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POREIONYMIC BACKRONYMS: AMBIT, FORMATION, AND DIVERSITY¹

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Abstract: The present paper examines the nature, formation patterns, types, and correlations of *poreionymic backronyms*, i.e. phrases serving as alternative interpretations of acronyms and non-acronyms designating transport brands, namely cars, both on theoretical and empirical planes. Since backronyms are likely to be confused with other linguistic phenomena, such as acrostics, apronyms, disabbreviations, and recursive acronyms, the differences between these notions are also analysed in the article.

Key words: backronym, poreionym (transport brand name), acronym, non-acronym, acrostic, apronym, disabbreviation, recursive acronym, language game.

1. Introduction

The postmodernism era is often said to be "marked by a shift from truth to fiction and narrative, by a change from the world of experience to that of language, and by the

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demise of the three great metanarratives of science, religion and politics with their replacement by local language-games" (Lecerle 1990: 76). Indeed, language games are by no means the exclusive invention of the 20th century. However, their unprecedented actuation and diversification throughout the past century and, even more conspicuously, nowadays point to an increasing role of satirization as a tool of debunking the stance of the formerly all-pervasive moralistic judgment as well as a response to the now not uncommon double standards penetrating virtually all areas of our life. The modern era may be regarded as a multidimensional "intermarriage" between *Homo Communicens*, *Homo Artifex*, *Homo Ludens*, and *Homo Ridens* (Samokhina & Pasynok 2017: 284). The resulting paradigm shift is linguistically reflected in various forms of wordplay: acronyms, acrostics, anagrams, eggcorns, homonymy, lipograms, malapropisms, neologisms, palindromes, pangrams, parody, polysemy, portmanteau words, rhymes, sesquipedalian words, spoonerisms, tautonyms (Žyško 2017: 19-23), fantasy words (Danilchuk 2018), Internet memes (Martynyuk & Meleshchenko 2019: 132-133), etc. The highlight of the present study is backronymy, which designates ludic phrases serving as alternative interpretations of existing acronyms and non-acronyms. The phenomenon under study lies within the domain of lexicology (including phraseology). Yet, backronymy constitutes a peripheral onomastic fact: it does not allow for the formation of new proper names per se but rather contributes to the ludic reinterpretation of existing ones through their (re)acronymization, the novel alternative meaning being literally "constructed in the process of communication" (Golubkova & Zakharova 2016: 37).

Previous work on backronymy, which belongs to the area of lexicology, has been limited primarily to its onomasiological aspect studied upon Russian language evidence (Журавлев 1982; 2012; Зеленин 2005; Хуснулина 2012). Although the phenomenon is not uncommon in English as well as other languages worldwide (vide infra 3.3 *PBs in diverse language families and language groups*), its occurrence in academic literature proves not only relatively rare but also inevitably supplementary to

other research objects, for instance acronyms (Mahadin 2011; Makkai 1972; Mattiello 2013; Tisserand 2006; Tosun 2018) or language games (Żyśko 2017). This may explain the fact that the information available on backronyms is confined to attempts at definition and exemplification, with no account of properties, heterogeneity, or interrelation with similar phenomena. The novelty of the present paper consists in addressing backronymy as a novel self-sufficient research object, with a focus on the evidence collected from nine Germanic languages.

2. Database and methodology

The aim of the present article is to outline the ambit, investigate the formation patterns, and explore the genetic, graphic, semantic, and structural diversity of poreionymic backronyms (PBs), i.e. phrases serving as alternative interpretations of acronyms and non-acronyms designating car brands. It is noteworthy that even though poreionymy embraces names of a vast variety of vehicles performing miscellaneous functions, the focus of this article is restricted to car brands as by far the most widely used means of transport the world over.

Proceeding from the aim of the article, the following research questions are addressed:

a) what a backronym and, more specifically, a PB is; b) what linguistic phenomena it correlates with, in what manner, and to what extent; c) whether backronymy is restricted to a particular language family / group and why; d) what classes of PBs might be delimited in keeping with the heterogeneity and multiformity of the phenomenon.

Prior to approaching the issue of backronymy per se, it is necessary to disambiguate several terms used recurrently throughout the article. An *acronym* is defined as any type of shortening (which is taken to mean any subtractive process presupposing word segmentation and resulting in the emergence of a new lexeme (Borys 2018: 1) constructed from the word-initial letters of the shortened phrase and pronounced as a letter sequence or as an ordinary word (Adams 1987: 136-137; Gary Miller 2014: 148;

Kreidler 1979: 3-6; Minkova & Stockwell 2009: 16-17; Plag 2003: 127). An *expansion* is understood as a phrase that undergoes shortening and, thus, produces an acronym, with the referent being left unchanged. It is noteworthy that the term *expansion* is utilized retrospectively, i.e. designates the original phrase after the formation of the acronym and exclusively in the context of the latter.

The present research may be subdivided into five stages.

The first stage is *selection of the material for the linguistic investigation*. The database of the present research is 317 backronyms. Since alternative interpretations of acronyms and non-acronyms designating car brands are not listed in dictionaries at all, it is modern network communication that serves as the main source of the empirical material. Therefore, our selection is based on car users' and amateur linguists' Internet forums and humour compilations (vide infra **Abbreviations linking to empirical data sources**). Although the scope of the article is reduced to nine languages of the Germanic group (Afrikaans, Danish, Dutch, English, German, Icelandic, Letzeburgesch, Norwegian, and Swedish), the overall number of languages admitting the phenomenon under investigation and supplied in this study with at the very least one example amounts to 25, embracing the Indo-European, Finno-Ugric, and Turkic families (vide infra 3.3 *PBs in diverse language families and language groups*).

The second stage is *verification of the spelling and grammar of every single backronym*. This stage is indispensable in view of the fact that online contributions are generally made anonymously, so the literacy and grammar skills of each contributor may and do vary greatly. Frequent were the cases of missing diacritics, letter omission or displacement, citing foreign-language examples inaccurately, or even blending two closely related languages together (for instance, Norwegian and Swedish, or Polish and Czech).

The third stage is ***translation of all the non-English backronyms into English***. Since the language of the article is English, it is of crucial importance to found the comparative analysis on a certain "common denominator", i.e. commensurable examples in the same language. All the English translations throughout the present research were made by the authors. Any already available English renditions online were double-checked and underwent language editing. Although certain translations may be judged as semantically, grammatically, or syntactically unnatural, it was deemed paramount to render each phrase as close to the original as possible, with a focus, if necessary, on the semantic, grammatical, and syntactic anomalies aimed at producing the effect of defeated expectation upon the recipient, as in the English *crazy and demented idiots like large American cars* (unsubstantiated semantic redundancy) for *Cadillac*, *Detroit's angry towards sneaky unscrupulous Nips* (incorrect adjectival rection) for *Datsun*, and *screwed up beyond all repair usually* (misplacement of a frequency adverb) for *Subaru* respectively.

The fourth stage is ***elaboration of PB taxonomy***. The prerequisite for delimiting backronymy from acronymy and other semantically related phenomena is transformational analysis. The other methods applied in the elaboration of a fully-fledged typology of backronyms (placed in the order of their importance) include:

- 1) derivational, conceptual, and etymological analyses for a genetic classification of backronyms;
- 2) graphemic and comparative analyses for a graphic classification of backronyms;
- 3) comparative and, occasionally, morphemic analyses for a structural classification of backronyms;
- 4) axiological, componential, and conceptual analyses for a semantic classification of backronyms.


