 1993:257-258). Besides reflecting the different attitudes towards the notion of 'politeness', the writing styles are connected to the concept of 'persuasiveness', which involves the idea of authority. In some writing cultures this idea has a positive meaning and is believed to evoke respect and credibility to the reader, while, on the other hand, some writers consider it constraining and even potentially dangerous, provided there is no superior expertise behind it.

3. Academic research article as an exponent of differences in academic writing

The cultural variations and the diversities in academic writing can be easily noticed throughout the discourse of an academic article, which is the focus of this study. As a specific genre of academic discourse, academic article has two functions: to inform the readers of the reaserch results, analyses, conclusions, findings, etc. and to convince them of their truthfullness and validity. Thus, the academic article discourse acts as a medium of information and persuasion, which its writer accomplishes through the organization of discourse and through the use of metadiscourse, as a feature of academic rhetoric.

In order to create their articles similar to the English ones, writers of non-English background should become acquainted with the English

discourse conventions and become aware of the importance of the use of metadiscourse in discourse composing.

3.1. The discourse conventions in academic research articles

In the cultures where the educational system traditionally cherishes the argumentative prose writing and its writing techniques and where much attention is placed on discourse organization, the academic research articles writers have developed higher demand for producing a 'good discourse', they exhibit a high degree of sensitivity towards discourse organization. However, the first thing that a novice article writer should know about when trying to write in English is how to construct his/her discourse in order to meet so called 'discourse expectations' (Clyne, 1987:76) of the international readership who is mostly accustomed to the type of discourse prevailing in English academic writing. For this purpose, he/she has to get familiar with the most important discourse characteristics which exist within the English academic writing norms.

3.2. The requirements for 'good discourse'

Based on some observations of Clyne (1987:74) and Hinds (1990:98), I shall enumerate below some of the most important requirements that English discourse should fulfill in order to be labeled as ' good discourse':

The main thesis of the article should be presented at its very beginning, in a plain and straightforward manner. In contrast to this writing style, some writing styles promote so called 'the strategy of delayed introduction of purpose' (Hinds, 1990:98) - the main thesis is located far from the beginning of the article and is often not explicitly stated.

The unity of the discourse is achieved by means of linear progression – the paragraphs through the article are developed to contribute strictly to its coherency and there is no inclusion of new information which might break it. However, in many academic styles, such as German, Czech and Serbian, there is a greater degree of tolerance to parallel statements, as a consequence of introducing multiplicity of standpoints throughout the discourse.(Čmejrakova, 1996:145)

The notion of *relevance* is crucial to English academic writing: there is restriction to adding irrelevant material to the subject and the writers are never led astray to include some material for the sake of the beauty of expression, as it is the case with some Slavonic writing traditions (Serbian, Polish, Czech), which can be described as 'heavy and baroque' .

Besides stating the purpose of the research in a plain and a straightforward way, the whole English writing style requires straightforwardness and precision in expression. 'Reading between lines' favoured in some academic writings, is not a desirable feature in the English academic style, neither are such writing habits as making digressions or including various associations to the subject in consideration. The discourse structures similar to those may greatly divert the reader's attention and produce negative effects to the quality of the propositional content.

4. The use of metadiscourse in academic articles

The academic article writer has various rhetorical strategies at his/her disposal in order to persuade the readers in the validity of the propositional content carried by the discourse and at the same time to ensure his/her credibility in front of the wide readership. Here, again, the writer's choice of rhetorical strategies relies on the idea of persuasiveness: 'A writer's rhetorical strategy can be defined as a writer's path through his or her text, made up of the series of choices. The use of rhetorical strategies depends on the way in which the writer perceives persuasiveness in terms of both form of presentation (order, strategies of development, explicitness, etc.), as well as the arguments chosen, i.e. the content.' (Mauranen, 1993:34)

As the idea of persuasiveness varies from culture to culture, it can be best expressed in categories of explicit and implicit rhetoric. Explicit rhetoric means the writer's readiness to guide the reader through the discourse, and is s a type of rhetoric favoured in English academic style. This type of rhetoric is accomplished by the use of metadiscourse, which is considered a part of academic rhetoric, and the degree to which it is used, indicates the presence of the writer of the text and his willingness to help the reader interpret the conveyed material.

Metadiscourse is defined as a part of spoken or written discourse intended to help the listener or reader organize, interpret, and evaluate the given information. It has both the text organizing role and the expressive one: it 'allows writers to show readers how different parts of the text are related and how they should be interpreted, and also permits writers to express their attitudes toward the propositional content of the text and toward their readers' (Crismore *et al*.1993:41).

The English academic style cherishes the positive attitude towards the use of metadiscourse and a non-English academic writer should become aware of its significance and use it in a similar way to that of an English academic writer's. That will be a good starting point to approach the English academic manner of writing.

4.1. The importance of textual metadiscourse

The organizing role of metadiscourse is seen as the use of textual metadiscourse in order to form a cohesive and coherent text and in this way increase text readability. The mastering of text connectives and other metadiscoursal elements is an integral part of teaching the writing for academic purposes in the English educational system, so a non-English academic writer should be encouraged to use it in creating his/her academic article.

The model we advocate here (Blagojević, 2001) has been applied to detect the differences in the use of textual metadiscourse in academic articles written in English by English and Serbian writers in some disciplines of humanities, but we hope that it can be applied to various languages. Its method of quantitative analysis obtains the data which can indicate a non-English writer both the areas of the greatest differences in writing styles and some culture-based preferences.

The textual analysis in the model was done by identifying every metadiscoursal item and by labelling it into a corresponding metadiscourse group. The collected items, being functional equivalents, were compared on the quantitative basis and their number was divided by the number of the sentences in both the examined corpora and then expressed in percentage values.

Six groups of textual metadiscourse, (termed mostly by Vande Kopple (1985:83), were examined: 1. *logical-temporal connectives,* (to indicate logical and temporal relationships between the blocks of information), such as: *Accordingly,..... thereafter*, etc., 2. *sequencers,* (to indicate the order in which the blocks of information will be presented, such as: *First,....second,.... third....*, etc., 3. *reminders* (to guide the readers through the text by reminding them of the material presented earlier), such as: *As stated earlier,* etc., 4. *announcements* (to guide the readers through the text by announcing the material which will appear later in the text), such as: *I shall show bellow*, etc., 5. *reformulators* (to help the readers better understand the given statement by paraphrasing it), such as: *In other words*, etc., 6. *action markers and references to the text* (to indicate the readers the discourse act performed by the author or by referring to the whole text or its parts), such as: *To explain,..... this first section*, etc.

The obtained data are given in the Table 1., in which the abbreviation *ETE* stands for English academic texts written by English

writers, while *ETS* stands for English academic texts written by Serbian writers. (The same for table no.2)

TABLE NO. 1: TEXTUAL METADISCOURSE IN *ETE* AND *ETS* ARTICLES

	ETE		***ETS***	
TYPE:	*ITEMS N°*	*%*	*ITEMS N°*	*%*
LOGIC-TEMP CONNECTIVES	567	77	299	73
SEQUENCERS	13	6	4	1
REMINDERS	25	3	12	3
ANNOUCEMENTS	28	4	18	4
REFORMULATORS	34	5	32	8
ACTION & TEXT REFERENCES	62	8	35	9
SUM	729	100	400	100

According to the compared data, we may conclude that Serbian writers generally use smaller percentage of textual metadiscourse, which indicates that they are less concerned with their responsibility for increasing the readability of the discourse. Also, by the greater percentage of reformulators, we may conclude that Serbian writers are fond of paraphrasing their own words, which is not a desirable activity from an English reader's point of view. Reasonably, these conclusions hold truth only for the examined scientific disciplines, and discipline-specific characteristics should be always taken in consideration when conducting the comparison of the same type.

4.2. The importance of interpersonal metadiscourse

A rising awareness to the use of interpersonal metadiscourse means a rising rhetorical awareness in general, which, according to Swales (1990:112), is described as 'being able to guess how referees will react to a particular text'. This type of awareness presupposes the kind of writing style which is based on the writer's responsibility for successful communication and is one of the characteristics of the English writing style.

Interpersonal metadiscourse has an expressive role: by using it, the writer expresses his/her beliefs about and attitudes towards the propositional content conveyed to the readers and helps the reader comprehend the writer's point of view.

By interpersonal metadiscourse the writer explicitly indicates his/her presence in the text: it serves him/her for expressing cautiousness or certainty towards the propositional content, or for expressing either different

kinds of attitudes towards the conveyed material or for addressing the readers directly. Four groups of interpersonal metadiscourse can be identified in academic articles and each of them has a specific type of function: 1) *hedging devices* (are used to convey the writer's assessment of the certainty of the propositional content), such as: *It might be looked upon, this seems likely to.....,*etc., 2) *emphatics* (used to express the writer's categorical assertions), such as: *No doubt*, *.....Certainly,* etc., 3) *attitude markers* (used to express the writer's attitudes towards the propositional content), such as: *Most strikingly....., Surprisingly,* etc., 4) *commentaries* (used for writer's direct addressing the readers), such as: *I leave it to the reader to decide*, etc.

The use of these groups of metadiscourse is differently looked upon in various academic traditions: for example, in the Serbian academic tradition the frequency of hedging devices is considered a sign of the writer's lack of confidence towards his/her own findings or conclusions, while the same phenomenon is differently viewed in the English writing style: it is viewed as an act of politeness and respect towards the reader, for whom the writer 'leaves the door open' to have a different opinion. On the other hand, too many emphatic expressions in the article may be misunderstood by the English reader and be interpreted as a too pretentious type of writing style and the writer may be considered an arrogant and self-conceited person. Also, an article in which the writer frequently expresses his/her attitude towards the prepositional content, may be considered too emotional and its quality even diminished. As for commentaries, the type of commentary employed in the text is very important. The commentaries like *'Dear reader, you might not share the same opinion,...*' in modern English academic style is not considered appropriate, but rather patronizing and too personal.

The data obtained by comparing the presence of metadiscourse in the two groups of academic articles is given in the Table no. 2.

TABLE NO. 2. INTERPERSONAL METADISCOURSE IN *ETE* AND *ETS* ARTICLES

	ETE		***ETS***	
TYPE:	*ITEMS N°*	*%*	*ITEMS N°*	*%*
HEDGES	456	56	179	46
EMPHATICS	62	8	46	12
ATTITUDE MARKERS	225	28	144	36
COMMENTARIES	66	8	22	6
SUM	808	100	391	100

After comparing the two corpora, the cases where the qualitative data drastically differ may be identified as areas of potential rhetoric discrepancy, or the areas which may produce an undesirable rhetorical effect on the readership, or different from the expected ones: so, according to the figures in the above chart, we may notice that Serbian writers, when writing their academic articles in English, should be more sensitive towards the use of emphatic devices in order to avoid the risk to be misinterpreted by the international readership.

5. Conclusion

This paper can be considered an attempt to systematize the main differences in academic writing styles, first by bringing forward the causes for their cross-cultural variations and then by numerating the most striking differences between the English academic style and the other writing styles. These differences can be noticed both in the discourse organization of academic articles and in the employed rhetorical strategies as well, so that the central part in the paper is devoted to the notion of rising awareness of non-English academic writers of the discourse conventions and of the use of textual and interpersonal metadiscourse.

The paper also suggests the model of comparing the presence of textual and interpersonal metadiscourse in academic articles written in English by English native speakers and Serbian native speakers. The author hopes that this model is possible to apply to similar contrastive studies in order to depict the possible differences or preferences in writing styles.

Besides providing the certain implications for non-English academics who write their articles in English, the paper is also intended for the teachers who organize the courses of English academic writing for the students, not English native speakers, who study English for academic purposes. At the same time, the paper strongly advocates the idea of introducing these courses in the educational curricula where they are not included.

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THE FRAME OF REFERENCE AND REDEFINING

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Introduction

The authors of the present paper haven't got the intention of going - in their analysis - down (or up?) the full way from *decision-making* to *problem-solving*, as people involved in managerial activity of organisations often attempt to do.

Instead, we start from the *transactional analysis (TA) theory of personality* definition (italicised TA definitions in the text come from Stewart, J., Joines, V., *TA Today,* 1999:Glossary) of *(early) decision: a conclusion regarding self, others or the quality of life, adopted during childhood as the best available means of surviving and getting needs met within the constraints of the child's way of feeling and reality testing:*

> At present the *facts were disordered: there was no clear pattern,* no theory, which would at once explain the mystery… (James, 1972:130)

Based on such very early decisions, people adopt equally early in their lives a *(life)-script, an unconscious life plan made in childhood, reinforced by the parents, "justified" by subsequent events, and culminating in a chosen alternative,* meant at getting their lives organised in a way satisfactory to personal needs and survival. Scripts can be winning, non-winning and losing, like the one of Bernie, ex-police officer:

> … in some undramatic … way, life had *turned against* him…Bernie never got the enviable front left hand seat in the bus; he couldn't admire the view from the train window without another train promptly obscuring it; the bread that he dropped, invariably fell buttered side downwards; the Mini… stalled for Bernie at the busiest and most inconvenient intersections… (James, 1972:10) … It was odd but somehow typical of Bernie that … he had given up hope of life *without even a struggle* [committing suicide]. (James, 1972:13)

Although, as infants, people make *life decisions,* as grown-ups, they may resort to a *redecision*, a *replacement of a self–limiting early decision by a new decision that takes account of the individual's full resources,* in case they no longer feel that their early decisions are satisfactory:

> These last few days, since she had emerged from her cocoon, *she had been forced to look at life, and she didn't like what she saw*. She wished… she *could go back* to the time when everyone had appeared nice, when she *refused to think badly of anyone*... (Cookson, 1998:191)

TA is a *decisional model – philosophical stance, which holds that people decide their own destiny, and that these decisions can be changed.* This change is possible only in the ideal case when the individual has reached *autonomy (any behaviour, thinking or feeling which is a response to here-and-now reality),* not when he/she acts in response to *script beliefs:*

> … now, suddenly, *his brain awoke* to the *significance of the signs*, which his trained senses had subconsciously noted… (James, 1989:167)

A so-called **"**Integrated Adult**"** is expected to be able to reach autonomy. This assumption takes us further to another TA basic concept - *the ego-state model (a model depicting personality in terms of Parent – Adult – Child ego-states):*

> He was used to living his life *on different levels.* (James, 1989:21)

The *Adult ego-state represents a set of behaviours, thoughts and feelings which are a direct response to the here-and-now, not copied from parents or parental figures, nor replayed from the individual's own childhood.* People in their Adult ego-states live in present, test reality and solve problems *autonomously*:

> *Jane Dalgliesh* (about missing carbons at the Cadaver Club): There are several possibilities… Perhaps Setton didn't take carbons. In view of his meticulous habits I think that unlikely. Or perhaps he, or someone who had access to his room, destroyed them. Or perhaps the manuscript which Sylvia produced wasn't the one Setton actually sent her… someone … could have substituted one set of papers for another…Or could they? Do we know if Setton put the envelope out for posting where other people could see it? Or did he take it immediately to the post himself? Isn't there another possibility? (James, 1989:166)

The "Integrated Adult" is an *adult ego-state incorporating positive qualities of Child or of Parent* ego-states:

> *(P)* - Don't marry for money, but marry where money is. There's no harm in looking for money as long as there's kindness as well + *(A)* - If a man is good to one woman, he'd be good to another. + *(C)* - That's what I reckoned and I was right. (James, 1972: 116)

> *(A)* - Take them away and give them to anyone who needs them. + *(P)* - Unless you think I ought to unpick the wool and knit it up into something new? + *(C)* - Would that be a *suitable gesture*? (James, 1972: 187)
> He was no longer the *jolly boy (C)*, nor yet the *serious schoolmaster (P).* Another man had been born: the *Captain* of the bridge *(A)*. (Cookson, 2000b: 41)

Frame of reference

We can now introduce the idea of a "kind of skin that surrounds the ego-states, binding them together", integrating the various ego-states and expressing overall personality. This is the *FRAME OF REFERENCE*, originally defined by the Schiffs as *the structure of associated responses which integrates the various ego-states in response to specific stimuli; it provides the individual with an overall perceptual, conceptual, affective and action set, which is used to define the self, other people and the world,* **-** in a word, everything. All depends on the frame of reference:

> *(Very different external manifestations, according to frame of reference,* as a reaction to a single – unusual, but simple - story told by *Jim, driver, about Lance***,** his "ladies' dressing- tables cleaning" brother):
> *Matthew's* head was deep on his chest. His hand was gripping Elisabeth's. *Her* other hand was across her mouth. *Lucille's* face was a contortion. As for *Peter*, his forearm, which was resting on the… basket chair, was shaking wobbly. The expression on the *colonel*'s face couldn't be defined. Only *his mother*'s face appeared ordinary, except for the glow in the eyes, and she asked now "What did he get for tidying up?" (Cookson, 2000a:463)

People have their own way of perceiving the world, different from everybody else's way of perceiving the (same) world. Supposing that two people stand and look at a room, reporting what they see, although the room is the same, their *reports* will be more or less, - or even totally - *different*, just because of the *perception* of what they see, hear, feel, smell or taste. *They respond differently to the same scene because their frames of reference are different,* and these function as a kind of "filter on reality"**.** *This* filter can refer to simple, *isolated objects:*

> *Sophie Tilling*, participant at a funeral speaks about: … "that *awful* cross of roses with the black-edged card" (James, 1972:76), while *Nanny Pilbeam* and the *undertakers* appreciate the object as very *suitable* to the occasion and *stylish*,

to *group*s *of objects* (police file, suicidal note, photograph, passport, teddy bear, books, knitted pullovers, grandfather's will, mother's Bible), like those mentioned during the murder investigation conducted by Cordelia Gray, the perception of which, gradually and subtly filtered through her frame of

reference, helps her form an indirect but suggestive image about Mark, the dead young man as:

> ... *tangible objects* were better evidence (James, 1972:60).

It can also refer to *people* as well. Opinions about one and the same person *can* and usually *do differ* from totally *favourable* to (almost) totally *negative***,** because of *different frames of reference* (probably also different life positions):

> *(Fred and Sally Carpenter* **"**adopt" spiritually "*ROSIE* of the River", loving her as if she were their own daughter, others have very different opinions):
> *School clerk … she* looked at me as if I was something the cat had brought in … (Cookson, 2000b:99)
> *Mother***:** You *dirty little bugger …** filthy***,** you are filthy. (Cookson, 2000b:105)
> *Father***:** Dad cannot see me as other people do. For him I am a *bright spark.* (Cookson, 2000b:129)
> *College colleague: You're from the gutter*, from where miss B. dragged you up and taught you… (Cookson, 2000b:218)
> *Teacher***: Y**ou are a *girl of intelligence* beyond your age and background. (Cookson, 2000b:145)

The same happens in other cases:

> *Sir RONALD CALLENDER, the victim's father (actually the murderer), seen by all the persons Cordelia, the private investigator, interviews:*
> *Davie Stevens* **:** That arrogant *fascist*… (James, 1972:75)
> He certainly knows how to pick his slaves… Certainly Ronald Callender cares… more for him [Chris Lunn, the driver] than he did for his son… (James, 1972: 88)
> *Hugo Tilling:* He took no particular interest in his son when he was alive, why begin now he is dead? … (James, 1972:74)
> By fascist, Davie means that Ronald Callender holds certain unutterable opinions… I don't suggest that Ronald Callender holds all or indeed any of these reprehensible opinions. But Davie thinks that he does… (James, 1972:75)
> *Lunn* regards Ronald Callender as God Almighty (James, 1972:160)
> *Sophie Tilling:* Sir Ronald was *amiable* enough … (James, 1972:85)
> *Nanny Pilbeam:* He wasn't sir Ronald then… Oh, dear, no! He was Ronnie Callender, the gardener's son… I remember him well, a pugnacious, good-looking lad, but one who kept his thoughts to himself. He was clever, that one, oh, he was clever! He got a scholarship to the grammar school and did very well… After war he went up to Cambridge … They were quite poor then… then Mr. Callender finished the university and got a job teaching. He wanted to stay on at college to be a don or something like that but they wouldn't have him… I think he may not have been quite clever enough. (James, 1972:116)
> *Mrs. Gladwin:* He was a *gentleman* all right … He… said "Good afternoon, Doctor Gladwin" loudly, *as if talking to a servant***.** (James, 1972:125)
> *Eliza Leaming: He killed my son.* (James, 1972:163).

> Ronald never cared for his son. He found that he couldn't love him. And I … *I wasn't allowed to love him…* (James, 1972:187)

Stewart and Joines (1999:Chapter 19, passim) propose an exercise starting from the reports given by two persons about the same room. Person 1 says: *It is a fairly small room. It's square in shape. There are people in it. The carpet is green and the curtains are brown.* Person 2 says: *It's a family scene. The whole atmosphere is warm. There's mother, father and two kids. They are talking and laughing. It's a big room, so they have plenty of space.*

The two persons *notice and select different things according to their frames of reference.* Person 1 notes colours, shapes, but says nothing (filters out) about the people in the room. Person 2 refers to the warm atmosphere and the happy laughing of the family inside.

The only 2 elements common to both reports are the reference to *size* and to the *existence of people* in the room. But even such a down-to-earth, perfectly measurable, element as size is defined differently: "fairly small" as opposed to "big room". The definition of "big room" in their respective *frames of reference* is different, due probably to a simple fact, the place those people were brought up and used to live in. The same room might appear small to someone brought up in a large house, but 'big" to a resident of a pocket-sized flat, or to Cordelia Gray, raised in a:

> … small house, perpetually noisy with *foster* children. (James, 1972:13)

During her investigations and she feels happy and secure in the discarded *cottage* of the Marklands, because of its familiar small dimensions, although she enters houses that impress her by their dimensions and style:

> … Georgian house… stable block converted into laboratories / Victorian edifice (James, 1972:30, 42)

The *words* used might be *the same* but *the meaning* attached to them is *different*. Person 2 in the exercise, makes reference to *atmosphere***,** Person 1 does not. When invited to define the atmosphere of the room in question, Person 1 speaks about the colours in the interior design, while Person 2 refers to people talking/laughing openly with one another, as a mark for a pleasant atmosphere. The same happens about the *cottage* mentioned before:

> In the short time in which he had lived here, Mark Callender had created **a little oasis of order and beauty out** of chaos and neglect. (James, 1972:48)
> … *he* was very *keen on the cottage [Mark]… we have it in mind to apply for a conversion grant and get rid of the place [the Marklands]* (James, 1972:47)

Going back to the *ego-states,* the bricks of the *frame of reference,* we can say that Person 1 is probably in *Adult***,** making comments on shapes, sizes, colours seen in the here-and-now, aiming at problem-solving on the basis of Adult testing of reality, like:

> *Inspector Reckless:* This is murder all right. So we take our choice. One murderer and one unpleasant practical joker. Or one murderer and two crimes. Or two murderers. (James, 1989:172)

Person 2 is probably in *Child*, re-playing happy memories of family scenes:

> *Fred Carpenter, middle-aged maths teacher, with wife, Sally:*
> Sally found herself *swung round the hall, danced round the kitchen* to "A life on the Ocean wave" and plumped into a chair. Gone was the *curtness***;** gone was the wife-driven house-painting husband! Here was the merry, jolly boy, and *the merry jolly boy* took her face between his hands until her lips did prunes. Then he stuck his two index fingers into the sides of her mouth and pulled her face up into a smile. (Cookson, 2000b:12)
> (The children find the key to the attic and get out, on the roof)… in the distance stretches the magnificent triumph of the rainbow... *We scream at it* together … and do *wild dances* in the puddles and around the tall chimneys … We dance around the tower of the tall gold weather crest and *shout wordless triumph* across the tops of the trees and the fields and the endless distance. (Mc Ewen, 2001:167)

Speaking about ego-states, we must mention that the *Parent ego-state plays an important part in the formation of the frame of reference* because it consists of definitions of the world, self and others originally learnt from *parents and parent figures*. Everybody has a larger or smaller personal set of parental definitions of what is good/bad, wrong/right, large/small, pleasant/unpleasant, etc. People base their *views* on these *definitions* and choose their responses accordingly:

> You can't go on burning the candle at both ends (Cookson, 2000b:7)
> Don't whistle inside the house. That brings on bad luck. (Cookson, 2000a:222)
> Don't speak with your mouth full. (Mc Ewen 2001:140)

The *frame of reference concept* is also implied in the *stroke*-section of the TA theory of personality *(stroke - unit of recognition),* being closely related to the ideas of *stroke-filter (an individual's pattern of rejecting/ accepting strokes so as to conform with an existing self-image* in a selective way), *stroke-quotient (an individual's preferred mix of different types of strokes)* and *stroking-profile (a…diagram used to analyse an individual's preference for giving/taking, asking for/refusing to give strokes):*

> It was impossible to describe the almost obsessional *delicacy* with which they avoided each other, trying not to intrude, preserving the other's *privacy*…Living in the same small terraced house they had hardly seen each other outside the office. She wondered whether Bernie had decided to kill himself in his office so that the little house would be uncontaminated and undisturbed. (James, 1972:17)
> It's *unwise* to become *too* personally *involved with another human being.* (James, 1972:53)
> We all have *our feelings kept tight under control* here… (Cookson, 2000a:75)
> Dr. Venor was right … : *one can't afford to show emotion* (Cookson, 2000a:238)

All these are incorporated in and part of the frame of reference, they depend on a wide selection of factors, ranging from family do's and don't's to broad social and cultural patterns of stroking. Even the original ideas advocated by TA, that *self-stroking* is as valuable as getting strokes from others, or that *any stroke*, even a negative one, is *better than no stroke* at all, *depend on the frame of reference.*

Redefining

According to TA theory, when people feel that their *frame of reference is threatened* in a way they fear or resent, they unconsciously *defend it* against that menace by *REDEFINING (a distortion of an individual's perception of reality, so that it fits his/her script,* and implicitly, their frame of reference).

> **…** a fugitive hint which his *subconscious* mind had registered but which obstinately *refused to come forward and be recognised…* (James, 1989:132)

Redefining can be done in different ways:

> The two women had never liked each other although Bernie had galumphed between them like an affectionate old dog, *finding it convenient to believe* that they were great mates and *unaware* of or *ignoring* the almost physical crackle of *antagonism***.** (James, 1972:18)
> … *gradually* out of a childhood of *deprivation* she had evolved a *philosophy* of *compensation. In her imagination* she has enjoyed a lifetime of love… with no disappointments and no regrets. Her father had never talked about her mother's death and Cordelia had *avoided* questioning him, *fearful of* learning that her mother had never held her in her arms, … never perhaps even *known* that she had a daughter. The *belief in her mother's love* was the one phantasy which she could *still not entirely risk losing… Now, in her imagination, she consulted her mother.* (James, 1972:19)
> *Evelyn…* was practiced in *self-deception.* She *convinced herself* that we were doing what was best for the child. (James, 1972:184),

mainly using *grandiosity (an exaggeration of some feature of reality),* - many thinking disorders are based on it -, or *discounting (unawarely ignoring information relevant to the solution of a problem).*

> *Discounting + Grandiosity:* I don't like your generation, Miss Gray**.** I don't like your *arrogance*, your *selfishness*, your *violence*. The curious selectivity of your compassion… you denigrate and destroy and *never* build. You invite punishment like rebellious children, then scream when you are punished… (James, 1972:51)
> Bridget Gether:
> [The truth]…was forcing its point into her mind, demanding that she face up to facts, to life as it was, not as she would like it to be. But once she acknowledged its presence, there would be no return to the vagueness, *the aloofness, the protective screen against the reality of life.* (Cookson, 1998:48)
> She tried to *shut her mind against the memory* of his words… but the door was wide open and could never again be closed … no more would her dreamy character be *a screen behind which she could hide* and peep out at the world…at people she liked, and *withdraw* when confronted by people she didn't like. (Cookson, 1998:83)
> *Bridget suddenly put her good hand up to her ear and shook her head violently, as she cried "I don't want to hear*…Please!" (Cookson, 1998:88)
> *Uncle Vance Overmeer:*
> It will be all right for the wedding… She knew he was aware of what she had said to Aunt Sarah but it had been *arranged that he ignore it.* (Cookson, 1998:94)
> *Dr. John MacDonald:*
> You acted like a *child* when you should have been a *woman, you were old enough but you refused to be wakened***.** You are 22, Bridget, and you *are still clinging to your fairytale world.* (Cookson, 1998:123)

Redefining is done only *internally*, its *external manifestation* being the *discounts*. Every discount representing a distortion of reality, the behavioural clues that indicate discounting also indicate *redefining*.

Let's imagine that, as children, some persons receive from their parents *messages* saying *You can't think.* As stressful situations in adult life can, and usually do, determine people to *enter the script* (Chevereşan, C., Chevereşan, L., 2002 (a, b): passim), they can enter their script before – say - a difficult exam, and start replaying internally and unconsciously the old definition of themselves as not able to think.. In their Child ego-state, people accept the discount of their own ability of thinking and begin to feel inadequate and confused, although in reality, they *are* able to think. They distort their perception of reality so that it fits their script. This process is called *redefining***.**

As children, they accepted their parents' definition of them as unable to think and made it a *script decision,* believing it was the only way they had of surviving and getting their needs met. So, when as grown-ups, they

get into script, they re-run that old survival strategy and they *redefine* reality by *discounting* their ability to think. Of course this does not help them solve their problem (passing the exam), but outside their awareness, in their Child ego-state, they follow a reason that seems to them more important than the exam itself - to defend themselves against the immaterial disaster they fear may happen if they challenge their parents' definition:

> *Digby* … likes his unpleasant *facts gift-wrapped.* He *prefers to shut his eyes to reality*. He has always shut his eyes to the truth about me… *he had convinced himself* that it was all a cosy little game with easy rules, no personal risk and a prize of L 200, 000… (James, 1989: 208)
>
> "It was *you* who kicked her off the roof"… The reply was quick, defensive. That was an *accident*. I never meant her to fall. "Of course not", thought Dalgliesh*. It had to be an accident. Latham* was the last man to live with the thought that he had killed a woman, even in self-defence. Well, *if that was the way he had decided to remember it***,** he might as well begin now as later. (James, 1989:215)

If *clues* indicating *discounting* also *indicate redefining,* so do *redefining transactions. Transactions (the basic units of social discourse)* are usually meant for communication, but redefining transactions *(tangential and blocking transactions)* are meant for preventing/hindering it.

A *tangential transaction* is one *in which the stimulus and the response address different issues or address the same issue from different perspectives:*

> *Redefining transactions (tangent, blocking):*
>
> **"**It must have been about 5 weeks ago"…Again Miss Markland broke in: "It was Tuesday, May 9th. You took him because he was the only applicant who was prepared to work for the miserable pittance you were offering". (James: 1972:46)
>
> "… she was a policeman in disguise". "Why should she be? Did she look like one?" "… you don't look like a private eye" (James, 1972:76)

Everyday life is full of tangential transactions, because people who are in situations which they perceive as stressful, perhaps because of an expected *rubberband (a point of similarity between a here-and-now stress situation and a painful situation from the person's own childhood, usually not recalled in awareness, in response to which the person is likely to go into script),* are even more likely to redefine, because, in stressful situations, people often begin to perceive *threats to their frame of reference.*

> Sitting beside the body… she tentatively touched the side of his forehead. The skin was clammy and very cold. This was *death*, this was how *Daddy*... had felt. *As with him*, the gesture of pity was meaningless and irrelevant. There was *no more communication in death than there had been in life.* (James, 1972:13)

… hell of war …there it was *again*… And all around him the dead**.** *Dead***.** (Cookson, 2000a:18-19)

The covert purpose of a tangential transaction is to divert the interlocutor away from the issue which constitutes the threat. The other persons don't stick to the original topic, they generally follow the tangent and thus … they leave the dangerous area clear.

In *blocking transaction, the purpose of raising an issue is avoided by disagreeing about the definition of the issue. Although externally they look different* (tangential transactions may come in long chains, going on and on, or round and round to nowhere, blocking transactions usually get stuck into an argument over the definition of the issue, or simply come to a halt in silence), at a psychological level, the *aim* of the blocking transaction is to *avoid addressing issues that would threaten the script and,* ultimately**,** the frame of reference.

Conclusions

Going back to the frame of reference, we feel obliged to clarify the fact that the *script* is only *a part of the frame of reference.* It consists of all the definitions which entail discounts, but the *frame of reference in total* is made up of many other definitions *which do not* entail discounts. Still, *redefining* seems to be largely present in any *frame of reference,* and it is no wonder literature (faithful analyst of human nature) highlights numerous recordings of redefining instances, as we have seen above.

Contentment is never to allow yourself to want anything which reason tells you you haven't a chance of getting (James, 1972:182)

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TEACHING RESEARCH-PAPER WRITING IN ESP: LANGUAGE, CONTENT AND COMMUNICATION

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Introduction

The idea of focusing on the above topic has emerged from my colleagues' numerous complaints regarding the ESP students' preference for already written texts, which they find on the Internet, and which they submit as their own papers (essays) required in proof of having got the writing skill, included in their ESP training program.

The practice has become widespread and, with it the danger that the students, future professionals in different fields of activity, develop less if not any skill of writing texts/papers in which the evidence of personal and real involvement, as well as personal style is necessary.

The skill of writing a research paper is essential for university students, since in technical fields, as well as in any other fields, the communicative aspect of writing is paid a special attention, being the most widely used mode of communication.

The assumption that the basic skills involved in writing a research paper can be transferred to other genres, with slight modification in length or format (for example to memos, reports, business letters, press releases, oral presentations, etc in case of students in economics) does not seem too risky.