The fifth stage is ***linguistic interpretation and theorization of the research findings***. Based on the heterogeneity and multiformity of the material investigated, a definition

of the PB is synthesized as well as the correlation of backronymy with similar linguistic phenomena is outlined.

3. Defining and disambiguating backronymy

Prior to approaching the notion of backronymy, it is indispensable to identify the scope of linguistic phenomena it designates as well as the notions, with which it is likely to be confused.

3.1 Backronym as a semantic triad: Evolution

Although the term *backronym* was coined only as recently as in 1983, allegedly by Meredith G. Williams in "The Washington Post" (Blount 2011: 214), the earliest known instance of the phenomenon dates back to the 2nd c. A.D. in Ancient Greek and features the non-acronym *ἰχθύς*, or 'fish'. When capitalized, IXΘΥΣ, however, acquired a new sense – *Ἰησοῦς Χριστός, Θεοῦ Υἱός, Σωτήρ* 'Jesus Christ, God's Son, Saviour', thus becoming associated with Jesus Christ and Christians in general. Furthermore, early Christians were said to use the graphic representation of the profile of a fish, depicted as two intersecting arcs with the ends of the right side extending beyond the meeting point () as a secret symbol, now known colloquially as the *Jesus fish*. The sign is still found on the bumpers and tailgates of many modern cars (Wilton 2004: 83).

Arguably the first backronym in the English language (and, seemingly, in Germanic languages) was *cabal*, which in the late 16th c. designated the names of five ministers of King Charles II who were blamed for closing the exchequer in 1670, starting a war with Holland in 1672, and entering into an alliance with the French in 1673 – *Clifford, Arlington, Buckingham, Ashley, and Lauderdale* (ibid., 83-84).

Nowadays the term *bac(k)ronym* is employed in three senses. Firstly, it refers to a phrase or sentence constructed from the letters of a word treated as an acronym but

which was not originally an acronym (Charlesworth 2007: X; O'Conner & Kellerman 2009: 152; Wilton 2004: 82), for example *START* standing for *Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty* (Wilton 2004: 82). Secondly, it designates a phrase or sentence constructed from the letters of an already existing acronym (Bruns 2007: 109), for instance *YMCA* reinterpreted as *your money cheerfully accepted* (Mattiello 2013: 86). Thirdly, it is taken to mean a word that produces another word when read backward, for example, the word pair *lived* and *devil* (Abootty 2004: 197).

The discrepancy between the first and the second senses of *backronym* boils down to whether the original item is an acronym or a non-acronym. However, the subsequent transformation sequence proves identical: each consequent constituent letter of the (non-)acronym starts representing the initial letter of each consequent word in the expansion phrase. Therefore, it is proposed to use the term *pseudo-acronym*, which designates a word that has been given a false acronymic etymology (Algeo 1975: 230). In the present study, the latter term is taken to mean a non-acronymic word that is reinvented as an acronym by merely capitalizing all its graphemic constituents.

With regard to the third sense, its relevance as yet another lexico-semantic variant of the term *backronym* is highly controversial. Firstly, its motivation proves half obscure: whilst the component *back-* clearly correlates with the semantics of the whole word (implying reading backward), the component *-ronym* (or, with presumable word overlapping, *-(a)(ck)ronym*) appears semantically and functionally empty, referring neither to a proper name (or *onym*), nor to an abbreviated word of any kind (namely, *acronym*). Secondly, the phenomenon denoted as a backronym by Abootty (2004: 197) is already known in linguistics by another name – semordnilap. A semordnilap is defined as "a word that means one thing when read forward and another when read backward" (Elster 2014: 336), e.g., *drawer* – *reward* (McKean 2006: 198).

Accordingly, specifying the definition of the phenomenon proposed earlier (Borys & Garmash 2019: 61), a **PB** is treated in the present study as an expansion assigned to a pseudo-acronym or an alternative expansion assigned to an acronym, with the original referent represented by a car brand being left unchanged but evaluatively reinterpreted. Whilst the original (pseudo-)acronym is evaluatively neutral, e.g., *VW* (for *Volkswagen*), the resulting expansion is endowed with either positive or negative evaluation, e.g., *vidunderlig vogn* 'wonderful car' in Danish (TW) or *volkomen waardeloos* 'completely worthless' in Dutch (DS) respectively. The reinterpretation realized in the creation of backronyms allows for categorizing the overwhelming majority of the latter, including PBs, as ludic innovations, which contain an inherent historical component that is profoundly culturally bound, interactive, and highly functional (Moulin 2018: 262). Therefore, the key functions of poreionymic backronymy deducible from the definition include the semantically relevant ludicity, periphrasticity, and dysphemisticity as well as the structurally relevant redundancy.

3.2 Backronymy vs other linguistic phenomena

In view of their insufficient coverage in academic studies (vide supra 1. *Introduction*) and variability of the ambit (vide supra 3.1 *Backronym as a semantic triad: Evolution*), backronyms can occasionally be confused with other peripheral linguistic phenomena, namely *acrostics*, *apronyms*, *disabbreviations*, and *recursive acronyms*.

3.2.1 Backronym vs acrostic

The term *acrostic* is employed nowadays in three senses, which will be referred to hereafter as the *conventional*, the *broad*, and the *narrow*.

In the *conventional sense*, an acrostic is viewed as a poem, in which the first letters of successive lines form, when read vertically, its subject (Longman III 1993: 86; Rosen 2015: 403). Since the present research is not concerned with poetics or rhetoric, this sense proves irrelevant to the present research.

However, the incessant fusion of diverse branches of linguistics, which has been underway for several decades now and which inevitably results in more or less massive terminological interchange, has gradually contributed to the migration of the term far beyond the domain of poetics. Thus, the original concept extended to designating, in the *broad sense*, any series of words, names, or lines (in a script or poem), the first letters of which are used as initials in another series serving as a mnemonic for the former (Searleman & Herrmann 1994: 353). Correlating this broad understanding with the lexicocentricity of the present research and approaching it in the vein of lexical semantics, an acrostic may be defined as a reexpanded aide-memoire acronym whose connection with the expansion phrase is purely conventional.

From this perspective, a distinctive feature of acrostics is the seemingly illogical formation of the resulting expansion phrase (initially representing an ordinary phrase) – prior to the formation of the acronym per se. A good example would be the English phrase *Richard of York gave battle in vain*, which serves for memorizing the sequence of the seven spectral colours in a rainbow, namely *red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, and violet*. Yet, the fictitious anthroponym *Roy G. Biv*, which is the actual intermediary link between the two expansions, was coined later.

A liminal instance of acrosticity is when the acronym correlating the original expansion phrase with the resulting one is explicitly missing, being preserved only implicitly – in the initial letters of the constituent words of both expansion phrases. For example, the solar system planet names (*Mercury, Venus, Earth, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, Neptune, and Pluto*) are made easier to memorize by becoming associated with the sentence *men very easily make jugs serve useful nocturnal purposes* (Baine 1986: 95), where each successive word of the original expansion phrase is formally linked with its respective counterpart in the resulting expansion phrase by means of identical initial letters (M-V-E-M-J-S-U-N-P). However, there exists no such acronym as MVEMJSUNP in the English language. Similarly, in the case of the Slavonic

equivalents of the afore-mentioned English rainbow colour spectrum aide-memoire – the Belarusian *Чакаю апэтытных жабак зь беларускіх сажалак. Француз* (Дайнека 2005) 'I'm waiting for mouthwatering frogs from Belarusian frog ponds. Frenchman' (for *чырвоны, аранжавы, жоўты, зялёны, блакітны, сіні, фіялетава*) and the Russian *каждый охотник желает знать, где сидит фазан* (ibid.) 'every hunter wishes to know where a/the pheasant is hiding' (for *красный, оранжевый, жёлтый, зелёный, голубой, синий, фиолетовый*) – the respective intermediary acronyms *ЧАЖЗБСФ* and *КОЖЗГСФ* are simply non-existent.

It is equally noteworthy that mnemonic shortening does not boil down to acronymy alone and may involve other patterns, as is the instance of the German *syntactic blended acrostic* *Kilometertal – euer Urpokal*, literally meaning the nonsensical 'kilometer valley, your primordial cup', which serves an aide-memoire consolidating the names of the nine Muses: *Klio* (with the metathesis *-lio* to *-ilo-*), *Melpomene*, *Terpsichore*, *Thalia* (the retained segment *Thal-* is graphically adapted to *-tal* for convenience), *Euterpe*, *Erato*, *Urania*, *Polyhymnia*, and *Kalliope* (Wörtmann 2003: 91).

Deducible from the afore-mentioned broad definition is a far more specialized understanding of an acrostic, which, in the *narrow sense*, denotes an acronym, the pronunciation of which coincides with a homophone word in the same language (Conti & Mattiello 2008: 563). For instance, the acrostic *HOPE* stands for *Health Opportunity for People Everywhere* (Mattiello 2013: 90).

Whilst a backronym and an acrostic are both *reexpanded acronyms* (or, in the case of backronyms, these may equally be *expanded pseudo-acronyms*), i.e. they are based on shortening and totally depend on their resulting expansions in order to produce the desired stylistic effect, the difference between them manifests itself on two planes:

structural (concerning acrostics viewed in the broad sense) and semantic (concerning acrostics viewed in the narrow sense).

On the structural plane, formation of acrostics in the broad sense as reexpanded aide-memoire acronyms whose connection with the expansion phrase is purely conventional follows the pattern "original expansion phrase → [implicit intermediary acronym] → resulting expansion phrase (→ explicit intermediary acronym)". Conversely, backronymy presupposes strict compliance with the ontologically distinct pattern "original expansion phrase → acronym → resulting expansion phrase". The difference between the two patterns boils down to optionality of explicitness of an intermediate acronym in acrostics, which accounts for the fact that an acronym per se enters language lexicon (or becomes explicit) after the formation of the resulting expansion phrase, which may seem illogical at first sight. In the meantime, a backronym is always formed on the basis of an existing acronym or pseudo-acronym.

On the semantic plane concerning acrostics approached in the narrow sense, Mattiello claims that they "differ from backronyms (...) in that the latter either have a straightforward etymology (e.g., *Ford* from the founder's name) or an invented one ('First on race day')" (2013: 91). However, backronymy per se results from the invention of a new expansion phrase for an acronym (or a non-acronym), which coexists alongside its straightforward etymology. Therefore, any backronym balances both a straightforward etymology AND an invented one. Yet, a backronym always retains its original referent, merely highlighting some of its objective or subjective (attributed) characteristics in the resulting expansion phrase: compare the metonymically transferred founder's name [*Henry*] *Ford* and the expansion *first on race day*, which both denote a car of a particular brand. Conversely, an acrostic and its homophonic counterpart have obviously distinct referents: compare *hope* as a feeling and *HOPE* standing for *Health Opportunity for People Everywhere* as the name of a health organization.

3.2.2 Backronym vs apronym

An **apronym** – from blending *à propos* and *acronym* (Tisserand 2006: 57) – is an acronym that is expanded to a phrase "meaningful in the context of the term it stands for" (Mahadin 2011: 227), e.g., the English *USA PATRIOT [Act]* signifying *Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism* (McKay 2009: 249).

Both an apronym and a backronym are self-definitional acronyms, which would suggest their uniformity, if not identity. However, the distinction between them becomes obvious while elaborating their formation patterns, which do not coincide.

In apronymy, the acronym and its expansion phrase are formed simultaneously, i.e. following the pattern "original expansion phrase → acronym/resulting expansion phrase". For instance, the Swedish pseudo-acronym *KRIS* standing for *kriminellas revansch i samhället* 'criminals' revenge on society' and denoting the Swedish organization providing people recently released from prison with a network that can help them to start a new life (Berglund & Skoglund 2016: 66) transparently correlates with the simplex *kris* 'crisis', since former convicts are likely to face stigma as well as difficulties in social reintegration. Makkai refers to units of this type as **punning acronyms** (1972: 345), whereas Mattiello names them **semantically-relevant acrostics** (2013: 90-91).

In backronymy, the formation of the expansion phrase always follows that of the acronym or non-acronym (which, thus, becomes a pseudo-acronym), i.e. complies with the patterns "original expansion phrase → acronym → resulting expansion phrase" or "non-acronym → pseudo-acronym → resulting expansion phrase". An instance of the latter is *karate* reinterpreted as *kicking athlete, reaching at taming emotions* (Tisserand 2006: 57). In this case, we are dealing with a pseudo-acronym deriving from a simplex (a borrowed compound from Japanese, which is nonetheless morphologically

indivisible in English) that refers to the memorization of one of the basic philosophical principles of karate – self-control – and is, therefore, self-definitional.

3.2.3 *Backronym vs disabbreviation*

The term **disabbreviation** is occasionally employed in Russian linguistics (Гладченкова 2012: 83; Журавлев 2012: 46; Хуснуллина 2012: 276) as an absolute synonym of the English term **backronym(y)**. Etymologically, the word **disabbreviation** presents a calque of the Russian *дезаббревиация*, which was coined by Russian linguist Zhuravlev to name backronymy as one of the two types of secondary phrase formation, alongside transphraseologization (Журавлев 1982: 95). With regard to its morphological motivation, the **disabbreviation** presents an unobjectionable combination of the prefix **dis-** expressing regression and the term **abbreviation**, which is typically identified in the Russian linguistic tradition with acronymy, and, thus, appears perfectly intelligible and self-explanatory.

Nonetheless, it has been rightfully claimed above that not all backronyms are formed from acronyms. A great many backronyms expand pseudo-acronyms – non-acronymic words that are reinvented as acronyms by merely having all their graphemic constituents capitalized. For instance, the car brand name *Ford* originates from the company founder's full surname and is, therefore, not an acronym. Yet, in Icelandic, it is assigned the expansion *fyrir okkur rugluðu drengina* 'for us, disturbed boys', thus transforming into a backronym.

Consequently, the term **disabbreviation** should be regarded not as a synonym but as a hyponym of **backronym(y)**.

3.2.4 *Backronym vs recursive acronym*

A **recursive acronym** is an acronym that refers to itself in the expression for which it stands (Žyško 2017: 23), for instance the German *TikZ* for *TikZ ist kein*

Zeichenprogramm 'TikZ is not a drawing program', or the English OIL for Oil India Limited.

As can be seen from the examples, the original unit is always a pseudo-acronym assigned an expansion or an acronym assigned an alternative expansion. In either case, the resulting unit contains the original among its constituents (usually the initial constituent, as in both *TikZ* and *OIL*). Besides, the original and the resulting expansion phrases are associated with the same referent. On inductive grounds there is, therefore, sufficient evidence to claim that a recursive acronym constitutes a type of backronyms. A recursive acronym may thus be roughly defined as a "self-contained" backronym.