Therefore, as English has become the leading language of international communication in scholarship, research, business a.s.o. university-level students in technical fields should be required to take, besides the ESP course, some special courses devoted to writing-skills; during these courses/seminars the trainers should concentrate on a curriculum/program specially-designed to this purpose, and adapted to the specificity of each category of students, according to the field of activity they are to be involved in.

Thus, the trainers should be called to pay a special attention to the development of the research-paper writing skill with their students, and in what follows, we are going to suggest a possible program of this kind, taking the students in economics as an example.

The students; the structure of the writing class should consist of grouped students of the same discipline (25-30 students in each group) from

different Departments of the Academy of Economic Studies Bucharest (Trade, Marketing, International Relations and Business Administration, Finance, Accounting, Management etc) being at an intermediate or advanced level of general English proficiency.

The novelty of this program would be the suggestion that the audience of the written communication produced by the students of a group be represented by the students of another group, coming from a different discipline; they are viewed as non-specialist listeners or readers and an interesting evolution and feed-back is expected to be received from them.

Theoretical fundamentals; the writing program suggested here is based on research in three areas, research which was carried out by numerous scholars over the years. It includes: *ESP discourse analysis; content-based approach; communicative language teaching.*

Considering "*ESP discourse analysis*", the writers of texts should be explained and taught to make their decisions about the purpose, audience, scope, (pre-writing stage) as well as about content, organization, outlining, and style of their writing (writing stage).

As regards the grammatical choice, it is well known that it is predetermined by rhetorical principles, the ESP discourse itself fulfilling a rhetorical function; consequently, those grammatical elements which show some difficulty for ESP students should be emphasized (tenses, subject-verb number agreement, use of definite/indefinite article, verbal complementation, etc) as well as cohesive devices (lexical repetition, synonyms, substituted phrases etc).

As regards "*the content-based approach*", the ESP teaching is characterized by the importance paid to language learning in the context of studying a specific academic subject matter. Therefore, there is a close connection between the language and the subject studied.

When the writing skill is taught, it is seen as a good opportunity to be developed in close relation with thinking and researching in the specific area of scientific interest, which makes the students highly motivated in studying the respective subjects. The incorporation of specific subject matter into the language learning process will help transfer some skill obtained from subject into means of expression in language learning. In the situation of teaching writing skills applied to research-papers centered on specific subject matter, the process is reversed; in this case, the subject matter is the beneficiary of the skills transferred from the field of linguistics.

When considering the "*communicative language teaching*", we have to mention that since Chomsky (1957) and the other (Hymes, 1972; Candlin, 1976; Widdowson, 1972; Finocchiaro & Brumfit, 1983 a.s.o.) revolutionized linguistics, the functional and communicative approach of

language has assumed an important role in language study. Interactional activities are strongly recommended as teaching methods and they are carried out either through pair or group work. In oral communication the spontaneous use of the language for real communication, with the student centered interactionally has, as a result, the unconscious development of the target-language system. In written communication, spontaneity is replaced with skills, but their acquisition should also be achieved by similar interactive practice.

Procedure

The procedure described here represented an experiment involving the activity developed with a group of 1st year students (Faculty of Economic Studies in Foreign Languages, English Department, Bucharest Academy of Economic Studies); the topic under consideration was "A Research Project – Business Report Writing". The purpose of the topic was to train the students in such a way that they could get, in the end, the skill of writing business reports, an activity often required in their future profession as business people.

The procedure was divided into two types of activities:

A) teacher/trainer guided activities; B) student-centred activities.

A) During the first phase, the teacher/trainer directed the students' activity and helped them choose the topic of the report, learn how to develop reference skills and built up an expository scheme.

B) During the second phase, the activity gradually became student-centred, and it included group discussions, oral presentations of the outline, writing of a first draft followed by peer evolution and revision. During this phase the teacher/trainer is more a language consultant rather than a dominating personality.

A.1 Choosing the topic. The activity started with the group of students (28-30) being divided into smaller groups (4/7-8 students). It is important that all groups entering the training program be constituted of students having the same disciplinary background and language level). Then, the students were required to think about a topic which they would prefer for group work and paper writing, and which would represent a report written for a company.

The students were recommended to choose the topic from a field of specialization they conversed with, and in the case that the topic chosen was too broad, the teacher/trainer could interfere and help them narrow it down so that they may deal with it in depth and detail. *The most important aspect at this stage is that the teacher/trainer should refrain from imposing a*

certain topic to the students, no matter how interesting it could seem to him; *his role is only to guide the students in choosing the topic, and no more*. (Example of topic: "*Employee Involvement in X Company Activity*").

A.2 Developing references skills. After the topics were set up, the trainer's task was to guide the students to the correct sources of reference which were to generate quality information. At this stage, the students should be taught to gather the most reliable and up to date information. (Specialty books, text books, periodicals, reference tools and dictionaries). It is also very important that the students be encouraged to consult their subject trainers both for getting information on sources or on topic itself. Summary writing or notes taking are important reference skills, absolutely necessary when getting information from primary or secondary sources and they should be reinforced as a class activity. Besides, some reference skills such as library use and documentation are particularly useful, and we consider that to make the students familiar with all these activities is the obligation of the language teacher in technical universities. Therefore, a couple of hours could be devoted to a library-use class, and some handbooks on writing could be also recommended/used for reference. *The correct recording of documentation in the right format is of utmost importance, and the full elements including author's name, title of the material, publisher, the year of publication as well as the number of page(s) referred to should be clearly indicated by the trainer as being compulsory in any research paper. The trainers should draw the students' attention that any quotes, opinions, figures or facts cited in their paper must be accurately referenced.*

A.3 Building up the Expository Scheme. The texts (articles, handbooks, monographs, studies in economic matters etc) read by students in economics/ technical fields are mainly of an expository nature, their main purpose being the communication of technical information. Therefore, the way in which the students write their own texts will be similar, the students going to use patterns specific to expository writing.

The trainers should take into consideration this aspect, and teach the students the basic structure of the essay and its commonly used patterns. As part of our experiment this activity was carried out during a few class-hours in the period when the students were busy collecting the information from different sources outside the classroom. The students should be made aware that the essay is more or less a formal composition and its basic structure consists of three parts: introduction, development and conclusions, each having a designated function.

The trainers should also think about the commonly used patterns which can be mentioned/indicated/taught, such as definition, testing, comparison and contrast, classification. In the class activities the students

will learn to identify these patterns and even the function each pattern is used for. (For example, the definition is often given to fulfil the function of describing the situation/case/experiment etc.)

B.1 Discussing the topic within the group. Beginning with this activity the trainer ceases to be the center, his role being more that of an organizer of activity, while the students take the main role. Thus, at this stage the members of each group will get together to discuss the topic that has been set at the beginning of the activity; they have to exchange opinions/personal experience and the information gathered from different sources in a sort of brainstorming session. Referring to our experiment, it became obvious during its development that this activity gave rise to discussions, making the students refer to additional sources/literature, a fact which enriched the content of the topic.

At this stage the students have to work together the general plan of the written text (in our experiment a report) which has to be less formal or detailed than the outline which is to be prepared by each group; the plan can be adjusted/amended quite easily. At this moment the trainer should guide the students' work. In our experiment the plan included: *a) The subject of the report* ("Evaluation of employee involvement in medium-seized corporation and its impact on productivity, profits, labour management relations, and decision making"); *b) Purpose of the report*. ("To determine if employee involvement techniques would be suitable for the X company"); *c) Special terms*. (Some special terms were defined, as they could represent new concepts for readers. e.g.: "employment involvement", "quality circles", "quality of work life"; *d) Date* (It meant specifying the kinds of information the students would be using in the text/report: interviews, questionnaires; literature from public/government/industry sources; personal experience etc.) *e) Sources*. (The students were recommended to keep a working bibliography so that they were able to compile their sources at the end of the writing activity); *f) Rough outline of content and organizational approach*. (A short outline of the text to be written was necessary, the methods of approach being decided as well. It can be chronological, functional, cause and effect, geographical etc.; g) *Conclusions and Recommendations* (Possible outcomes of the research can be formulated, with possible recommendations etc. In the experiment the recommendation referred to the conditions under which the employees' involvement could be considered as well as the training/education which labour and management required with the end in view).

B.2 Outlining/Oral presentation before starting the writing process. After each group has finished preparing the detailed outline, it is distributed to the classmates forming the other groups. This outline will serve for

writing the research-paper. Doing it the students have got a chance to thoroughly go through the data gathered and organize them, to evaluate what will be included or discarded; the outline should be detailed enough to help in developing each section of the paper, yet flexible enough so that the necessary changes could be easily done. The outline represents the students' way of thinking through the structure and content of the topic in detail. Final adjustments and corrections can be made after writing the first draft. An outline would involve the following elements: *a) Summary/synopsis* (the main points of the paper are summarized and the findings are indicated); *b) Introduction* (explains the reasons for writing the paper and the way of writing it: purpose, scope, methodology used as well as structure and the type of approach); *c) Review/Presentation of the events/situations/problems* etc. (with comparative events/situation etc.); *d) Evaluation* of the events/situations/problems etc under discussion with full descriptions, presentation of data collected and characteristics revealed, with a summary of the findings; *e) Conclusions and recommendations* (estimation of costs in case of some programs to be accomplished)*; f) Bibliography; g) Appendixes* (Charts, illustrations, graphs, tables, questionnaires etc).

After the outline has been distributed among the students, its writer (representative of the group) is asked to present it to the whole class. This stage is quite important as it represents the link between the written and oral skills, both of them necessary for the future professionals. Since oral communication in business area as well as in any other technical areas, is likely to be needed as part of the future profession, the activity related to oral presentation is designed to help the students develop their speaking skills combined with a sense of audience as well. It also provides opportunities to exercise their ability in locating possible mistakes often appearing in others' presentations, and hence, a possibility to improve their own speech. In the speech addressed to the other students, the mistakes become obvious to the classmates who are called to comment on the speech and its correctness from different perspectives – including the linguistic one. The feedback coming from classmates is always better considered than the one coming from the trainer, and it heightens the speaker's awareness of the possible wrong forms he uses; this may represent a possibility to remedy the situation.

B.3 The writing process/Drafting. To write on the topic decided becomes easier after the correct and adequate outlining of the ideas, the activity consisting in the careful and detailed commitment to paper of the elements already discussed. Besides, the students have to follow the basic structure of any scientific text, a requirement already taught by the teacher/trainer: (*a) introduction, b) body of the text including method,*

materials, analysis/discussion and result, and *c) conclusion*), as well as some stylistic requirements (clearness, coherence of ideas expressed in the right sequence of paragraphs, conciseness, correctness a.s.o.). Thus:

a) In the *introduction* the student writers should include the information necessary for the readers' orientation in the text, regarding the purpose, scope, methodology of gathering data, definitions and structure.

A good introduction arouses the reader's interest and gives them some background information on the subject, preparing them for the material contained in the body of the paper.

b) In *the body of the paper* the students should include the section on materials and methods, where they indicate, firstly, the materials/documents a.s.o. on which they have relied their research, and, afterwards, the methods/ criteria they have resorted to.

In the next section, all the pertinent data which have been gathered are analyzed and discussed. The section can also present major information or generalizations as well as comparisons with other theoretical or experimental work within the field. It goes without saying *that this section is the heart of the paper in which the writer should state his case and substantiate his point of view*; it is here where the writer should present the results of his research and analysis. The text can be supported by illustrations – charts, graphs, pictures – which will enhance the meaning of the text without repeating it. Great attention should be paid to these illustrations in order to make use of them when really necessary.

At this point the trainers should underline the importance of the text good organization, under various headings and (sub) subheadings.

Thus, the students should be explained to be careful so that the headings indicate the main points of the text, while the subheadings/ sub-subheadings indicate subordinate/supporting ideas.

c) Conclusions should introduce no new information but they should summarize the main points in the paper. They should be stated briefly and clearly, sometimes in the form of numbered statements. The students should be revealed that, in many cases, the readers only skim through the paper in order to get to the conclusion, as they want to discover what patterns, trends, observations etc, the writer has found in his research. That is why the students should be explained that their conclusions must be logical outcomes of the data presented, supported by the information gathered and the research itself (e.g. In the experiment the conclusion of one paper was: "The employee involvement proved successful when both managers and employees understood the correct implementation and administration of the technique").

The conclusions can also contain –according to the topic – some recommendations for further study or action. (Thus, the recommendations should answer questions as: what should be done? How do we achieve the desired result? How can we persuade people to agree with our plan of action?)

Writing the paper also means the use of different stylistic devices. Being cohesive is extremely important as cohesion enhances the readability of the technical passages and helps the readers connect the new information with that previously given. This device includes lexical and structural repetitions, referential pronouns, synonyms, transitional words and phrases. In order to get used to it, the students should be involved in specific class activities (text analysis, short texts guided writing etc.)

No paper can come to an end without the proper list of supplemental materials (the list of information sources and supporting data that did not appear in the body of the paper but that the writer wishes to include, considering them important) and bibliography. The trainers should insist on the students indicating bibliography correctly, listing all sources used in the paper and giving complete information on all books, articles, documents, and other references so that readers can retrieve these materials if they wish. Besides, the students should also be taught the correct way of indicating the entries, a fact which is often overlooked if not insistently pointed out. This section also contains information mentioned under the name of *Appendixes* and which consists of data that support the ideas in the body of the paper but are too lengthy or detailed to be included in the text. The students should be explained that Appendixes can include charts, questionnaires, short reports, documents, photographs, explanations of statistical methods or computer programs used to gather data, transcripts of interviews, or any other data the writer feels the reader would find valuable.

Supplemental materials, bibliography and appendixes included in the paper are very important for any research-paper as they prove the proper documentation of the students and provide theoretical evidence for the points made. Therefore, the trainers should be aware of the importance to be paid to this part of the paper when training their students for writing research-papers.

B.4 Peer-Evaluating. The first evaluation of the research-papers should come from the students as it is well known that the impact of the feed-back coming from the colleagues is stronger and more striking than the fee-back coming from the trainer. Therefore, by responding to each other's writing the students can learn a lot. In order to achieve a meaningful and relevant interaction the trainer should organize the evaluating activity.

First, he should indicate the individual students/groups and the peer-evaluators in a way able to balance the levels of skills and general linguistic knowledge.

Second, the students should be recommended to give both positive and negative feed-back, as only in this way the activity can be considered accomplished. Thus, the evaluation shall be considered objective, nobody shall feel embarrassed or protected, and the possible personal frustrations or discontents shall be eliminated. Third, the trainer should provide the students the guidelines for evaluating each other's work.

B. 5 Revising. After evaluation, each group should go over their own work and makes revisions, both as suggested by their peers and according to their own deeper thinking. The recommendation given to the students should be to let the first draft "cool off" for a few days, if possible; the students should also be recommended to read the text several times, each time keeping in mind a series of questions, most of them coming from the evaluator' suggestions such as:

1. Is the purpose defined in the working plan and outline achieved?
2. Does the introduction establish the scope/methods of the paper?
3. Is the presentation of ideas/data/information logical?
4. Is the information complete so that the reader could have all the data necessary to understand the situation?
5. Are the facts well documented and supported?
6. Is the information presented concisely? (Unnecessary words/phrases can be cut, repetitions can be eliminated, and the whole information can be condensed).
7. Are the opinions separated from facts? (When an opinion should be expressed, it has to be clearly labeled with phrases as "In my/our judgment …", "These facts suggest that … ", "The situation seems to … " etc).
8. Has the precise word been chosen to convey the right meaning? (Vague writing should be eliminated; the exact amount/degree of what was achieved/changed etc should be exactly specified; the text should answer the questions: "How much?", "What kind?", "In what way?", "How long?", "Who was involved?" etc).
9. Have the facts been checked? (Accuracy is essential in any scientific paper, and, consequently all statements, figures, sources, etc should be double-checked for accuracy).
10. Do the titles/headings/subheading reflect the material under discussion? (Titles/etc should be edited in order to make sure that they precisely indicate the subjects to follow; general and abstract titles/etc should be avoided).

11. Have the spelling/grammar errors been checked? (The recommendation is to read the paper once for grammar and the second time for spelling errors). The students should be explained that neatness and accuracy in format, content, and language is extremely important as they enhance the paper credibility and influence the readers' in the writer's favour. A lot of revising activity should be indebted to peer/evaluation and the students should be explained and convinced that they must thoroughly rely on the feed-back coming from their evaluators. Good writing is often a joint project and they should consider their writing activity from this perspective. As well-known, teaching also involves formative aspects and, therefore, the students should be trained to become aware of the fact that false pride will not help them produce the best papers possible. To learn from the others' opinions is the best way towards perfection!

*B. 6 Responding to students' writing***.** The end of the activity is the training's response/reaction to the students' work, after the latter have finished revising the paper. It is better that the trainer should ask questions about specific parts (s)he does not understand/has doubts and have a talk with the students instead of only marking the errors. (Sometimes the ESP trainer/teacher could consult the subject-matter trainers regarding the specialized content before the class-time in order to get a better/appropriate understanding of the topic). Anyway, at this stage, it is important to let students understand that responding is no punishment/criticism etc., coming from the teacher, but an integral part of the writing process. In order to get the best results the trainer should adopt a calm, open and co-operative attitude becoming a sort of students' adviser and not a sort of supervisor.

Conclusion

The ability to write research papers is an important requirement for university students. By writing on topics chosen by themselves from their areas of interest/specialization, the students become highly motivated as they understand the usefulness of what they are learning. For their future activity/profession meaningful interaction is also provided when the students are asked to communicate to their colleagues the findings of the research during the oral presentation.

The group discussion and peer-evaluation activities make them learn from each other, and the new skills are reinforced when transferred from their peers/colleagues to their work. The experiment incorporated important aspects such as purpose, setting, learner's/teacher's role, etc in the area of

language, content and communication, all of them contributing to the acquisition of the basic skills of research-paper writing.

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CREATIVITY IN LESSONS OF ENGLISH

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In modern society, *creativity*, *originality* and *flexibility* are terms that are used very frequently today no matter what the topic of conversation is. They denote popular qualities that are usually required of employees or examinees. It is necessary to have these qualities to be successful and efficient. Once I even heard someone saying "*when you stop being creative, you are likely to lose your job or give up your career."*

In addition to creativity, one needs a lot of special knowledge and skills to be successful at school, at work, or in life in general. For example, one should have a good command of foreign languages, which is one of the main qualifications employers require of their employees. Speaking foreign languages is especially important for Hungarians because not many people speak Hungarian in the world. My country has just entered the European Union, which makes it even more important for Hungarians to speak languages. By knowing foreign languages we will be more able to meet the challenges of modern life, examinations or job requirements, etc.

Nowadays there are better and better course books, resource books, dictionaries, graded readers, cassettes, CD ROMs, etc. both for learners and for teachers of foreign languages and especially English. If you look at the tasks in the teaching materials you will find that they often require creativity, originality and flexibility. Just think of some typical English language tasks like 'brainstorm as many examples of ... as you can within one minute', 'list three ways of ...', 'compare ... and ...', 'Discuss the pros and cons ...'. But learning a language is not the only situation in which you need to be creative. You should be very well-prepared and creative when taking a language exam or an entrance examination at university or college, taking part in a post graduate course or in a job interview and also when fulfilling tasks at work. Therefore schools must not only teach the course material but also train their students to be creative. And foreign language classes provide good opportunities for that.

In the present paper, I will look at tasks that develop students' creativity while they are using a foreign language.

First, let me make a few notes about *creativity*. In very general terms, creativity is understood as the ability to produce things or thoughts that have not existed before, to solve problems and give answers to questions that are new to us. One is called creative when they think in an

original way, make new units out of parts that they know already. One is called original when they are able to think individually in a way that no one has done before. One is called flexible when they are capable of adjusting to different, varying or regularly changing circumstances or else when they are capable of going from one field of ideas to another very easily, very fast and frequently. A man of ideas always finds solutions in totally unexpected situations, and very often their solution is not just one possible solution but a rather good one or may be the best one. They can choose the best solution easily because they are capable of keeping several possibilities in mind at the same time and do not stick to one too early or prematurely.

People having the above qualities get on well with problems in their lives. If the main aim of schools is to prepare their students for their every day life, it must also be their aim to train students to be creative, original, flexible and full of ideas. Therefore as a part of different lessons it is necessary to *create* situations in which students can gain experience and practice in their own creativity.

If you wish to have a lesson to develop students' creativity, no matter what subject you teach, it is worth considering the factors that help your lesson be successful and the ones that do not. In my experience, friendly and relaxed atmosphere, in which we do not give marks or grades for the students' performance, supports both the students' and the teacher's creativity. The latter is extremely important because the teacher's creativity is an example for the learners' to follow. Besides the teacher should constantly give feedback on the students' creativity because being acknowledged raises their self-esteem and confidence. I find it very beneficial to set tasks that are interesting and challenging for students because being challenged and wishing to reach the aim of the task drives the students to take an active part in the activity. However, tense and unfriendly atmosphere, getting marks or grades for performance and situations in which it is only the teacher who can know the right answer, or a badly chosen place or time, boredom, monotony, etc. may very well cause problems that will reduce the learners' creativity during the lesson.

If, however, we have the desired circumstances for creativity development, we should go to our lesson very well-prepared and with our minds and hearts open because new techniques and tasks can trigger unexpected behaviour and reactions of students. If this is the case we should handle these situations with a lot of care in order that the lesson could go on and work out well. It is interesting to note that problems arising during the lesson always provide good opportunities to have meaningful spontaneous communication between the teacher and the students. Working out problems is very valuable because our students use English with a real need to clarify

something or get information (see Medgyes, 1994:88-89). So in this sense a situation of misunderstanding is like an information gap exercise. I think it is wise to gradually introduce our learners tasks and activities requiring creativity, therefore start with simple short exercises that can be done in groups or pairs and later move on to more complex and individual tasks.

Let me present a few activities that I have designed for my English lessons to develop creativity. Of course, any of them can be used in lessons of other languages.

The first task I will show is based on the classical picture description exercise, which is one of the compulsory tasks at the Hungarian state language examinations. In the classical task we ask the learner to tell what he/she can see in the picture. The picture normally shows an everyday situation. We can choose a similar picture for our lesson but instead of asking our students to describe the picture we ask them to brainstorm words and expressions in English or in the language we teach. This part of the activity is a warm-up exercise by which students can revise useful vocabulary for the topic. Brainstorming can be done individually, in pairs, in small groups or even as a class, either in writing or orally. We can also have a competition, in which the person brainstorming the most words and expressions is the winner. The teacher or the students can put the words on the board if it seems necessary and the students can consult the list throughout the whole task.

Next, if there is a person in the picture we should ask our students to write down questions that they would like to ask him/her. Then we ask them to pair up with their colleagues. One member of the pair should imagine that he/she is the person in the picture and is supposed to answer his/her partner's question. Then they should change roles. If the students have finished the interviews, they can also write reports, in which they summarise what they have learnt from their partners. Finally, the class listens to the reports and votes for the best or most interesting one.

If there are no people in the picture but there is an animal, we can ask our students to imagine that they are the animal in the picture or imagine that the animal can speak. In this way the exercise can be done in the same way as above. If there are neither people nor animals in the picture, we should ask our students to put themselves in the situation shown in the picture. If it seems appropriate we can suggest them roles or places in which they can imagine themselves. In this case the task is not making an interview but telling their partners what they are thinking about and how they are feeling in the given place and situation. If you prefer a written task, ask your students to write a letter to their relatives or friends, or a report to

their boss at work who has sent them to the place in question or they can write an e-mail or sms message.

In this activity we combine written and oral tasks, individual, pair and group work, we let our students choose a topic for their conversation, letter, report or message. In this way, students can express their own ideas at their own level of English, which has a crucial importance in a mixed ability class. This exercise improves the students' speaking, writing and listening skills. We provide opportunities for our students to volunteer to read out their written pieces, and get feedback from their peers in the report competition. We can use pictures collected by the students or they can choose from our collection. The pictures used in this task may be photographs cut out from magazines, posters or reproductions of paintings or sculptures, etc.

For the following activity we need a set of pictures and a set of words. We should have at least as many pictures as students in our class. If we have more pictures than students, it is even better because in that case they can have a wider choice. It is best to choose pictures in which there is only one thing or a group of similar things, like books, balls, pens, apples, glasses, etc. We also need as many word cards as pictures. We should choose words in a way that they do not denote the things in the pictures, that is, if we have a picture of books, we should not have a card with the word *books*. The words should be nouns denoting abstract ideas, e.g.: learning, friendship, competition, happiness, etc.

We should put the pictures and word cards on two different tables and ask our students to choose a picture and a word card. Their task is to tell how their pictures and words are related. (As you can see it is a game of associations and that is why it is important to give words that do not directly tell what can be seen in the pictures.) In my experience, this exercise works best when it is done in groups of four to six because in this way students do not only report on their own associations but also have the opportunity to comment on other students' pictures and words. In the second part of the task each group is asked to agree on their favourite combination of picture and word and then work on the association in detail. In other words, they can explore the link between the picture and the word, which are likely to be understood as two elements of a simile or metaphor. After brainstorming ideas, students are asked to arrange their thoughts, write them down and make a poster showing the picture and word combination and the simile or metaphor, as well as the collection of explanatory sentences. We can put the posters on the walls of the classroom and/or have a poster competition.

An alternative follow-up can be writing poems. The words of the poems can be totally different from the explanatory sentences when the

students only keep the simile or metaphor as the title or they can arrange the explanatory sentences into a poem. I find that the latter version can free our students from the burden of finding the right words for a poem. They are 'only' supposed to find a good arrangement or order for the sentences they have made before. In this way they can try their hands at playing around with words, expressions and sentences, producing a literary piece, during which they can get experience in how flexible they are when using the language they are learning. I find writing poetry very suitable for practising a foreign language "because it tolerates errors" (cf. Maley, 1987:94).

Just imagine how interesting the associations can be if someone combines a picture of spices with the word 'books'. Let me give a few examples:

Books are spices of weekdays.
Spices make our meals more tasteful, books make our free time more enjoyable.
Books are like spices, both make the things they are added to more enjoyable / both make their users happy.
Spices enrich meals just like books enrich people's thoughts.
Spices help show the real taste of some food, books help recognize the really important things in life.
Using too many spices you can hide the real taste of your food, reading too many books you can forget about the (real) problems in your life.
Spices are only additional ingredients in a meal that can change the value of it to the better or the worse. Books are tools in the reader's hand that can help him/her get closer to reality or prevent him/her from doing so.

The list of associations or explanatory sentences can go on endlessly. I think that the activity presented above gives a wonderful opportunity to activate students' imagination, creativity and vocabulary as well as to practise the present simple tense and comparative constructions.

If our group/class has gained some experience in working with metaphors, we can give them a whole list of metaphors describing the same thing in different ways. We should ask our students to choose their favourite one from the list. E.g.: *Friendship is like growing flowers / learning to play a musical instrument / exploring a new territory, etc.* If everybody has chosen, we should ask those to form a group who have the same metaphors as their favourite. Then ask them to prepare a pantomime to show how they interpret their metaphor. In this task students can consult each other in the phase of preparation when they discuss their ideas, decide on the roles they will play in the pantomime and practise for the performance. After watching all the performances, students can give their evaluations and their votes for the best one. Then we should ask the students to read out their evaluations

and votes. Finally, based on the votes the class decides which the best performance was.

In this exercise students are encouraged not only to be creative but also to co-operate, share their ideas and tasks, practise together and in the meantime use English to communicate about what they are actually doing. So they gain experience in solving problems in the language they are learning.

One of the advantages of the activity is that students are supposed to speak English only during preparation so shy or reserved students who usually are not very keen on acting out things in front of the class are willing to take part in it. During preparation the teacher plays the role of a helper and is active only if the students ask for his/her help. Otherwise he/she is only monitoring and if he/she notices mistakes that are worth attention and working on, he/she takes a note of them and decides how to come back to the point at a later time.

As we have seen, all the activities above consist of several steps, they take a relatively long time to do, need some preparation and sometimes some follow-up work, that is, we may want to return to certain things and give them further practice. Although it is a matter of course because learning a language is a rather time-consuming, complicated and complex process in which we use a number of skills and abilities of ours. Acquiring the material and integrating our skills and abilities go in a number of phases throughout a period of time. We can also see that activities like the above improve not only the students' language skills but also their fantasy and imagination, abilities to recognise, identify and solve problems as well as their social skills. In this way they provide wonderful opportunities for our students to gain experience in being successful and achieving good results in situations that they are not accustomed to within the language classroom. This in its turn will help them get prepared for situations outside the school or in their lives after the school years.

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THE PRO-DROP PARAMETER IN SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

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Introduction

In the past decades the pro-drop parameter has been of considerable interest to first language (L1) and second language (L2) acquisition researchers. As the growing number of research studies indicates, the pro-drop parameter is a linguistic issue which is worth exploring. This parameter is one of the most extensively studied features since it is also associated with a number of linguistic properties which may constitute a cluster. Via investigating the nature of this particular parameter we can get a better understanding of how language specific parameters are acquired in general and how the value for a given parameter is reset in second language acquisition.

This paper aims to explore the nature of the pro-drop parameter including the grammatical properties traditionally associated with it within the Principles and Parameters framework. Furthermore, the role of the pro-drop parameter in second language acquisition will be discussed on the basis of the most influential second language acquisition (hereafter SLA) research studies. In surveying the literature, the following questions will be addressed: How is the pro-drop parameter acquired and represented in the mental grammars of L2 learners? Is there a clustering of properties associated with the pro-drop parameter? How much access do L2 learners have to Universal Grammar (UG) in resetting the parameter under investigation?

1. Principles and Parameters Theory

Within *Principles and Parameters Theory* (Chomsky 1981, 1986) Universal Grammar consists of a fixed set of universal *principles* and a set of *parameters*. Like principles, parameters are innately specified. Universal principles are the same in all human languages, for example the Empty Category Principle. However, variation among particular languages is permitted in the form of parameters, which may take one of two or more values. The choices are predetermined by UG. In L1 acquisition the child has to set each parameter in one of its values appropriately on the basis of the language input. In other words, the appropriate setting is triggered by the

input. Moreover, an important claim of Principles and Parameters Theory is that each value of a parameter is associated with a cluster of syntactic and morphological properties**.** When the parameter is set, all of these properties are assumed to emerge together (for details see Haegeman 1993).

2. The pro-drop parameter

2.1 The nature of the pro-drop parameter

The *pro-drop parameter* (also known as the *Null Subject Parameter*) was one of the first parameters proposed by Chomsky (1981) to account for cross-linguistic variation among languages. It captures the phenomenon that some languages may omit subject pronouns, whereas other languages require overt subject pronouns. The term *pro* refers to the empty element in the subject position. The pro-drop parameter is of binary nature. In other words, there are two settings for it: an unmarked pro-drop (+PD) value and a marked non-pro-drop (-PD) value. So, languages differ as to whether or not they allow null subjects in finite sentences.

In *pro-drop languages*, null subjects are allowed. Languages such as Italian, Spanish, Hungarian, Chinese Japanese, Korean etc have the (+PD) value of the parameter. In linguistic literature, null subject languages are divided into two types: 1. *pro-drop languages* with rich verbal agreement, in which null subjects can be licensed and identified by agreement on the verb, e.g. Italian, Spanish, Hungarian etc; 2. *topic-drop languages* (with topics that can be identified by the preceding discourse, e.g. Chinese, Japanese etc. In contrast, English, French, German etc belong to *non-pro-drop languages*, in which null subjects are not allowed.

In terms of markedness, the (+PD) feature is considered to be unmarked, whereas the (-PD) feature is considered to be marked. As Hyams (1986) points out, English children acquiring their mother tongue tend to omit the subject pronoun at the beginning of their language development. For instance, they often produce sentences like 'Raining'; 'Left' etc. So, initially they seem to choose the (-PD) value for the pro-drop parameter. Moreover, Hyams claims when children in a (-PD) language start using expletive pronouns they also stop simultaneously dropping subject pronouns. As evidence shows, children seem to reset the initial value of the parameter on the basis of positive language input.

2.2 Clustering properties associated with the pro-drop parameter

The pro-drop parameter is assumed to be associated with a cluster of properties (Chomsky 1981). To illustrate the difference between the two

types of languages, Italian (+PD), Hungarian (+PD) and English (-PD) sentences will be given. Sentences in brackets are the word-for-word translations of Italian and Hungarian sentences. The (+PD) option is associated with the following cluster of properties:
a, + *pro-drop languages*:

1. *Null and overt subjects* (rich agreement: inflection of the verb that is different for 1st person, 2nd person, etc.):

a, Vado al cinema stasera. ((I) go to the cinema tonight.)
b, Moziba megyek ma este. OR Ma este moziba megyek.
(Cinema-to go-I tonight). OR (Tonight cinema-to go-I.)

c, Va al cinema stasera. (Goes to the cinema tonight.)
d, Moziba megy ma este. OR Ma este moziba megy.
(Cinema-to goes tonight.) OR (Tonight cinema-to goes.)

e, La ragazza/Lei va al cinema stasera.
(The girl/She goes to the cinema tonight.)
f, A lány/ő moziba megy ma este.
(The girl/she cinema-to goes tonight.)

As can be seen, in pro-drop languages with rich inflectional morphology, subject pronouns are rarely used overtly because the verb form, that is the suffix of the verb, clearly indicates the person and number of the subject. If an overt pronoun is inserted into the sentence, it is usually used for contrastive purposes.