Considering all the above, the difference between backronymy, on the one hand, and acrosticky as well as apronymy, on the other, boils down to the incompatibility of their formation patterns. Conversely, both disabbreviation and recursive acronymy constitute specific instances of backronymy. Complying with two transformational patterns, i.e. "original expansion phrase → acronym → resulting expansion phrase" or "non-acronym → pseudo-acronym → resulting expansion phrase", backronymy meets all seven criteria for new word-formation (as delimited by Mattiello (2017: 28-29): transparency, regularity, productivity, decodification, informativity, mnemonic effect, and analogy.

3.3 PBs in diverse language families and language groups

Onomasiologically, backronyms reinterpret a vast variety of notions, designating political parties and movements; political / economic / social phenomena; jobs; educational establishments; cultural institutions; sports clubs; indoor spaces; machinery; weapons and ammunition; school subjects; emergency situations; humans (by appearance / behaviour / character) (Зеленин 2005: 86-88). The present paper, however, focuses on *poreionyms* (within the thematic group of machinery), i.e. proper

names designating means of transportation (Подольская 1978: 112; Томасик 2012: 61-62), namely cars.

The highlight of this study is polyonymic backronymy in Germanic languages, namely **Afrikaans, Danish, Dutch, English, German, Icelandic, Letzeburgesch, Norwegian, and Swedish**. The focus of the research on Germanic languages is due to several factors.

Firstly, English and, to a lesser degree, German are two of the dozen languages enjoying the status of contemporary *world languages*, based on the staggering number of speakers (both native and non-native); the official status in numerous countries; the high prestige; the multiethnicity and pluricentricity correlating with heterogeneous language varieties and dialects; the extensive use in international political, economic, and social relations; the significant bodies of literature; the popularity with language learners on the global scale; the preponderant use by the academic community. In addition, among the existing world languages, English is recognized to have special status, whilst its linguistically unprecedented dissemination across the globe is clearly reflected in the model of three concentric circles developed by Braj B. Kachru: the Inner Circle (the English language's traditional heartland: the USA, Canada, the UK, Australia, and New Zealand), the Outer Circle (non-native countries where English is an official second language: Singapore, Kenya, India, etc.), and the Expanding Circle (countries where English does not have any official status but is used as an international language: China, Egypt, Japan, Russia, etc.) (Horobin 2018: 117-118).

Secondly, English features by far the largest amount of web content – estimated as 55% as of 2012 (Dailey-O'Cain 2017: 47). It is this factor that is vital for the present investigation, which totally relies on the evidence collected on car users' and, occasionally, amateur linguists' Internet forums.

Thirdly, since the highlight of this study is backronymy in proper names of cars, the economic welfare of English- and German-speaking countries, especially in Europe and North America, is equally important. Traditionally ranking highly worldwide, the purchasing power of an average citizen of the USA, the UK, Canada, the Netherlands, Sweden, or Norway allows him or her to be less mentally dependent on material goods. Back in the early 20th c., owning a car was viewed as a luxury; nowadays it is treated as a mere necessity instead. This economically driven depreciation of material goods would inevitably find its reflection in language. In backronymy, it is the irony (treated as a literary device exploiting a reversal of meaning, i.e. an intentional use of the literal meaning of a phrase in order to evoke the contrary or contradictory meaning (Wilson & Sperber 2012: 123-124)) alongside the occasional sarcasm, which serve the purpose of connotatively depreciating diverse car brands.

Fourthly, Germanic languages employ the Latin alphabet, which, similarly to the Cyrillic one, allows for investigating *case-sensitive shortenings*. Studying backronymy in Arabic, Chinese, Hebrew, Hindi, or Japanese would be impossible since their graphic systems do not presuppose discrimination between uppercase and lowercase letters. As a result, acronyms (at least, in their traditional understanding) and the like phenomena involving the use of capitalization, no matter whether for the sake of language economy (as opposed to language redundancy (Litkovych, Smal & Yanovets 2020: 99) or mere ludicity, simply do not exist in such languages.

Yet, the scope of PBs extends far beyond the Germanic group.

Within the Indo-European language family, which includes the Germanic group, PBs are detectable in:

a) Baltic languages: **Lithuanian** *baisiai mandras Volksvagenas* 'extremely fancy Volkswagen' for *BMW* (BA);

- b) Romance languages: **French** *supérieure aux autres bagnoles* 'better than other cars' for *SAAB* (QU); **Italian** *fermati imbecille abbiamo tamponato* 'stop, you moron, we have rear-ended' for *FIAT* (DI); **Portuguese** *fui iludido, agora é tarde* 'I've been had, now it's too late' for *FIAT* (Cavallini 2008: 27-28); **Romanian** *dacă ai cap, iei altceva* 'if you're smart, you take something else' for *Dacia* (JA); **Spanish** *siempre estarás apretando tornillos* 'you will be tightening screws forever' for *SEAT* (PE);
- c) Slavonic languages: **Bulgarian** *бърка масло и вода* 'mixes oil and water' for *BMW* (TU); **Polish** *będziesz miał wydatki* 'it will cost you a lot' for *BMW* (NO); **Russian** *всеми обожжаемая лего Горьковского автопрома* 'the generally worshipped Lego by Gorky Automobile Plant' for *Volga* (PI); **Ukrainian** *бабки можуть все* 'money can do it all' for *BMW* (ZK).

Outside the Indo-European language family, examples of PBs are found in:

- a) Finno-Ugric languages: **Estonian** *ohulik pask eesti liikluses* 'dangerous shit in Estonian transport' for *Opel* (CA); **Finnish** *on pakkasta en liiku* 'it's frosty, I'm not moving' for *Opel* (RC); **Hungarian** *buszon, metrón, villamoson* 'by bus, by metro, by tram' for *BMW* (GY);
- b) Turkic languages: **Kyrgyz** *машина аңдыган иттер* 'car-tracing dogs' for *MAI* as *Мамлекеттик Автоинспекция* 'State Automobile Inspectorate' (SU); **Turkish** *enayi biner oturmadan iner* 'dummy gets on and falls from his seat' for *EBOI* as *Edirne belediyesi otobüs işletmelerinin* 'Edirne Municipality Bus Operations' (Tosun 2018: 166).

The translinguistic nature of backronymy spanning diverse language groups within several families proves that, if peripheral, it falls within the scope of not only general linguistics, which typically relies on data from a range of languages in order to describe various phenomena in their wholeness and diversity as well as temporal and local continuity, but also of contrastive linguistics, aimed at establishing the isomorphic and allomorphic features of the phenomena juxtaposed.

4. Taxonomy of PBs

Since backronymy is becoming more and more common nowadays, a necessity arises to elaborate a fully-fledged typology of backronyms, based on diverse approaches, namely *genetic*, *graphic*, *structural*, and *semantic*.

4.1 Genetic classification

In accordance with the genetic approach, it is proposed to discriminate between *acronym-based backronyms* and *non-acronym-based backronyms*.