2. *No expletives* (*it, there*):

a, Piove. (Rains.)
b, Esik. (Rains.) OR Esik az eső. (Rains the rain.)
c, C'e una sedia in camera. (Is a chair in room.)
d, Van egy szék a szobában. (Is a chair the room-in.)

3. *Postposed subjects* (The subject may be preceded or followed by the verb.) / *Variable word order*:

a, Ha telefonato Gianni. (Has phoned John.)
b, Telefonált János. (Phoned John.)
c, Gianni ha telefonato. (John has phoned.)

d, János telefonált. (John phoned.)

4. *No that-trace effects*:

a, Chi hai detto che ti ama?
(Who have (you) said that you-ACC loves?)
b, Kit mondtál, hogy szeret téged?
(Who-ACC said-you that loves you-ACC?)

That-trace effect refers to the phenomenon that the extraction of a *wh*-phrase from the subject position next to a lexically filled complementizer is not allowed in English. However, pro-drop languages lack *that*-trace effects.

The (-PD) option involves the following grammatical properties:
b, - *pro-drop languages*:

1. *No null subjects/Overt subjects*:

a, I go to the cinema tonight.
b, *Go to the cinema tonight.
c, The girl/She goes to the cinema tonight.

2. *Expletives* (*it, there*):

a, It is raining.
b, *Is raining.
c, There is a chair in the room.
d, *Is a chair in the room.

3. *No postposed subjects/Fixed word order*:

a, John has phoned.
b, *Has phoned John.

4. *That-trace effects*:

a, Who do you think __ loves you?
b, *Who do you think that __ loves you?

3. The pro-drop parameter in SLA research

3.1 Overview of some empirical research studies

As has been mentioned, the pro-drop parameter is one of the most widely investigated grammatical features in SLA literature. However, due to the theoretical framework, the scope of interest and the methodology applied, SLA research studies often have controversial research findings. In L2 acquisition literature the following issues have been considered: What is the initial setting of the pro-drop parameter? Is there a clustering of properties in L2 acquisition? If yes, do L2 learners reset all the features associated with the pro-drop parameter? Do L2 learners have access to UG? Are they capable of resetting the parameter from the value of L1 to the value of L2? Articles by White (1985) (1986), Phinney (1987), Liceras (1989), Lakshmanan (1991) and Cook (1996) are reviewed in the light of the questions presented.

In L2 acquisition research, the study of the pro-drop parameter was first investigated by White (1985, 1986). White also examined whether the grammatical properties associated with the pro-drop parameter cluster together in interlanguage grammars. The subjects of 1985 study were Spanish and French learners of English, whereas the 1986 study included two Italian learners, too. Spanish and Italian are pro-drop languages, while English and French are non-pro-drop. The learners were asked to make grammaticality judgements on various sentence structures, such as the sentences with missing pronoun subjects, sentences with ungrammatical subject-verb inversion, and sentences with a *that*-trace. The Spanish and Italian learners performed differently compared to the French learners. They were more likely to accept subjectless sentences. Nevertheless, there was no difference in the grammaticality judgement of sentences with ungrammatical subject-verb inversion. Both groups were accurate in rejecting the verb-subject word order.

In addition to grammaticality judgements, subjects had to do a question formation task which was to test if L2 learners know that a *wh*-phrase cannot be extracted from subject position of an embedded clause if a complementizer is present. In contrast, there is no restriction on the extraction of a *wh*-phrase in object position. In terms of *that*-trace effect, the Spanish learners of English were more likely to make *that*-trace errors.

On the basis of research results, White claims that L2 learners initially choose the L1 value of the pro-drop parameter, but as their proficiency increases, they switch to the appropriate L2 setting. In other words, L2 learners are capable of resetting a parameter to the new L2 value. Moreover, L2 features may cluster in interlanguage grammars.

Like White, Phinney (1987) examined the pro-drop parameter and the markedness of transfer errors in adult L2 learners. She also supported the hypothesis proposed by White that L2 learners start with L1 parameter values, which may lead to transfer errors in their interlanguage. She investigated the use of pronouns and pro-drop in the written compositions of native Spanish students learning English and native English students learning Spanish. All the subjects were university students. The written compositions were analysed for the absence of subject pronouns (ESL) and the overuse of subject pronouns (SSL).

The results showed that it was easier for English learners of Spanish to drop pronominal subjects than for Spanish learners of English to use overt subject pronouns. In particular, in impersonal constructions, Spanish (ESL) subjects tended to omit expletives up to 76%. In contrast, English (SSL) students never used subjects in Spanish impersonal statements.

These research findings confirm Phinney's hypothesis that (+PD) is unmarked, while (-PD) is marked. Therefore, it is easier for L2 learners to move from (-PD) setting to (+PD) setting than vice versa in L2 acquisition. In addition, Phinney claims that it can account for the phenomenon that some languages are considered to be easier to learn than others. Consequently, languages with more unmarked settings appear to be easier while languages with more marked settings seem to be more difficult.

Liceras (1989) agrees with Phinney (1987) on the fact that Spanish, that is, the (+PD) setting is the unmarked setting. Unlike White and Phinney, she assumes that L2 learners do not necessarily start with the L1 setting of the parameter if the L2 value is the unmarked one. Moreover, she suggests that L2 learners may start with the unmarked option before setting the parameter values appropriately. She also proposes an implicational hierarchy: pro-drop > inversion > *that*-trace. In other words, if *that*-trace has been acquired, the other two properties must have been acquired.

In order to test her hypotheses, Liceras examined four different groups of French and English speakers learning Spanish in a classroom setting on various constructions. All the subjects were students at the University of Ottawa. On the basis of their language proficiency they were divided into 4 groups: beginner, intermediate, advanced, and high advanced. She also involved 5 Spanish native speakers who were graduate students at the same university. They served as a control group. Subjects were asked to respond to a written grammaticality judgement task containing various structures, focusing on null subjects, subject-verb inversion and *that*-trace effects.

Liceras analysed the research results in terms of the three aspects above. The subjects usually tended to accept null subjects in Spanish sentences, which supports the hypothesis that the (+PD) setting is the

unmarked option. As for subject-verb inversion, the control group accepted all the inversions, whereas the French and English groups showed variation in their acceptance of verb-subject constructions. Among the three properties the *that*-trace constructions proved to be the most complex and most difficult for both the French and the English groups.

On the whole, the results confirm the original hypothesis of the researcher that the three properties associated with the pro-drop parameter do not have the same status in the grammar of L2 learners. Liceras also adds that acquisition of inversion and *that*-trace effects needs to be preceded by the acquisition of null subjects. Moreover, she states that the results indicate that L2 learners do not begin with the L1 parameter settings.

Lakshmanan (1991) conducted a study investigating whether null subjects in L2 learners' speech go together with the lack of inflections. Lakshmanan investigated three children, L2 learners of English: 4-year-old Spanish-speaking Marta, 4-year-old French-speaking Muriel, and 5-year-old Japanese Uguisu. Spanish and Japanese are null-subject languages, while French and English are not. The analysis of transcripts showed that Marta started by using null subjects and these null subjects mostly occurred in copular sentences with the verb form *is*. However, there was no relationship between null subjects and omission of inflections. Likewise, there proved to be no relationship between Muriel's use of pronominal subjects and her use of verbal inflections. She tended to use null subjects in contexts with *it is*. In the speech of Uguisu, there were no null subjects, but some inflections. Uguisu used subject pronouns from the very beginning. According to Lakshmanan, it is due to the fact that subjects in English are probably salient to her since in Japanese both null subjects and null objects are allowed. This phenomenon contradicts the hypothesis that initially, learners with a (+PD) L1 tend to omit subject pronouns in the (-PD) L2 and then learn to switch into the appropriate L2 setting.

Cook (1996) conducted a study with the help of a MUGtest (Multi-parameter Universal Grammar test). The MUGtest consists of 96 sentences including structure-dependency and pro-drop. The aim of the study was to test the knowledge of L2 learners of English on the aspects above and to make cross-linguistic comparisons. The subjects of the test were Japanese, Finnish, and Chinese university students of English, as well as native speakers of English. They were asked to make grammaticality judgements on various sentence structures. The research findings show that L2 learners judged most English sentences with null subjects ungrammatical, ranging from 64.2% to 92.8% compared with English native speakers scoring 90%. Moreover, Cook points out that learners with (+PD) L1s have different scores in English from learners with (-PD) L1s. The results imply that the L1 value of the pro-drop

parameter may be an important factor in the acquisition of L2 parameter setting.

3.2 Summary of research findings

The issue of markedness is investigated by White, Phinney, and Liceras while the clustering properties of the pro-drop parameter are examined by White, Liceras and Lakshmanan.

1. What is the initial setting of the pro-drop parameter? Is the unmarked setting (+PD) or (-PD)?

White, Phinney and Cook assume that the initial setting of the pro-drop parameter is the L1 value of the parameter. In contrast, Liceras and Lakshmanan provide counter-evidence.

In terms of markedness, White, Phinney and Liceras agree that it is easier for L2 learners to acquire the unmarked setting compared to the marked setting. In contrast, there is no agreement with respect to the unmarked value of the pro-drop parameter. White assumes that (-PD) is the unmarked option, while Phinney and Liceras claim that (+PD) is the unmarked setting.

2. Is there a clustering of properties in L2 acquisition?

Based on the studies reviewed here, there are three different positions in terms of clustering effects. White concludes that there is some clustering effect in the L2 grammar. The second position is presented by Liceras who suggests an implicational hierarchy for the properties of the pro-drop parameter. This can account for the fact that subject-verb inversion and *that*-trace constructions proved to be more difficult for L2 learners than sentences with null subjects. The third position, as suggested by Phinney and Lakshmanan is that there is no clustering of properties in L2 acquisition.

3. Do L2 learners have access to UG? What is the role of L1 in L2 acquisition?

The study of the pro-drop parameter has also contributed to the issue of UG accessibility in L2 acquisition. However, there is not a general agreement as to whether UG is available to L2 learners. On the basis of research findings there are three possibilities, as summarised by Cook (1996):

1. *No access:* Only the L1 parameter setting is available, UG parameters are not available. If the L2 value of the pro-drop parameter is different from the L1, then principles and parameters of UG are not available, so conscious learning must be used to match the data.

2. *Direct access:* UG parameters are accessible without L1 interference. L2 learners acquire the parameter settings of the L2 as children acquire their mother tongue through UG. If (+pro-drop) is the default, or unmarked setting for the pro-drop parameter in L1 acquisition, then it should be the default option in L2 acquisition, too.

3. *Indirect access:* UG parameters are available with L1 reference. L2 learners initially use their L1 settings, then reset the value for parameters appropriate to the L2 (for details of the Parameter Resetting Model see Sharwood Smith 1994: 160-63).

White and Phinney and Cook support the third position. They argue that L2 learners start with L1 parameter settings, then reset the parameter settings on the basis of input data. Liceras and Lakshmanan, however, provide counter-evidence as they claim that L2 learners do not necessarily start with the L1 setting of the parameter.

Conclusion

The pro-drop parameter has received considerable attention from SLA researchers. As can be seen, research findings often appear to be controversial. This could be due to limitations of research studies, such as inappropriate methodology, research design, experimental subjects and tasks. In addition, the limitations of the theoretical framework may also contribute to inadequacies in empirical research. Nevertheless, Principles and Parameters Theory provides a strong theoretical basis for the L2 acquisition of the formal properties of language. To sum up, the studies reviewed here are of great importance because via them we can gain insights into the nature of parameter setting in L2 acquisition. However, in order to achieve more conclusive and convincing results, further research studies on this topic are necessary.

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TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDING OF THE CONCEPT OF CULTURE AND ITS ROLE IN E.L.T.

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1.0. Introduction

Understanding foreign cultures is very important for foreign language education. The two areas where cultural understanding has been acknowledged to play a role are foreign language learning motivation (Gardner and Lambert: 1972, Gardner 1985), and cross cultural. Teachers' understanding of 'culture' influences their teaching of the language and has an impact on their students' understanding of the target language culture. This was the rationale behind researching teachers' understanding of the concept of culture and the place of culture in E. L.T.

1.1. Teachers' understanding of the concept of culture

Teachers' perception of the meaning and role of culture in education in general and in foreign language teaching in particular is important for at least two reasons:

a) Teachers are in a position to mould the personality, and influence the attitudes of their students and thus need to be aware of everything that can help them fulfil this task.
b) Teachers' definition of culture will determine their choice of teaching aids as well as their decision regarding the role of cultural elements in foreign language classes.

The transcripts of the interviews with four English teachers provided the data used in the present study. They will be analysed from the perspective of the teachers' understanding and use of culture in their classes.

The English teachers' definition of and approach to the study of culture displays some similarities which in part are brought forth by their academic and social experiences. The following quotes show that teachers perceived culture mainly as 'high culture', including literature, music, arts, although they did not actually define it. They comment on the content of the English textbooks they used before and after 1989, a year that marked a radical change in the Romanian society:

> '…Because ten years ago we had just one book, and they were not reflecting err…culture and civilisation at all' (K: turn 16).

' This is what our former textbooks lacked… the information on the culture and civilisation of the people whose language they are studying.' (N: turn 31).

All the interviewed teachers had the tendency to use 'culture' and 'civilisation' as a collocation, without discriminating between the individual meaning of each of the terms. This could be related to the subject matter of *'British culture and civilisation'* that they may have studied at university. The very general answers and the difficulty of talking about culture as everyday life are also a result of the teachers' lack of vocabulary and confusion in using the concepts. It has to be mentioned though that even if they did give examples of customs from the target countries, they did not directly acknowledge their belonging to 'culture'. Everyday life routines *'filling in some forms, exchange money', using 'telephone cards' (VL: turn 58)* were also mentioned by a teacher, but mainly as examples of what textbooks should include, instead of literature, and not as instances of 'culture'.

The quotes mentioned above point to the importance of education in shaping the teachers' understanding of the term 'culture'. The analysis of their learners' perception of 'culture'(Ilies: 2003) revealed a similar impact of formal education on students as well. This leads to the conclusion that school experience had an important impact on the respondents of all age. It also supports the idea that culture is 'learned' (Abercrombie et al.:1984, Hofstede:1994).

As a result of my trying to make them look beyond the collocation of 'culture and civilisation' some teachers did provide examples that they related to the concept of culture. Thus they agreed that 'culture' also included: science, modern music, habits, special food, health (K: turns 20, 28), traditions, history, main buildings and streets (in cities) (VL: turns 18, 35). I have to admit that none of them gave a definition of 'culture'. They talked in very general terms and provided examples that indirectly revealed their opinions on what culture was. From the interviews analysed, one can conclude that the teachers' educational and social background had an impact on their way of perceiving and using the term 'culture'. The next sequence will discuss their perception of the role and place of cultural elements in their English classes.

1.2 Teachers' opinions regarding the role of culture in E. L. T.

There were two points mentioned by the interviewed teachers in respect to the role of culture in teaching and learning English:

1. The contribution of cultural knowledge to the foreign language proficiency of their students, as well as to their general education, and
2. The role of cultural awareness and understanding in moulding the learners' personality. This is seen as a key to influencing the learners' attitudes towards foreigners.

The role of culture in ELT is under the same influence of the respondents' formal education. Everything is seen in terms of language improvement: *'First…the cultural information helps students get closer to that language'* (N: turn 33). The cultural elements in textbooks *'help* (learners) *because it's in fact a real approach to the British and American culture'* (VL: turn 25). It is important to note that they expect to find the relevant cultural information mainly in books. Their lack of experience abroad may justify this preference. One teacher even said that *'[…] we learnt from books, English. And from other teachers who were not native speakers.* (N: turns 36; 38).

The following quotes are more important in the present study because they reveal the teacher's awareness of the relationship between cultural knowledge and attitudes towards foreigners, as well as other potentials of culture in improving the general education of learners:

> '…We can change our attitude towards other people, maybe we can change our way of thinking about other nations and we can accept them easier if we know them, and their culture and civilisation, and habits, we can compare theirs with ours…' (N: turn 44).

She also mentioned the possibility to reach understanding of a foreign culture by comparison to one's own. This option is also mentioned by the students' (Ilies, 2003). Another teacher gave a comprehensive report on the role of culture in general, and as a means to improving cross-cultural understanding by shaping the learners' attitudes towards foreigners:

> ' Not only learners need cultural knowledge, everybody needs that. If teachers had the right attitude (1) towards these things, they can influence their students (2), err…if the students come into contact with culture and civilisation from other countries, it can help them enlarge their general cultural knowledge (3), and they need this a lot. They can change their attitude towards people, (4) err…they can find new friends, err…they can become more tolerant, (5) and accept people with different ways of life, (6) culture and religion, and I think this is what they all need, and we all need these days' (K: turn 74. Emphasis and numbers added).

The underlined and counted parts in the above long quote sum up very important facts regarding on the one hand the chain of action in implementing cultural knowledge or awareness: first it is the teachers themselves who need to have the 'right attitude'(1) towards cultural knowledge. They will then pass it onto their students, who will become more 'tolerant' with people who are 'different' in any respect.

On the other hand she pointed to other areas of action of culture, other than the already mentioned language proficiency. The first one she

mentioned was 'culture' as a means in broadening one's general knowledge of the world (3), which was also mentioned by the teacher in the commune (N: turn 28) and the other one was in the area of shaping characters: a change in attitudes (4) would bring forth 'tolerance' (5) and something that is in fact included in 'tolerance': accepting people who are 'different'. All these are very important to trainers, textbook writers and educators in general.

1.3. Conclusions

To conclude, the analysis of the learners' (Ilies, 2003) and their teachers' understanding of 'culture' revealed the importance of formal education as the main catalyst in any changes in their perception of the world. The examples used also pointed to the great dependence on books, mainly textbooks, that both teachers and students admitted. This could be the influence of the Romanian context, where the foreign language teachers interviewed learned English 'from books', and without the benefit of a 'native speaker' who could have shared with them the experience of a foreign culture.

Formal education could also be discussed in its capacity to 'guide' learners and teachers alike. This is, I believe, evident in the fact that although some learners and two of the four teachers spent some time in Western European countries after 1989, their understanding of 'culture' was similar to those who did not. This highlights the lasting impact that formal education may have. Another example that backs the importance of formal education in helping learners adopt a broader definition of culture was that of the high school students in BM (Ilies: 2003)who, being enrolled in a 'bilingual' class studied "British and American culture and civilisation". Some of them have also had some experience abroad, and thus a larger source of information on foreign cultures and peoples.

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ERROR ANALYSIS: ITS ROLE AND PLACE IN EFL LEARNING AND TEACHING

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Nowadays when learning foreign languages has become imperative, when intensive efforts are being made to improve the methodology of research in applied linguistics, the attitude of theoreticians of teaching instruction and practitioners themselves has remained the same as before: errors are inevitable and represent a genuine source of data in discovering the processes or strategies learners make use of in learning and using a foreign language. Since learning a foreign language implies a creative and not only manipulative use of language, it is understandable that it includes hypothesis testing, which consequently leads to deviations from the norm. One theory of language learning states that hypothesis testing is a part of a learner's development and should thus be viewed as positive. Language errors are a sign that learners are learning something (Chaudron, 1988:134); they are "learning steps" learners can learn form (Edge, 1989:13-17).

The aim of Error Analysis is collecting errors, classifying them and tracing their sources or the systematic interpretation of the factors causing their occurrence. Theoretically, Error Analysis helps us to investigate the nature of the language learning process, that is to confirm or disclaim hypotheses of the psychological processes involved. Practically, its function is providing a remedial programme or preventive measures teachers must take in order to correct an unsatisfactory state of affairs and hence help students enhance their learning. That system of students' or learners' errors is called differently by different applied linguists. S. Pit Corder (1975:159) calls it "the transitional competence" or "an approximative system", but the most widely used term coined by Selinker (1975:31) is "interlanguage".

Interlanguage refers to a language continuum which manifests itself in correct and incorrect forms between source language and target language. A distinction is sometimes made between a mistake and an error. An error is a deviation in the speech or writing of a foreign language learner which results from the lack of knowledge of the correct rule, that is faulty or incomplete learning. A mistake, according to the Longman Dictionary of Applied Linguistics is made by a learner when writing or speaking and caused by lack of attention, fatigue, carelessness, or some other aspect of performance. The learner knows the correct form but has temporarily forgotten it. He or she can probably correct his or her own mistakes.

With respect to the method and the aim of research, errors can be classified as lexical errors, syntactic or morphological errors, phonological errors, orthographic errors, interpretive errors (misunderstanding a speaker's intention or meaning), pragmatic errors (producing the wrong communicative effect).

Errors of linguistic form can be caused by the interference of the learners' mother tongue in which case we are talking about *interlingual* errors, then by overgeneralisation, ignorance of rule restrictions, incomplete application of rules or false concepts hypothesised, in which case we are talking about *intralingual* errors. Apart from these so-called psycholinguistic factors there are also psychological factors causing the occurrence of errors such as: lack of concentration, carelessness, lack of motivation to deal with a specific problem. There also exist "induced errors" which are the result of inadequate methodological procedures, teaching techniques and didactic materials. Errors, however, can occur as a result of a mixture of these and other factors which cannot be covered in a single paper; nor are there sometimes any traceable sources for which researchers have systematic knowledge.

In this paper I shall try to emphasize the significance of learners' errors and Error Analysis, and the implications they carry for language pedagogy. To illustrate this, I shall provide a framework of the research I have carried out. By teaching academic writing in the first year of undergraduate English language studies I realised that students generally had problems with mastering elements of correct written language expression; namely orthography, vocabulary and grammar, which are the segments most easily identifiable and separable from the written text as a whole. I set the objective to analyse grammatical, lexical and orthographic errors (for which purpose I assessed 120 first-year university students' essays) and to use the results of the corpus analysis to define pedagogical and methodological implications.

A methodological procedure of getting the corpus involved collecting and correcting errors. The complex corpus led to a stratified structure. All the errors dealt with were given within the smallest communicative context. Misused forms grouped under headings ranged from those made at the level of syntax and morphology: incorrect use of articles, prepositions, verb tense, subject – verb agreement, pronoun – antecedent agreement, incorrect sentence structure, word order, word form; errors made at the semantic level were listed and corrected (lexical, lexical-stylistic) as well as errors made at the graphological level (misspelled words and mistakes in punctuation).

What aggravates every error analysis and what has inevitably accompanied my research is that some errors do not submit themselves to any precise systematic analysis; the division between errors traceable to L1 interference and those that are independent of L1 interference is not invariably clear-cut. There seems to exist a cross-association of both L1 and L2. In any case, in order to successfully trace the sources of errors and do a thorough analysis and systematic interpretation of the results I had to make use of findings in psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics, discourse analysis and pragmatics.

The aspect of error analysis pertaining to my research (a total number of 878 errors were processed) showed that the most frequent were grammatical errors followed by orthographic and in the last place lexical errors.

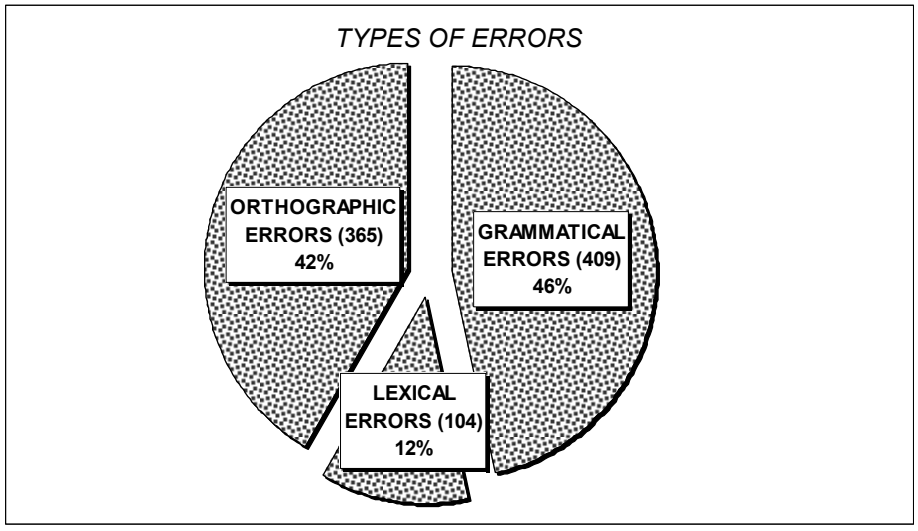

Chart 1 – types of errors

Of the total number of grammatical errors (409), about 80% (82.89%) were of intralingual origin. More precisely, errors were caused by false analogy, ignorance of rule restrictions, incomplete application of rules, creating false systems or concepts. Only about one error in six (17.11%) was caused by L1 interference. (A sample of errors will be given in the addendum at the end of the paper.)

At the syntactic level the most frequent errors were those that referred to the incorrect use of articles (about one quarter of all grammatical errors – 24.25%), then prepositions (about one fifth – 18.83%) and verb tense (about one in seven - 14.43%). In the fourth place were morphosyntactic errors (also about one in seven 13.94%) (subject-verb

agreement, pronoun-antecedent agreement), then structural errors (13.45%) (wrong sentence structure), errors relating to word order (8.31%) and finally morphological errors (6.60%).

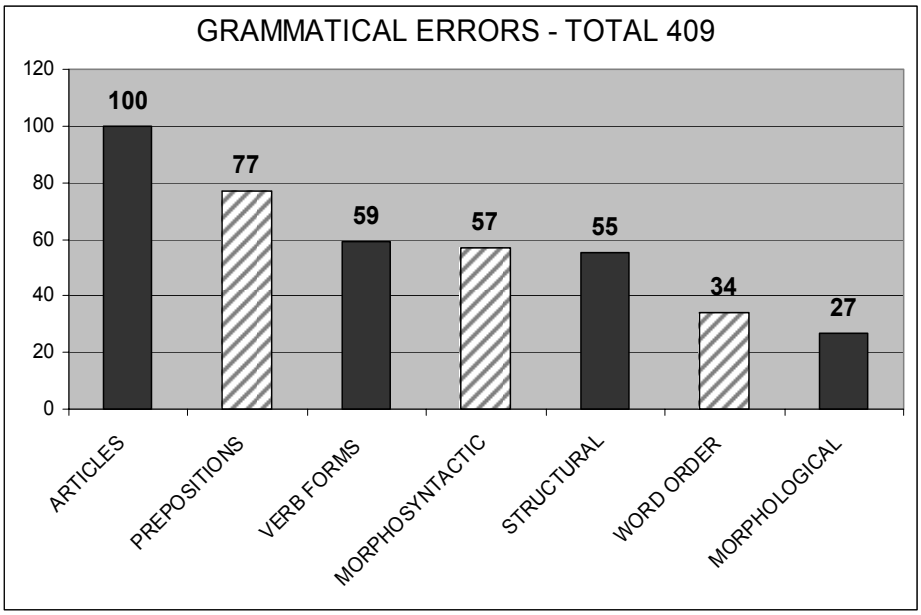

Chart 2 – distribution of grammatical errors

Grammatical errors were followed by orthographic ones (365 were processed). The vast majority of these were of intralingual origin (361), in other words totally independent of L1 interference. Mistakes were due to mispronunciation on the part of the student, then omission of a letter which, by definition, is not pronounced, transposition, substitution, confusion with homonyms, confusion due to a specific arrangement of letters. Only 4 mistakes were interlingual.

And last but not least, of the total number of lexical errors (104: 12%), 88 were intralingual errors caused by ignorance of word use, faulty analogy on a phonetic-phonological basis and lexical simplification violating semantic or collocational restrictions.

Results of the critical analysis showed that most errors were intralingual (788; 89.75%), and a very small number were caused by the influence of the mother tongue (90; 10.25%).

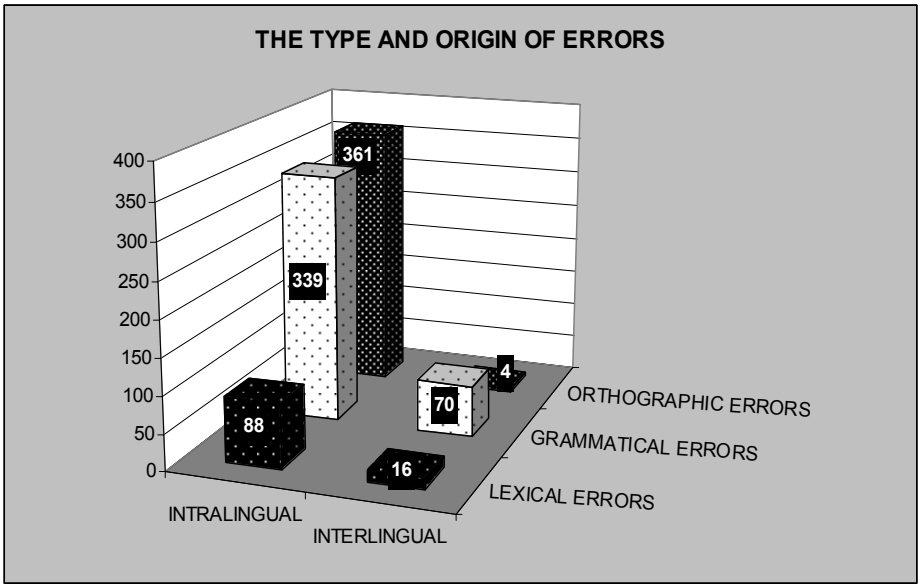

Chart 3 – the type and origin of errors

A critical analysis of the data suggests that better knowledge and correct or consistent application of rules should lead to clearer and more precise written expression. It helped me establish pedagogical implications and methodological implications in communicative language teaching. Namely, I designed and administered a remedial programme of grammatical exercises in a communicative context, carefully planned lexical and orthographic exercises in a communicatively oriented EFL university teaching practice.

Corrective exercises were designed to help correct common errors to which EFL students are liable: they can be implemented in different instructional settings, in accordance with the primary teaching goals, group dynamics, personality profiles, and individual interests of the students.

In conclusion, it is necessary for all language skills and elements to be continuously assessed, difficulties identified and analysed, thus devising and enhancing teaching materials and teaching practice in general.

Addendum

Syntactic level

Articles (intralingual)

- *In the conclusion, it can be said...
- *Racial discrimination brings sorrow into the life.

- *He cannot do anything without this the most important thing...

Prepositions - a) interlingual
- *Although he was accused for theft...
- *... the only answer on her question...
- *He thinks only on himself...
- *She explained me that... (prep. omitted)
- *That fancy car belonged the company he worked for. (prep. omitted)

b) intralingual
- *I always hold on this view...
- *As regards to this suggestion...
- *His friend was appointed the post of the chief executive of...

Verb tense – a) intralingual
- *In the spring of 1997, my way of life has reached a point of dissipation.
- *I wish he told me the truth before.
- *Scientific research has started two years ago.

b) interlingual
- *I was very much missing my friends.
- *I could not believe what I was hearing.
- *I realized how unhappy I am.

Morphosyntactic errors – a) intralingual
- *Some poets says...
- *If love cease to be mutual...
- *Both this parts are...

b) interlingual
- *The news were that...

Structural errors – a) intralingual
- *But, why do people have to acting like this?
- *...and I know what does it means...
- *I got used to visit my friends...
- *...they often get beat up and hurt...

b) interlingual
- *They enjoy to watch such things

Syntactic errors – word order a) intralingual
- *...and how will it happen is just a matter of...

- *Not only my life was in danger, but also my father's and my sister's.
- *His all salary was spent on...
- *She loved sincerely him.

b) interlingual

- *One day happened something that changed...
- *I was very much missing my friends.
- *It was my town and I knew in it every street.

Morphological errors – a) intralingual

- *...a complexed issue...
- *...beautiness...
- *...a substantional increase in...

Orthographic level

Orthographic errors – a) intralingual

- *enviroment
- *unfortunatly
- *spear time
- *brake (instead of break)
- *excidentally
- *maby
- *peak through the curtain (peek...)
- *heel my wounds (heal...)

b) interlingual

- *the second world war (capitalization)
- *bingo cards (Bingo tickets)

Lexical level

Lexical errors – a) intralingual

- *Consciousness-troubled men...
- *Fear made me sensible and weak.
- *Generally said, ...
- *...and failed to unfreeze his refrigerator because...

b) interlingual

- *...a great number of plagiators...
- *...it was written on a advertisement table...
- *...a higher school for organization and informatica...
- *...and money they earned for the "black days"...

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BODILY SIGNIFICANCE IN TEACHING

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It is generally accepted as true that the way people look and act influences those around them. We all know that it is not only our knowledge and culture that matters, but also the way we EMBODY and market that knowledge. We must not forget the fact that it is true for teachers too that our bodies bear significance, "tell something" to our students, influencing their response and achievements during classes.

My son, who is 7 years old and in the 1st grade at school, came home from school one day with the a song which he had learnt from a 3rd-grade mate and whose approximate translation I will render bellow:

My heart is beating,
It's beating for you.
I haven't learnt either for maths,
Or for the Romanian class
All the week long.
My teacher's head
Is like a crow's,
She wears a miniskirt,
One can see her bikinis.

Now, if even primary school students can notice a correlation between the teacher's physical appearance and clothes and the students' learning, I think the matter is important enough to look into it.

If there are certain aspects of our appearance and behaviour that cannot be significantly altered, there are also aspects that teachers can and, perhaps, should change in order to have a better impact on the students during the educational process.

But images of the "ideal" body of a teacher vary across cultures, geographical areas, and also over time. This means that current images of the ideal body of a teacher reflect arbitrary preferences and not universal, timeless standards. So, it would be profitable to see which are the up-to-date, contextualized preferences of our students concerning their teachers' body, so that we can analyse ourselves and draw the right conclusions as far as the necessity to change is concerned.