4.1.1 Acronym-based backronyms

An *acronym-based backronym* is an alternative expansion assigned to an acronym, with the original referent being left unchanged but evaluatively reinterpreted. Acronyms are in no way uncommon among car brand names, the best known being:

- a) *AMC* (*American Motors Corporation*), reinterpreted as *all makes of cars* in English (EV);
- b) *BMW* (*Bayerische Motoren Werke*), reinterpreted as *BART / Muni / walking* (the reference to Bay Area Rapid Transit and the Muni Metro in San Francisco provides an additional, sociolinguistic, context) in San Francisco English (EV); *bättre med Wankelmotor* 'better with a Wankel engine' in Swedish (ME); *billig mands vogn* 'cheap man's car' in Danish (TW); *blijf maar werken* 'just keep working' in Dutch (RI); *blöde Mantawitze* 'stupid Manta jokes' (the reference to the popular German humour about the Mantafahrer, i.e. a stupid macho, having a blond girlfriend or wife, belonging to a lower social class, and driving his Opel Mantra fast and aggressively (Feyaerts 1999: 325), provides an additional, sociolinguistic, context) in German (CE);
- c) *FIAT* (*Fabbrica Italiana Automobili Torino*), reinterpreted as *farlig i alt trafik* 'dangerous in any traffic' in Danish (TW); *fietsen is achteraf troost* 'cycling afterwards is a consolation' in Dutch (RI); *fikset i alkoholisert tilstand* 'fixed in a drunken state' in Norwegian (VG); *fjollor i antik traktor* 'queers in a pre-historic tractor' in Swedish

(ME); *flying in a Tupolev* in English (EV); *französisch-italienischer Affentransporter* 'Franco-Italian ape-carrier' in German (CE);

d) *GM (General Motors)*, reinterpreted as *goddarned mess* in English (EV);

e) *GMC (General Motors Company)*, reinterpreted as *generally mediocre cars* in English (EV);

f) *MB (Mercedes-Benz)*, reinterpreted as *mechanics beware* in English (EV);

g) *MG (Morris Garages)*, reinterpreted as *mobile garbage* in English (CI);

h) *SAAB (Svenska Aeroplan Aktiebolaget)*, reinterpreted as *steeds allerlei abnormal bromgeluiden* 'constantly all kinds of abnormal humming sounds' in Dutch (RI); *svenskt arbete av blinda* 'Swedish work by the blind' in Swedish (ME); *Swedish automobile – always broken* in English (EV);

i) *SEAT (Sociedad Española de Automóviles de Turismo)*, reinterpreted as *serienmäßig eingebaute Austauscherteile* 'standard built-in replacement parts' in German (CE); *seriematige ellende als toekomst* 'standard misery in the future' in Dutch (RI); *skakar eller alstrar torv* 'shakes or produces peat' in Swedish (GA);

j) *VW (Volkswagen)*, reinterpreted as *vettvillingar* 'madmen' in Swedish (ME); *vidunderlig vogn* 'wonderful car' in Danish (TW); *virulent wheels* in English (EV); *volkomen waardeloos* 'completely worthless' in Dutch (DS); *völlig wertlos* 'completely worthless' in German (CE).

Acronym-based backronyms may be regarded as prototypical backronyms since they constitute reinterpretations of existing acronyms. The reinterpretations prove to be negative in the overwhelming majority of cases, the depreciation of the referents (i.e. car brands) extending from primary to secondary. **Primary depreciation** manifests itself through pointing to the attributed drawbacks of the vehicle per se, both real (through the use of such words as *abnormal*, *broken*, *cheap*, *dangerous*, *goddarned*, *mediocre*, *mess*, *misery*, *prehistoric*, *shakes*, *virulent*, and *worthless*) and potential (with the help of the word *replacement* as well as the phrases *better with a [...] engine*, *cycling afterwards*, *keep working*, *mechanics beware*, and *misery in the future*).

Secondary depreciation relies on degrading either its user, i.e. driver (*Manta[fahrer]*) or passenger(s) (*queers*), or its manufacturer (*fixed in a drunken state and work by the blind*), with the ultimate intention to disparage the car brand.

4.1.2 Non-acronym-based backronyms

A **non-acronym-based backronym** is an expansion assigned to a pseudo-acronym, with the original referent being left unchanged but evaluatively reinterpreted. The majority of car brand names are formed by means other than acronymization, which include metonymization, metaphorization, compounding, blending, clipping, and borrowing.

4.1.2.1 Metonymic poreionym-based backronyms

In accordance with cognitivist semantics, which may itself be defined as a mapping from linguistic expressions to cognitive structures (Gärdenfors 1999: 20), **poreionymic metonymization** constitutes a process providing mental access to an entity, represented by a car brand, through another entity, represented by the founder / inventor / producer of the brand or by the place where it is manufactured, within the same domain.

A distinctive feature of the metonymic poreionym-based backronyms is that they constitute expansions of secondary eponyms (names of car brands), which, in their turn, are semantically derived from existing anthroponyms (and, occasionally, toponyms). Thus, metonymic poreionym-based backronymy rests on resemantization of existing secondary eponyms, thus endowing them with alternative content.

The most typical pattern is when the founder's / inventor's / producer's surname is the vehicle and the car brand name is the target. The examples based on such eponyms are numerous in our sample:

a) *Benz* (after *Karl Friedrich Benz*), reinterpreted as *because engineers know Zen* in English (this is a rare instance of phonetic backronymy, with a focus on initial

phonemes instead of graphemes: *know* /*nəʊ*/) (EV); *bei Elchtest nicht zuverlässig* 'not reliable in the moose test' (the reference to the incident which took place in Sweden in 1997 when the journalist Robert Collin from the motor magazine "Teknikens Värld" overturned the new Mercedes-Benz in the test designed to check the ease with which the model could be steered around an animal such as a moose appearing on the highway, whereas a much older and widely mocked Trabant managed the same test perfectly (Lancaster & Massingham 2011: 266), provides an additional, sociolinguistic, context) in German (CE);

b) *Bugatti* (after *Ettore Bugatti*), reinterpreted as *bangin' underground gangsta attitude trumps techy image* in English (JA);

c) *Buick* (after *David Dunbar Buick*), reinterpreted as *big ugly indestructible car killer* in English (EV);

d) *Cadillac* (after *Antoine de la Mothe Cadillac*), reinterpreted as *crazy and demented idiots like large American cars* in English (EV);

e) *Chevrolet* (after *Louis Chevrolet*), reinterpreted as *cheap, hardly efficient, virtually runs on luck every time* in English (EV); *creëert heel erg veel rook of loopt ellendig traag* 'produces an awful lot of smoke or runs agonizingly slowly' in Dutch (RI);

f) *Chrysler* (after *Walter Chrysler*), reinterpreted as *can hear revs, yet sense little engine reaction* in English (JA);

g) *Citroën* (after *André-Gustave Citroën*), reinterpreted as *claxon indrukken terwijl roestig onderdeel even nivelleert* 'press the horn while the rusty part briefly flattens' in Dutch (DS); *crap interior, terrible road-holding, owned entirely by nutters* in English (JA);

h) *Daewoo* (after *Kim Woo-jung*), reinterpreted as *damn Asian engineering works only occasionally* in English (CR); *deze afgekeurde ellendige wagen oogt onbruikbaar* 'this criticized miserable car looks unusable' in Dutch (RI);

i) *Dodge* (after *Horace Elgin Dodge* and *John Francis Dodge*), reinterpreted as *drips oil, drops grease everywhere* in English (EV);

- j) *Ferrari* (after *Enzo Ferrari*), reinterpreted as *fanatieke egoïstische rakkers rijden allemaal rasechte Italianen* 'fanatic egoistic rascals all drive pure Italians' in Dutch (EV); *Ferrari er rigtig røde automobiler rejsende indenlands* 'Ferrari are true red cars circulating inside the country' in Danish (TW); *fragile, expensive rides repel all reasonable individuals* in English (JA);
- k) *Ford* (after *Henry Ford*), reinterpreted as *fejl og rustne døre* 'faults and rusty doors' in Danish (TW); *félag organdi rass dýrkenda* 'screaming ass worshippers' club' in Icelandic (MB); *fiks og reparer daglig* 'fix and repair daily' in Norwegian (VG); *Ford onderdelen rammelen dagelijks* 'Ford parts rattle daily' in Dutch (DS); *forlorn, old, rat-ridden dustbin* in English (EV); *ful och riktigt dålig* 'ugly and really bad' in Swedish (ME); *für Osis reicht der* 'enough for Osis' in German (CE);
- l) *Honda* (after *Soichiro Honda*), reinterpreted as *heel oud nutteloos dom autootje* 'very old useless stupid car' in Dutch (RI); *höllischer Orgasmus nach dem Anfahren* 'hellish orgasm after starting' in German (CE); *hon orkar nästan dagens arbete* 'it can almost work today' in Swedish (GA); *hunk of nasty dung, always* in English (EV);
- m) *Maserati* (after *Alfieri Maserati*), reinterpreted as *must also suggest extra rope and towing implements* in English (CR);
- n) *Mazda* (after *Jujiro Matsuda*), reinterpreted as *många... alla zigenares drömbil alltså* 'in other words, many... all Gypsies' dream car' in Swedish (GA); *miles at zero, dead anyway* in English (EV); *miserabele auto zonder degelijke afwerking* 'miserable car with no happy ending' in Dutch (DS); *Müll auf zwei drehenden Achsen* 'rubbish on two rotating axes' in German (CE);
- o) *Opel* (after *Adam Opel*), reinterpreted as *Olle Perssons elektriska låda* 'Olle Persson's electric box' (the reference to the popular Swedish opera singer Hans Olle Persson provides an additional, sociolinguistic, context) in Swedish (GA); *onderweg panne en lekkage* 'breakdowns and leakage en route' in Dutch (RI); *op på en lift* 'up on a lift' in Danish (HE); *optische Perfektion ersetzt Leistung* 'visual perfection replaces performance' in German (CE); *ousted problematic export leaker* in English (EV);

- p) *Peugeot* (after *Armand Peugeot*), reinterpreted as *people ever unhappy, goes every other turd* in English (CO); *pippa ej utan gummi en omgång till* 'do not have another round of sex without a condom' in Swedish (ME); *probeer eens uw geluk en ondervind trammelant* 'try your luck once and experience a fuss' in Dutch (DS); *Produkt eines unterentwickelten gehirntoten Europäers ohne Technik* 'product of an underdeveloped ditzy European without technology' in German (CE);
- q) *Porsche* (after *Ferdinand Porsche*), reinterpreted as *probeer onze rotzooi: start chaotisch, heel erbarmelijk* 'try our rubbish: chaotic start, very pathetic' in Dutch (RI); *proof only rich suckers can have everything* in English (EV);
- r) *Renault* (after *Louis Renault, Marcel Renault, and Fernand Renault*), reinterpreted as *rampspoed en narigheid achtervolgen u lange tijd* 'disaster and misery will haunt you for a long time' in Dutch (EV); *retarded engine, no acceleration, ugly lump of trash* in English (CI); *rostet einfach nicht, außer unter lackierten Teilen* 'does not rust, except beneath painted parts' in German (CE);
- s) *Škoda* (after *Emil Škoda*), reinterpreted as *sakta kör ofta druckna absolutister* 'drunk teetotallers often drive slowly' in Swedish (ME); *samen knutselen onder de auto* 'DIYing together under the car' in Dutch (RI); *skal kassere og dræbe alt* 'must discard and destroy everything' in Danish (TW); *so kennen Ossid das Auto* 'Ossid know the car as such' in German (CE);
- t) *Suzuki* (after *Michio Suzuki*), reinterpreted as *sadly uninspired zip ultimately kills it* in English (JA); *sinnlose, unzusammenhängende Zusammenstellung unzähliger Konstruktionsirrtümer* 'senseless, incoherent compilation of countless design mistakes' in German (CE);
- u) *Toyota* (after *Kiichiro Toyoda*), reinterpreted as *too often Yankees overprice this auto* in English (EV); *totaal onveilig Japans ontwerp tegen afval prijs* 'totally unsafe Japanese design at waste price' in Dutch (DS).

In two instances, however, poreionymic metonymization is based on a slightly modified version of the above pattern: the founder's / inventor's / producer's relative's first name becomes the vehicle, while the target remains the same – the car brand:

a) *Edsel* (after *Edsel Bryant Ford*, son of Henry Ford), reinterpreted as *even Dad says Edsel's lame* in English (this is a rare instance of recursive acronymy when the resulting expansion *even Dad says Edsel's lame* contains the original unit *Edsel* as its non-initial constituent, which becomes possible due to the availability of two *E*'s in *Edsel*) (EV);

b) *Mercedes* (after *Mercédès Jellinek*, daughter of Emil Jellinek), reinterpreted as *med en rullande champion envisades den ettrige stofilen* 'the hot-tempered old fogeys insisted on one rolling champion' in Swedish (ME); *meines Erachtens richtiges Chaos, erreicht durch eigene Schuld* 'in my opinion, real chaos with no one but oneself to blame' in German (CE); *money envy reliably causes every derogatory expletive to surface* in English (CI); *motorisch, exclusief rommelig, carrosserie echt doorgerot en slecht* 'motorized, exclusively messy, the bodywork is really corroded and bad' in Dutch (RI).

In yet another pattern of poreionymic metonymization, the place where the car brand was founded or is manufactured is the vehicle and the car brand is the target, as is the case of *Pontiac*, named after Pontiac, a city in Michigan, and reinterpreted as *Polizeiautos ohne neuen TÜV initiieren Autocrashes* 'police cars without new MOT cause car crashes' in German (CE); *poor old ninny thinks it's a Cadillac* in English (EV).

Overall, the metonymic poreionym-based backronyms constitute the largest group of non-acronym-based backronyms. As in the case of the acronym-based backronyms, the novel reinterpretations are predominantly negative. Although the primary eponyms are represented by anthroponyms, wherefrom it could be deduced that secondary depreciation referring to the inventor or manufacturer should be more common than in

acronym-based backronyms, this does not seem to be the case. **Primary depreciation** predominates, featuring such references to the vehicle's drawbacks as *breakdowns*, *crap interior*, *faults*, *grease [dropped]*, *leakage*, *oil [dripping]*, *parts rattl[ing]*, and *run[ning] on luck*, as well as the attributes *bad*, *cheap*, *corroded*, *dead*, *forlorn*, *hardly efficient*, *hellish*, *incoherent*, *lame*, *miserable*, *nasty*, *not reliable*, *old*, *pathetic*, *rat-ridden*, *rusty*, *senseless*, *slow*, *stupid*, *terrible*, *ugly*, *unsafe*, *unusable*, and *useless*. The car is also identified with *box*, *car killer*, *chaos*, *disaster*, *dung*, *dustbin*, *misery*, and *rubbish / trash*. **Secondary depreciation** is far less common, most frequently focusing on the driver (*ass worshippers*, *crazy and demented idiots*, *drunk teetotallers*, *fanatic egoistic rascals*, *old fogeys*, *nutters*, and *rich suckers*) and occasionally – on the passenger (*goes every other turd* and *repel all reasonable individuals*), or the manufacturer (*underdeveloped ditzy European*). Secondary depreciation also actively exploits national and racial stereotypes, using the ethnonyms *American*, *Asian*, *European*, *Gypsies*, *Italians*, *Japanese*, *Ossis*, and *Yankees* with implicit depreciation as well as the racial slur *ninny* with explicit depreciation. Thus, the lack of correlation between the primary eponym and its backronymic reinterpretation points to a totally ludic nature of metonymic poreionym-based backronymy as such.