I myself did this and I designed a questionnaire, which I applied in 4 high schools in Arad (as I am a high school teacher). There were 236 subjects between 15 and 19 years old, attending high schools with very different profiles and proficiency levels, and belonging to different social backgrounds. They were asked questions about their preferences regarding teachers' gender, age, physical appearance and bodily movements in the classroom. The second part of each question referred to the reasons of their choice. My paper mentions the results of this survey.

To stand and speak in front of the students can be quite a challenging experience. Students watch us very carefully and follow every move we make. A gesture, however slight, is noticed. The nonverbal behaviour of the teacher gives them clues about the teacher's state of mind, degree of lesson preparation, helps them open for instruction and communication or, on the contrary, blocks them from doing so.

A school inspector once told me that teachers are like actors on the stage in front of the students. As teachers, we will indeed be expected to be not only informative and instructive, but also exciting, inspiring, why not amusing - in fact, we are expected to give a performance. And *we have to learn* how to make our performance successful.

The co-ordination between the teacher's body and the verbal message is essential if the lesson or course is to be successful. Physical involvement assists in releasing tension and helps managing the class. A movement forward to the students helps to emphasize a point while firmly establishing a closer link with the students. The use of gesture - for example, counting out a number of reasons on each finger is a visual reinforcement of the length of the list which the students will then expect to hear point by point. If a teacher only sits at the teacher's desk or stands in front of the classroom, there is always a barrier or a distance present and felt by the students. Movements to the back of the classroom should then be incorporated into the lesson, as the students will feel more at one with the teacher.

Too often teachers employ mechanical visual aids without realizing that the whole person is the best visual aid to use. Because it is not only *what* you say in the classroom that is important, but it's *how* you say it that can make the difference to students. Nonverbal messages are an essential component of communication in the teaching process.

Teachers should be aware of nonverbal behaviour in the classroom for three major reasons:

- An awareness of nonverbal behaviour will allow them to become themselves better receivers of students' messages.
- They will become better senders of signals that *reinforce learning*.

- This mode of communication increases the *psychological closeness* between teacher and student.

There are various opinions as to what belongs to the nonverbal phenomena, but there is a core area that includes *physical appearance, body movements, proxemic behaviour* and *paralinguistic phenomena.*

1. Physical appearance

An important dimension of forming an impression of someone is what that person looks like. If he or she dresses sloppily, is clumsy, and is physically unattractive, we are inclined to dislike him or her, or in general think negatively about him or her. However, to many people, an attractive person can do no wrong.

Facial features

There is little doubt that a person's face is seen as an important source of information about their personality. This is by no means to suggest that we are at all justified in drawing such conclusions from a person's face any more than we are justified in drawing conclusions based on their behaviour on a single occasion. We might not be justified, we might just be plain daft, but we do it anyway and students are no exception.

Research has showed that there are certain facial features that are given stereotyped significations, such as for example: thin lips are judged as conscientious, thick lips (female) are judged as sexy, high forehead is seen as showing intelligence, dark or coarse skin (male) is judged as hostile and spectacle make the person wearing them more intelligent, dependable, industrious, etc.

The results of my research show that for 68% of the subjects, *teachers' wearing of glasses* is indifferent, while 21% dislike it (because those teachers are too studious) and 10% like it (because they think teachers wearing glasses are more intelligent). So, the idea that spectacle wearers are more intelligent and studious is kept.

As far as the *make-up* is concerned, 63% of the subjects prefer women teachers who make-up decently and using colours that match their clothes because this shows care and respect for themselves (said 48%) and because their attractiveness and charm are thus enhanced (said 27%).

Clothes

There are studies that show that in business "the best suit colours [for men] are navy, medium blue, tan, and all shades of grey" (Bixler, 1984: 112). "The best basic colours for women are black, brown to camel,

burgundy, blue to navy, beige to taupe, and all shades of grey. The darker the colour, the more authority the suit will impart to the woman wearing it. " (Bixler, 1984: 157).

Maybe we could apply part of these to teachers, too. However, my questionnaire results reflect a similar interpretation given to dark colours, as being ”more serious”, but students assessed it as being so with reference to dark hair.

45% of the subjects of my questionnaire prefer their teachers to wear elegant and classic *clothes* (15% more girls than boys) because they impose thus more respect and sobriety, while 24% (8% more boys than girls) prefer the latest fashion since they like to see well-dressed people. 23% (of which more boys) were indifferent.

Hair

Like our face, our hairstyle is a nonverbal *signature display* representing who and what we are, also showing our desire to identify with people.

A Procter & Gamble study (2000) led by Marianne LaFrance of Yale found that, in the U.S., hairstyle plays a significant role in first impressions**.** *For women*, a. short, tousled hair conveys confidence and an outgoing personality, but ranks low in sexuality; b. medium-length, casual hair suggests intelligence and good nature; and c. long, straight, blond hair projects sexuality and affluence. *For men*, a. short, front-flip hairstyles are seen as confident, sexy, and self-centred; b. medium-length, side-parted hair connotes intelligence, affluence, and a narrow mind; and c. long hair projects "all brawn and no brains," carelessness, and a good-natured personality (see http://members.aol.com/nonverbal2/haircue.htm).

The results of my questionnaire reveal the fact that 58% of the subjects prefer *male teachers* with short hair, having as main reasons the fact that, this way, they are more decent (26%), more masculine (15%) and a better example for the boys in the classroom (15%). For 28% the length of the male teachers’ hair was indifferent and subjects preferring teachers wearing beard or moustache were under 5%. As far as the *female teachers’ hair* is concerned, 33% preferred long hair and 16% curly or wavy hair because these types are considered more feminine and modern, and 29% were indifferent. As to *the colour of teachers’ hair*, 61% were indifferent, 18% preferred black hair, 8% blond hair and 6% brown hair.

When we refer to the *physical beauty* in relation to teachers, we can enter a prejudiced area in which there is the opinion that women career teachers, especially, are ugly. The

supermodel Linda Evangelista pointed to this generally accepted view when she said: “It was God who made me so beautiful. If I weren’t, then I’d be a teacher”.

Most institutions of higher learning in the United States require their faculty to be evaluated by their students in every class. The results show that physical beauty appears to have substantial influence over how instructors are rated for teaching ability. Students assess teachers that are more physically attractive as being more efficient as teachers (Feldman, 1993).

So, results of research in this area suggest that someone who does not qualify to be a supermodel might well go into teaching. Even in college teaching, there is evidence that teaching productivity is enhanced by the instructor’s beauty.

Related to the physical appearance of teachers, questionnaire results concerning *the teachers’ height* reveal the fact that 58% of the subjects were indifferent to this aspect, 30% preferred average height for teachers because they give the impression of being ordinary people, diminishing this way the teacher-student tension.

As to *the teachers’ weight* – 44% of the subjects were indifferent, 38% preferred average weight for teachers because they are more pleasant to look at. Interestingly enough the percent for thin teachers was lower (6%) than the one for the stout teachers (9%).

2. Body movements

While the physical appearance gives information about the teacher in general, bodily behaviours (such as facial expressions, arm movements, proximic behaviour, etc.) are significant for the teaching process itself.

Facial expressions (mimicry)

Better than any body parts, our faces reveal emotions, opinions, and moods, and because of this facial expressions are essential to the establishment of relationships with others. It seems that there are seven principal facial expressions (Ekman and others, 1972): anger, disgust/contempt, fear, happiness, interest, sadness, surprise. These appear to involve configurations of the whole face, though much information is carried by the eyes and mouth. For example, the *lip-compression* may express anger, emotion or frustration, the *lip-purse* shows disagreement, the *frown* shows anger, sadness or concentration, the *direct-gaze* indicates affiliation or threat, etc. (Givens, 1998-2002).

Smiling is a powerful cue that transmits: happiness, friendliness, warmth, liking, affiliation. Thus, if teachers smile frequently they will be perceived as more likeable, friendly, warm and approachable. Smiling is often contagious and students will react favourably and learn more.

Gestures

Gestures give physical content to conceptual entities. The power of gestures comes from the fact that their strengths are different from and complementary to speech. If you fail to gesture while speaking, you may be perceived as boring, stiff and unanimated. A lively and animated teaching style captures students' attention, makes the material more interesting, facilitates learning and provides a bit of entertainment.

Gesture offers students a second window into the task, one that students do take advantage of. Susan Goldin-Meadow, Professor in Psychology, claims that "comprehension of speech appears to depend on the gestural company it keeps" (Harms, 2000).

Many teachers have heard students say that when they listened, it all made sense, but when they tried to study or recall the material during a test, they could not put it together. This is a proof that teachers communicate more than they say — body position and gestures provide resources for making sense. Students who copy into their notebooks merely what the teacher says will miss all the gestures and shifts in body position that allowed students to make sense of the talk in the situation. My questionnaire results connected to *teachers' gestures and mimicry* reveal the fact that 43% of the subjects (especially girls) prefer teachers with expressive mimicry and 34% (especially boys) prefer teachers who gesticulate a lot, because this contributes to lesson explanation and understanding. Only 4% like teachers who do *not* gesticulate.

Touch is widely agreed to be a powerful, but often confusing, tool. According to Zunin (1972), the message sent is most often one of good feeling: "I like you," "you're ok," "I agree." The message received is often different and can provoke surprising reactions. Morris (1971) shows that touch is avoided in impersonal relationships in order to avoid "sexual implications." University teachers especially should be attentive to this aspect.

When asked about preferences concerning *physical contact* between students and teachers, the subjects of my questionnaire replied that they enjoy physical contact between them and a teacher when it expresses a positive attitude (39%) – with the girls liking it slightly more than the boys, they can't stand any teacher to touch them in any way (8%) – and here boys are more reluctant than girls, they loathe to be physically punished by teachers (35%) – especially the girls, and 15% were indifferent to this aspect – more boys. So, the boys seem to be not that much interested in physical contact, but is it really so, or they only want to pretend to be "tougher and more insensitive"?

3. Spatial behaviour

Spatial relationships, or proxemics, refer to man's perception and use of space. The *informal space* constitutes an area that humans protect from the intrusion of outsiders. Thus, if an individual is to be satisfied in a communication encounter, his/her informal space must be respected. Behavioural study indicates that individuals perceive a distance that is appropriate for different types of messages (Underwood):

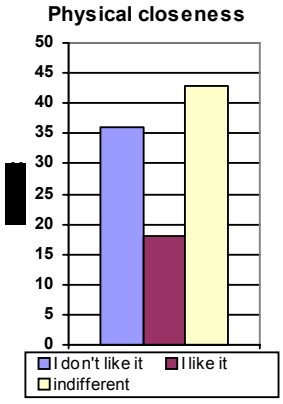
- **Intimate distance** — People who have an intimate relationship will interact within a space of 15-30cm.
- **Personal distance** — In a reasonably close, personal relationship, we will interact with others at a distance between 30cm to 1m. This seems to be the space which is often referred to as our 'body bubble'. If strangers come within that space, we are likely to feel uncomfortable.
- **Social/consultative distance** — The area outside our 'body bubble' or 'personal space' within which we are happy to interact with strangers in our everyday lives. This tends to be around 1m to 3.6m.
- **Public distance** — Used for public speaking - above 4m.

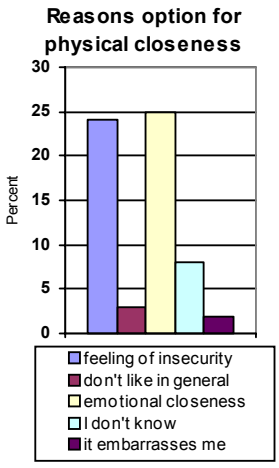
The social distance (1 to 3.6 metres) is the casual interaction-distance in classrooms. Cultural norms dictate a comfortable distance for interaction with students. You should look for signals of discomfort caused by invading students' space. Some of these are: rocking, leg swinging, tapping and gaze aversion (Ritts & Stein).

Typically, in large college classes space invasion is not a problem. In fact, there is usually too much distance. To counteract this, move around the classroom to increase interaction with your students. Increasing proximity

enables you to make better eye contact and increases the opportunities for students to speak.

When being asked about preferences regarding *physical closeness* to a teacher, 18% of the subjects state that they like the physical distance to be





small because this creates a feeling of emotional closeness, 36% don't like to stay too close to teachers because this gives them a feeling of insecurity. 43% (!!!) were indifferent. These reveal the fact that the teachers these students have had were quite clumsy in spatial behaviours.

As far as *the teachers' movement in the classroom* is concerned, 46% of the subjects prefer teachers that alternate movement with repose because this mobilizes them and keeps them interested, while 29% prefer teachers who only sit at the teacher's desk since this gives them a feeling of calmness and security and also allows them to do whatever they like.

4. Paralinguistic phenomena

The tone of voice is the manner in which a verbal statement is presented (its rhythm, breathiness, hoarseness, or loudness). It refers to those qualities of speaking and vocalizing not usually included in the study of languages and linguistics.

For maximum teaching effectiveness, teachers should learn to vary the characteristics of their voice. One of the major criticisms is of instructors who speak in a monotone. Listeners perceive these instructors as boring and

dull. Students report that they learn less and lose interest more quickly when listening to teachers who have not learned to modulate their voices.

Questions have been asked concerning the existence of a relation between *the nonverbal behaviour of teachers* and *students' learning*. The results of several studies reveal that appropriate nonverbal behaviours of teachers can contribute positively to student learning in both the affective and the cognitive domain. And it seems that teacher immediacy behaviours make the strongest impact on student affect towards learning. Mehrabian (1971:1) explained the immediacy principle by noting that, 'People are drawn toward persons and things they like, evaluate highly and prefer; and they avoid or move away from things they dislike, evaluate negatively, or do not prefer'. Several behaviours which indicate immediacy have been suggested. "*The more immediate a person is, the more likely he/she is to communicate at close distances, smile, engage in eye contact, use direct body orientations, use overall body movement and gestures, touch others, relax, and be vocally expressive. In other words, we might say that an immediate person is perceived as overtly friendly and warm, expressive and enthusiastic*" (Andersen, 1979). Immediate behaviours may actually decrease the physical distance, or they may decrease the psychological distance. Hence, a positive relationship developed between teachers and students would seem likely to influence the development of favourable attitudes towards the learning situation.

My questionnaire results agree with this view. When asked whether their *school achievements* were influenced by the fact they disliked the physical appearance and behaviour of a teacher, 61% of the subjects answered "yes", and the direction of the influence was a negative one: they simply didn't want to learn or couldn't learn for the respective school subject. It has to be pointed out that the number of girls sensitive to corporal aspects of teachers is 10% higher than the number of boys. Boys are not that much influenced or are undecided.

Two more questions of my questionnaire referred to more general or conclusive aspects of the teachers' bodily communication in the class. One of them checked the degree in which *students can guess* the emotional state of a teacher and the clues they have for doing that. 82% of the subjects answered that they can guess the emotional state of their teachers and their main clues are: the teachers' way of looking and behaving (for 48%), the teachers' facial expression (for 15%), the fact that the teachers act atypically (for 13%) and the teachers' tone of voice (for 6%).

When asked whether they regard their teachers as a model as far as bodily appearance and behaviour are concerned, 64% of the subjects answered "yes, some of the teachers" (20% more girls than boys), while

23% of the subjects answered “no” (25% more boys than girls) because they want to be themselves (8%) and because many teachers do not reach the required standards (said 14%). Boys seem to be more discontented and rebellious. Their opinion should give us food for thought anyway!

Just for the record, it may be interesting to see the results of the questionnaire regarding the teachers’ gender and age: for 63% of the students the teacher’s gender is indifferent, but 24% (of which more boys than girls) prefer female teachers, while only 8% prefer male teachers (slightly more girls than boys). As far as the age is concerned, 40% prefer younger teachers (especially women teachers), 23% prefer middle-aged teachers and for 29% the teacher’s age is indifferent.

Conclusions

For teachers, it is necessary to realize that simply doing one’s job correctly is not enough. Obviously, adequate knowledge of the subject matter is crucial to a teacher’s success; however, it's not the only crucial element. The teacher must make students comfortable about approaching him/her and ensure students that he/she is comfortable with approaching students. Creating a feeling of closeness, whether it is psychological or physical, ensures the positive affect of the students towards learning, but also demands good nonverbal and verbal skills.

The prescriptive usefulness of this knowledge is directly associated with the degree to which nonverbal behaviours can be *consciously employed* by teachers. It has been demonstrated that *teachers' nonverbal behaviours can be modified through awareness and training* (Grant & Hennings, 1971; Nier, l979; etc.). Awareness is the key to this maximum effect: awareness of your body, your voice, your message, your intention, your attitude, and thus you will become more credible, more convincing and more acceptable. Lack of awareness of these visible and vocal skills means that the success of your lesson will often be second-rate. Visual aids are now surpassing human aids. Perhaps it is time to reassert ourselves and utilize the best of our human talents and qualities.