4.1.2.2 Metaphoric poreionym-based backronyms

In keeping with the cognitivistic paradigm, **poreionymic metaphorization** constitutes a projection from a source domain to a target domain, which is always represented by a car brand. In general, conceptual metaphorization of CAR as ONE'S FAMILY MEMBER or A LOVED ONE is extensively used in advertising (Kövecses 2018: 128). However, we have identified five novel conceptual metaphors of CAR in our study:

- a) THE CAR IS AN ANIMAL: *Jaguar* (after *jaguar* – a large spotted wild cat species), reinterpreted as *jarenlang allerlei gecompliceerde unieke autotechnische revisies* 'for years all kinds of complicated unique MOT tests' in Dutch (DS); *just a guess U are rich* in English (CR); *Mustang* (after *mustang* – a free-roaming feral horse), reinterpreted as *messed up shit that ain't no good* in English (EV); *Pinto* (after *pinto*

horse – a horse whose coat colour combines large patches of white with any other colour), reinterpreted as *paid inspector nicely to overlook* in English (EV);

b) THE CAR IS A SHIP: *Corvette* (after *corvette* – a small maneuverable warship), reinterpreted as *could old Roy Vector eat the tires evenly* in English (EV); *Lada* (after *lada* – a Viking longship), reinterpreted as *laget av diverse avfall* 'made from miscellaneous rubbish' in Norwegian (VG); *langs achter duwen alstublieft* 'please push from behind' in Dutch (PS); *lavet af diverse affaldsdele* 'made of miscellaneous waste parts' in Danish (TW); *left at dump, abandoned* in English (PS); *letzter auf der Autobahn* 'last on the highway' in German (CE);

c) THE CAR IS A CELESTIAL BODY: *Subaru* (from the Japanese 昴/PL 'the Pleiades star cluster M45'), reinterpreted as *schwache und bescheidene Arbeit ramponiert Unfallstatistik* 'weak and crappy work worsens accident statistics' in German (CE); *screwed up beyond all repair usually* in English (EV); *steeds uitermate belachelijke abnormale rammelende uitvindingen* 'always extremely ridiculous abnormal rattling inventions' in Dutch (DS);

d) THE CAR IS THE PRESENT: *Hyundai* (from the Korean 現代 'modernity'), reinterpreted as *how your usual nerd drives an import* in English (EV);

e) THE CAR IS THE FUTURE: *Probe* (after *probe* – a small, usually unmanned, spacecraft used to acquire information or measurements about its surroundings – to highlight its futuristic design), reinterpreted as *probably runs on belching engines* in English (EV).

All the conceptual metaphors revealed above are monomodal, since they exploit only one medium, i.e. written verbal communication, as opposed to multimodal and hypermodal ones, which are intrinsic, for instance, to Internet memes (Morozova 2017: 251-252). Of the five conceptual metaphors identified, the first juxtaposes the speed, strength, and stamina of animals with those of car brands; the second correlates the power and maneuverability of vessels with car brands; the third parallels the

remoteness and inaccessibility of a constellation with that of a car brand; the fourth and fifth project the notion of time (moving WITH time or AHEAD OF time) upon that of car brands. Thus, it is not only time that is interpreted in terms of other entities (as in conceptual metaphors of time (Konnova & Babenko 2019) but other entities (e.g., car brands) can also be interpreted in terms of time.

4.1.2.3 Compound poreionym-based backronyms

Poreionymic compounding is based on combining two or more full stems into one car brand name. The present study contains five examples thereof:

- a) *Datsun* (from *DAT* [*Motorcar Co.*] + *sun*), reinterpreted as *Detroit's angry towards sneaky unscrupulous Nips* in English (CI); *diese Autos töten sanft unsere Nation* 'these cars gently kill our nation' in German (CE);
- b) *Kia* (from 起 'to come out' + 亞 '(East) Asia'), reinterpreted as *kan ikke accelerere* 'cannot accelerate' in Danish (HE); *keep inside Asia* in English (CR); *keiner ist alberner* 'nobody is silly' in German (CE); *konstig i allmänhet* 'weird in general' in Swedish (BO); *koreansk industri avfall* 'Korean industrial garbage' in Norwegian (VG); *kuchend irritante auto* 'annoying coughing car' in Dutch (RI);
- c) *Mitsubishi* (from the Japanese 三 'three' + 菱 'rhombus'), reinterpreted as *met interessante techniek speciaal uitgevoerde bakfiets in slechte hedendaagse improvisatie* 'using interesting technology, specially exported carrier tricycle in poor modern improvisation' in Dutch (DS); *Modell ist technischer Schrott und Blech ist sowieso höchst instabil* 'the model is technical scrap and the metal is highly unstable anyway' in German (CE); *mostly in the shop undergoing big investments, sometimes halfway incomplete* in English (EV);
- d) *Oldsmobile* (from [*Ransom Eli*] *Olds* + *-mobile*), reinterpreted as *overpriced, leisurely driven sedan made of Buick's irregular leftover equipment* in English (EV);
- e) *Volkswagen* (from the German *Volk* 'people, folk' + interfix *-s-* + *Wagen* 'car'), reinterpreted as *vehicle of loser Krauts some wacky Austrian guy endorsed nationally* in English (EV).

All the collected compound poreionym-based backronyms constitute negative reinterpretations, which are expressed not only through primary depreciation (with the help of the labels *carrier tricycle*, *garbage*, and *scrap* as well as the attributes *annoying*, *coughing*, *incomplete*, *irregular*, *overpriced*, *unstable*, and *weird*), but also through an extensive use of ethnonyms with implicit depreciation, like *Asia*, *Austrian*, and *Korean*, as well as of the downright disparaging ethnic slurs, like *Krauts* and *Nips*.

4.1.2.4 Blended poreionym-based backronyms

Poreionymic blending presupposes a combination of two or more word segments, which form a new word. The blended car brand names include:

- a) *Mopar* (from *motor* + *parts*), reinterpreted as *miscellaneous oddball parts assembled ridiculously* in English (EV);
- b) *Nissan* (from the Japanese 日本 'Japan' + 産業 'industry'), reinterpreted as *na iedere start snel alles nakijken* 'check everything quickly after every start' in Dutch (DS); *nahezu indiskutabel schlechter Schrott aus Nippon* 'almost unacceptably bad scrap from Nippon' in German (CE); *needs improved safety system at night* in English (EV); *Nissan i skrotigt skick anses ny* 'Nissan in scrappy condition considered new' in Swedish (BO).

Apart from constituting exclusively negative reinterpretations with primary and secondary depreciation, the blended poreionym-based backronyms under study feature a rare instance of what we propose to call a **recursive backronym**, i.e. a backronym that refers to itself in the expression for which it stands: *Nissan i skrotigt skick anses ny* 'Nissan in scrappy condition considered new'.

4.1.2.5 Clipped poreionym-based backronyms

Poreionymic clipping is the formation of a car brand name by reducing the original word to one of its parts. In both identified examples, it is the final part that becomes deleted:

- a) *Audi* (from *Audiwerke*), reinterpreted as *accelerates under demonic influence* in English (EV); *alltid under ditt inflytande* 'always under your influence' in Swedish (ME); *als u duwen interesseert* 'if you are interested in pushing' in Dutch (DS); *außergewöhnliche und dumme Innenausstattung* 'exceptional and stupid interior' in German (CE);
- b) *Yugo* (from *Yugoslavia*), reinterpreted as *Yugoslavian ugly goat oil* in English (EV).

The idiosyncrasy of the clipped poreionym-based backronyms under investigation is that, unlike all the other genetic groups of backronyms, they feature a unique example of a zoonym (*goat*) that is used alongside an ethnonym (*Yugoslavian*) and an attribute (*ugly*) to reinforce secondary depreciation.