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INTERNET AND LANGUAGE LEARNING

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An issue often discussed among teachers is the dilemma of getting students to use language in real time situations. This paper discusses the implications of getting language learners to use internet chat rooms for language learning purposes.

Apart from the "real time situation" thing, language educators are often required to investigate different approaches to classroom practice in order to address the needs of their students. These needs may be linguistic such as difficulties with spelling or pronunciation, or they may have difficulties in learning due to factors such as lack of experience or over-reliance on the teacher. This tends to be chiefly due to the students' experiences in schools where there is an emphasis on rote learning.

One way of addressing the problem could, just like in the "real time situation", draw on computer technology. Computer technology has been reported to facilitate learning in numbers of ways including motivating learners, providing alternative practice techniques, promoting higher-order cognitive processing skills, and providing opportunities for the development of learner autonomy.

Moreover, many language students do not have the opportunity to use English extensively outside the classroom. In addition, language learners in a foreign language situation may have difficulty even seeing English as a means of communication. There are cases when English is generally necessary for college entrance exams, and students may think of it mainly as something that they learn about in order to take a test. The purpose of the language that they produce is mainly for the teacher to evaluate, not for the purpose of expressing their ideas. So, the challenge for teachers often lies in moving students away from a mindset in which English is something learned through rote memorization for entrance exams, towards a view of English as a living language they can use to communicate with and learn about the world around them.

Chat, in all its various forms, is doubtless one of the most popular uses of the Internet and has been since its beginnings. With connection speeds still rising and an ever-increasing number of participants, it is now possible for immense number of users to engage in real-time interactions, and today it seems very true that such interactions constitute "an important new communication modality".

‘Internet Relay Chat’ (IRC), created in 1988 was one of the first forms of synchronous Computer-Mediated communication (CMC) where people could ‘chat’ in real time by typing their contributions. Since then, it has been growing rapidly in popularity with the Internet’s general rise in influence during the 1990s.

Now, that we have seen what a chat room is, we will continue with a “definition” of the chatter (definition given by *The New Hacker's Dictionary* (Raymond, 1997)).

> “A lower form of life found on talker systems. The chatter has few friends in RL and uses chat rooms instead, finding communication easier and preferable over the net. He has all the negative traits of the computer geek without having any interest in computers per se. Lacking any knowledge of or interest in how networks work, and considering his access a God-given right, he is a major irritant to sysadmins, clogging up lines, following passed-on instructions about how to sneak his way onto Internet ("Wow! It’s in America!") and complaining when he is not allowed to use busy routes. A true chatter will start any conversation with "Are you male or female?" (and follow it up with "Got any good numbers/IDs/passwords?") and will not talk to someone physically present in the same terminal room until they log onto the same machine that he is using and enter talk mode.”

(This definition is perhaps now less accurate than in the early 1990s, when conserving bandwidth was a serious consideration for any network and access to networked computer terminals was restricted to those in academic institutions or high-tech firms).

Indeed, its appeal is so great that we are actually encountering problems with people becoming ‘addicted’ to the new communication medium; their social life and interests revolving more around virtual discourse, in a virtual environment than with real-life (RL) interactions.

RL community is therefore recreated online solely through the collective use of keyboards. Identity is created entirely through the use of language and typography onscreen. ‘Computer networks’, therefore, ‘nullify our physical existence’. Relationships are formed between participants (chatters) in real-time without the prejudicial restrictions that would normally be derived IRL by physical presence, such as age, gender, race, skin colour, body language, facial expressions, clothes and so on.

As a ‘stripped down’ medium, chatters can only retrieve information about each other by what is ‘explicit or can be inferred’ from the text itself.

The role of interaction and communication in language learning

While Krashen (1981) asserted that comprehensible input was both a necessary and a sufficient condition for the acquisition of language, Ellis (1985: 161) conducted an analysis of various studies and theoretical treatments of the subject and concluded that both input and interaction influence second language acquisition. He listed eight characteristics of input and interaction which seem to facilitate rapid acquisition, based on this analysis. They are:

1. A high quantity of input directed at the learner.
2. The learner's perceived need to communicate in the L2.
3. Independent control of the propositional content by the learner (e.g., control over the topic choice).
4. Adherence to the "here and now" principle, at least initially.
5. The performance of a range of speech acts by both the native speaker/teacher and the learner (i.e., the learner needs the opportunity to listen to and to produce language used to perform different language functions).
6. Exposure to a high quantity of directives.
7. Exposure to a high quantity of "extending" utterances, (e.g., requests for clarification and confirmation, paraphrases and expansions).
8. Opportunities for uninhibited "practice" (which may provide opportunities to experiment using "new" forms).

Of these factors in language acquisition, most are either facilitated by interaction or require interaction, as opposed to input alone. Interaction can be used to elicit input, increasing its quantity. Interaction helps the learner control the propositional content. Interaction can involve a range of speech acts, a high quantity of directives and extending utterances, and opportunities to practice.

Using interaction to learn language

As Ellis concluded, the opportunity to use language in interaction plays an important part of language learning. The more language he/she has an opportunity to learn, and the more language he/she learns, the more input he/she can solicit in order to learn more language. At first, the learner uses whatever non-verbal means and small amount of verbal language he/she already knows. This elicits language, which the learner can use to confirm or disconfirm his/her hypotheses about the language. The learner can use the newly acquired language to elicit more language and confirm or disconfirm new hypotheses.

After having seen the importance of interaction, and having established that internet chat rooms do provide an important means of interaction, we are going to take a look at their main advantages and disadvantages.

Advantages of chat rooms

Firstly, language students can use a chat room at any time to interact with any number of people anywhere in the world. They allow learners to interact in an authentic context with native speakers without being restricted by location. In many ways, this is an unprecedented learning opportunity as the communication is real, despite the virtual interlocutors, whereas the target language interaction in the classroom is quite often unreal, despite the real interlocutors.

Secondly, Chat rooms can promote autonomous learning. This is primarily due to the fact that the teacher's role is minimized. Transcripts are generated which are useful for studying the language used. Every line of conversation is recorded, and can be seen in full thereafter.

I have two observations related to this problem. First of all, if learners interact with strangers in a CMC environment, they too may be exposed to potentially offensive or sensitive content which may make them uncomfortable thus jeopardising learning opportunities. The use of CMC therefore needs to be somewhat controlled in order that it be appropriate for the learner group and it is uncertain whether this may affect its ability to promote autonomy.

(for examples of "offensive content" see annex 1)

Also, simply letting students chat freely in a chat room could be compared with arriving in the classroom and telling students to talk amongst themselves. They also have the tendency to stick to simple structures and familiar vocabulary, which means that the session could seem repetitive. Activities can be designed to give learners the opportunity to focus on a different vocabulary set each time and also provide practice in different grammatical structures. These activities must be adapted to the participants' interests, profession or country; the students could also come up with their own tasks.

Another advantage is that students have the opportunity to observe the language used by native speakers. Learners are able to see how a conversation develops, and also to notice what kinds of response are suitable (or unsuitable) in given situations.

Chat rooms also promote active involvement. The learner is enticed into conversing with others, and yet can withdraw as and when they feel like

it.

Learners are also given the opportunity for skills development and practice. Chat rooms offer the learner the chance to produce language which is somewhere between everyday spoken English and the language in its written form. Many learners may not have previously been exposed to such informal written English. In fact, the nature of the language used in chat rooms is of great interest to linguists: like spoken discourse, it is real-time and interactive, and displays more features commonly found in spoken English. But unlike spoken discourse it is conducted entirely in typed (written) form. Messages delivered electronically are neither 'spoken' nor 'written' in the conventional sense of these words. The ease of interaction is a feature common in spoken varieties of English, but the participants' lack of face-to-face contact disqualifies cyber-chatting from definitive spoken status. Despite the written nature of chatting, it is fully interactive, and in fact bears more relation to spoken forms of English than to written, as may be seen from comparison with descriptions of spoken English.

Finally, and importantly, they allow communication to take place in real time. This is a truly authentic communicative device. The conversations are real and the frameworks around which they are built are extremely loose. They therefore necessitate a degree of spontaneity and adaptation. Also, the sense of real time is a little more forgiving than a face to face spoken encounter. Firstly, there is that all important thinking time between seeing what the other person has written and making one's reply. Secondly, there is the factor of anonymity which potentially increases the learners' confidence, so another great advantage of the use of chat rooms: it is less stressful than using English face-to-face.

Learners' difficulties with chat rooms

Learners' keyboard skills in English are usually slow which means that they often miss part of the conversation thread. (And yet, the younger generations have been brought up "computer literate" and are therefore not discouraged by any technicalities associated with it.) It is the nature of chat room dialogue for conversations to move very quickly at times, thus leaving the learner somewhat confused and downhearted.

Furthermore, the way the conversation scrolls down the screen requires the participant to read text very quickly. This is often difficult for EFL students, due to deficiencies in the type of reading skill which native speakers would inherently possess.

Chat room participants also often use slang and abbreviations which EFL learners may not be familiar with. Having previously stated that

students may benefit from seeing how native speakers use the language, it should be noted that an 'internet language' is evolving rapidly, which differs in many ways from spoken English.

Acronymic abbreviations such as brb, afk, irl, ROTFL, lol, and others have now become standard across the Internet as convenient contractions, and appear on talkers as they do anywhere else online.

Acronyms such as brb (be right back), lol (laughing out loud) and ROTFL (rolling on the floor laughing) are the most common on talkers, and vary in capitalisation in talker usage.

In addition to the standard acronyms mentioned above, talker English also plays host to homophonic, single-grapheme abbreviations:

Barbie asks 'yeh phlebas y u kicking him for???'

Others include r (are), n (and). Similar abbreviations of longer words are also used: *u'r* for *you're*, *ur* for *your, tho* for *though, laff* for *laugh, prolly* for *probably* and *ppl* for *people*, each of which contains about half as many letters as the original word.

Character names may be abbreviated (e.g. brit for british_stereotype, unique for u_r_not_unique, Rasky for raskolnikov_complex, destroyer for Jesus-with-a-Gun, dove for dovetailjoints, vol for volcano_male, etc), although usually only between friends; consonant clusters may also be simplified phonetically.

This type of abbreviation is very practical since it dramatically reduces the keystrokes needed to type some of the most common words in talker English. Similar abbreviations use numeric characters in addition to letters, such as *l8r* (*later*, used as a farewell) and *k3w1* (cool). (see annex 2)

Native speakers using chat rooms may discuss topics which are culture specific to the English speaking world, or inappropriate or offensive to some learner groups. This may lead to misunderstandings which have nothing to do with the learner's knowledge of the language. (see annex 3)

As a conclusion, in Internet chat, language is no longer a goal but an instrument to pursue other goals; integrating into a chat community is socializing in the target language, one of the highest ranking activities in foreign language learning.

Annex 1:

Yo mama's so fat she fell in love and broke it.

Yo mama's so big when she goes to the movie theatre she sits next to everybody.

Yo mama's so fat and old that when God said "Let there be Light", he told her to move her fat butt out of the way.

Yo mama's so fat she jumped up in the air and got stuck.

Yo mama's so fat she wears a VCR for a beeper.

Yo mama's so fat she's on both sides of the family.

Yo mama's so fat that when I tried to drive around her, I ran out of gas.
Yo mama's so fat when she gets on the scale it says to be continued.
Yo mama's so fat when she wears a yellow raincoat, people said "Taxi!"
Yo mama's so dumb, when asked on an application, "Sex?", she marked, "M, F and sometimes Wednesday too."
Yo mama's so dumb, when she read on her job application to not write below the dotted line she put "O.K."
Yo mama's so stupid at bottom of application where it says Sign Here - she put Sagitarius.
Yo mama's so stupid on her job application where it says emergency contact she put 911.
Yo mama's so stupid she asked me what kinda jeans I wore, I said Guess and she said "Ah Levis?"
Yo mama's so stupid she said "what's that letter after x" and i said Y she said "cause I wana know".
Yo mama's so stupid she studied for blood test & failed.
Yo mama's so ugly when she joined an ugly contest, they said "sorry, no professionals."
Yo mama's so ugly just after she was born, her mama'said "What a treasure!" and her father said "Yes, let's go bury it."
Yo mama's so ugly she has to trick or treat over the phone
Yo mama's so ugly she made an onion cry.
Yo mama's so ugly when she walks into a bank, they turn off the surveillance cameras.
Yo mama's so black if she had a red light she'd be a beeper.
Yo mama's so skinny I gave her a piece of popcorn and she went into a coma.
Yo mama's so old that when she was in school there was no history class.
Yo mama's so old, she knew Burger King while he was still a prince.
Yo mama's so poor, she can't even afford to pay attention.

Annex 2

"Romeo and Juliet - Txt Version"

---------- Act 1 ----------
Login:
Romeo : R u awake? Want 2 chat?
Juliet: O Rom. Where4 art thou?
Romeo: Outside yr window.
Juliet: Stalker!
Romeo: Had 2 come. feeling jiggy.
Juliet: B careful. My family h8 u.
Romeo: Tell me about it. What about u?
Juliet: I'm up for marriage if u are..Is that a bit forward?
Romeo: No. Yes. No. Oh, doesn't matter, 2moro at 9?
Juliet: Luv U xxxx
Romeo: CU then xxxx
---------- Act 2 ----------

Friar: Do u?
Juliet: I do
Romeo: I do
---------- Act 3 ----------
Juliet: Come bck 2 bed. It's the nightingale not the lark.
Romeo: OK
Juliet: !!! I ws wrong !!!. It's the lark. U gotta go. Or die.
Romeo: Damn. I shouldn't hv wasted Tybalt & gt banished.
Juliet: When CU again?
Romeo: Soon. Promise. Dry sorrow drinks our blood. Adieu.
Juliet: Miss u big time.

---------- Act 4 ----------
Nurse: Yr mum says u have 2 marry Paris!!
Juliet: No way. Yuk yuk yuk. Anyway, am married 2 Rom.
---------- Act 5 ----------
Friar: Really? O no. U wl have 2 take potion that makes u look dead.
Juliet: Gr8.
---------- Act 6 ----------
Romeo: J-why r u not returning my texts?
Romeo: RUOK? Am abroad but phone still works.
Romeo: TEXT ME!
Batty: Bad news. J dead. Sorry m8.
---------- Act 7 ----------
Romeo: J-wish u wr able 2 read this...am now poisoning & and climbing in yr grave. LUV U Ju xxxx
---------- Act 8 ----------
Juliet: R-got yr text! Am alive! Ws faking it! Where RU? Oh...
Friar: V bad situation.
Juliet: Nightmare. LUVU2. Always. Dagger. Ow!!!

Logout.....!

Annex 3

You are in "Washington Watch:1" (Discuss all the latest gossip inside the Beltway...)
george_bright2003: HERE IS ANOTHER ITEM... BUSH GOT.. IN THE OMNIBUS BILL.. FOR GUN OWNERS....
charlee_mi: to understand why the administration wished to cover it up.

savychris: smack!,, " sit up straight!"
teamplayer_4: hey stand, don't forget us with those blueberry muffins
fmf55lives: KC..... PLEASE TAKE A NERVE PILL
kirk_1949: rodney king was a criminal but the police were the ones who looked bad when they didnt act according to good guy standards and gang beat him. saddam's intelligence guys were criminals but the US prison guards look bad when they forgot the standards and sunk to sexual humiliation.
deb_osc: cover up?
demswonalaskaliquidnatgasproject: true charlee, from the public
george_bright2003: GUN DEALERS.. NOW.. WHEN THEY SELL A GUN... CAN DESTROY.. RECORDS.. AFTER 24 HOURS.. ON WHO BOUGHT IT..... IT USED TO BE... 90 DAYS.... BUSH DID THAT.. FOR THEM
deb_osc: is dems STILL gleeful over the humiliation?
searcher_4you: wonton slaughter is what the doctor ordered eh Currahee?.....you really think that would have set well with the rest of the planet or made America look good?
da_truth73: Why is it that almost all liberals must resort to insult and profanity?
demswonalaskaliquidnatgasproject: but to deny lawyers, to not investigate Red Cross warnigns
charlee_mi: Deb, if CBS hadn't run with the story, we would never have know of it.
demswonalaskaliquidnatgasproject: that is what is going to be hard for the administration to defend
fmf55lives: KC.... I'VE NEVER SEEN YOU THIS CRANKED UP BEFORE
george_bright2003: AND NOW.. GUESS WHAT..... THAT GUN.. THAT KILLS YOU.. WILL NOW.. NOT BE ABLE. TO BE TRACED.. TO A GUN DEALER... FOR WHO BOUGHT IT.... GEE... I BET.. LAW ENFORCEMENT.. LOVED THAT ONE
currahee41: and Searcher just because there is noway in hell I would vote for john Kerry doesnt mean I will allow the president a free pass
da_truth73: Are people no longer able to conduct reasoned, polite debate of issues?

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