4.1.2.6 Borrowed poreionym-based backronyms

Poreionymic borrowing has contributed to the formation of as many as two car brand names. In both instances, the source language is Latin, whilst the target languages are Japanese and Swedish respectively:

- a) *Acura* (from the Latin *acūtus* 'sharp(ened)'), reinterpreted as *Asia's curse upon rural America* in English (PS);
- b) *Volvo* (from the Latin *volvo* 'I roll'), reinterpreted as *vaxning och lagning varje onsdag* 'waxing and repairing every Wednesday' in Swedish (ME); *very odd-looking vehicular object* in English (EV); *volgende onderdeel ligt verder op* 'next part is further up' in Dutch (EV).

Similarly to the compound, blended, and clipped poreionym-based backronyms above, the collected borrowed poreionym-based backronyms constitute exclusively negative reinterpretations revealing primary and secondary depreciation.

4.2 Graphic classification

Assuming the graphic approach, it is proposed to divide backronyms into **graphically lucid** and **graphically obscure**.

A **graphically lucid backronym** is characterized by a thorough conformity of the capitals in the (pseudo-)acronym to the initials in the expansion phrase. This group comprises the overwhelming majority of PBs, e.g., the English *hope you understand nothing's drivable and inexpensive* for *Hyundai* (EV); the German *Motor ist total schwach und Bremsfallschirm ist sicherheitshalber hinten installiert* 'the engine is totally weak and the brake parachute is preventively installed behind' for *Mitsubishi* (CE). In each of the examples above, every letter of the poreionym coincides with the respective initial in the expansion phrase, i.e. *Hyundai* → *h- y- u- n- d- a- i-*, and *Mitsubishi* → *m- i- t- s- u- b- i- s- h- i-*.

A **graphically obscure backronym** is characterized by a partial conformity of the capitals in the (pseudo-)acronym to the initials in the expansion phrase. Graphic obscurity is normally due to the incompatibility of national alphabets, i.e. the presence of a particular letter in one graphic system and its absence in another. A brief contrastive study of the nine Germanic alphabets in question reveals their relative intercompatibility. With the basic 26-letter Latin alphabet taken as the tertium comparationis, i.e. the common comparative denominator, the allomorphic features include:

- a) letter addition: *Æ, Ø, Å* (Danish); *IJ* (Dutch); *Á, Ð, É, Í, Ó, Ú, Ý, Þ, Æ, Ö* (Icelandic); *Ä, Ë, Ê* (Letzeburgesch); *Æ, Ø, Å* (Norwegian); *Å, Ä, Ö* (Swedish);
- b) letter subtraction: *C, Q, W, Z* (Icelandic).

It is noteworthy that the letters with diacritics ignored when alphabetizing (for instance, *á, é, è, ê, ë, í, î, ï, ó, ô, ú, û*, and *ý* in Afrikaans) are not included in the list.

Concerning the letter addition, it does not generally complicate backronymization, since the overwhelming majority of manufacturers worldwide produce their cars for the international automobile market, which per se requires anglicizing the spelling of their brand names. The exceptions are rare: *Asüna* (Canada), *Citroën* (France), *ēfīni* (Japan), *Gobron-Brillié* (France), *Jösse Car* (Sweden), *Özaltin* (Turkey), *Rengsjöbilen* (Sweden), *Škoda* (Czech Republic), *Tofaş* (Turkey). However, when reinterpreted, the diacritic signs in these poreionyms are simply ignored: thus, *Citroën* becomes *crap interior, terrible road-holding, owned entirely by nutters* in English (*ë → e[ntirely]*) (JA); *Škoda* is expanded to *sicher kein ordentliches deutsches Auto* 'certainly not a decent German car' in German (*š → s[icher]*) (CE) and to *sakta kör ofta druckna absolutister* 'often drunk teetotallers drive slowly' in Swedish (*š → s[akta]*) (ME).

As for the letter subtraction, the absence of a particular letter in the graphic system of a certain language means that it has to be transliterated. Transliteration is commonplace when the two languages use different graphic systems (e.g., English and Chinese, German and Russian, Swedish and Japanese, Danish and Georgian, Norwegian and Armenian, etc.). However, this phenomenon is far less regular when applied to languages utilizing the same alphabet, although not necessarily without certain idiosyncrasies of their own. Such is the case of Icelandic, which does not have the letters *C*, *Q*, *W*, and *Z*. Thus, *BMW* becomes *BMV*, expanded to *bílar meira en venjulega* 'cars more than usual' (*w → v[enjulega]*) (BM). Similarly, the grapheme *W* is missing from Lithuanian, which is not a Germanic language but equally uses the Latin alphabet, so *BMW* is reinterpreted as *baleika mėšlui vežti* 'tub to carry manure' (*w → v[ežti]*) (AN).

4.3 Structural classification

Adopting the structural approach, it is proposed to delimit ***complete substitution backronyms*** and ***partial substitution backronyms***.

A *complete substitution backronym* is an alternative expansion assigned to an acronym, with the original referent being left unchanged but evaluatively reinterpreted by means of replacing all the lexical (or, occasionally, morphemic) elements within the expansion. This form of backronymy applies to the overwhelming majority of the poreionyms under study.

Relying heavily on optionality, complete substitution not only extends the list of possible word combinations in the source language of the original poreionym, but equally manifests itself on a cross-linguistic level, allowing for backronym formation in diverse, often unrelated languages. The former, intralingual case may be well illustrated by Swedish, which reinterprets the name of its globally-known car manufacturer *VOLVO* in quite a number of ways: *varför orsaka lokala vägolyckor?* 'why cause local road accidents?'; *varning, olämplig leksak, välter ofta* 'warning, unsuitable toy, often overturns'; *var omtänksam lämna vägen omgående* 'be so kind as to leave the road immediately'; *välter ovanligt lätt vid omkörning* 'overturns unusually easily on overtaking'; *vem orkar laga vraket ordentligt?* 'who can repair the wreck properly?'; *vi oljar lagren varje onsdag* 'we oil the bearings every Wednesday'; *vi orsakar landets värsta olyckor* 'we cause the country's worst accidents'; *vraket ombedes lämna vägen omedelbart* 'the wreck is requested to leave the road immediately' (ME) to name but a few. The latter, translingual instance is best observed when a particular car brand is so universally popular that it becomes ingrained in diverse nations' humour, no matter how geographically, culturally, or mentally distant they are. Probably, the most prototypical example would be the German car manufacturer BMW. Yet, its supremacy over the overwhelming majority of its domestic and foreign counterparts does not purely boil down to sales figures or publicity, but manifests itself linguistically too. The three-letter acronym is short and memorable, which makes it a perfect object for backronymy not only in languages employing the Roman alphabet, but equally in those utilizing the Cyrillic one: compare the Polish *bardzo majętny wieśniak* 'a very wealthy villager' / *bardzo mądry wybór* 'a very wise choice' / *będziesz miał wydatki* 'it'll

cost you a lot' / *będziesz miał wypadek* 'you'll have an accident' / *bolid młodzieży wiejskiej* 'the rural youth's race car' / *bryka młodego więźnia* 'a young prisoner's cart' / *bryka musi warczeć* 'the cart must growl' (NO), on the one hand, and the Russian *бандитская машина воров* 'thieves' gangster car' / *безмерные возможности* 'immeasurable opportunities' / *боевая машина вояков* 'Udmurts' battle car' / *большое мужское вождение* 'big male driving' / *быстрая машина вселенной* 'the fast car of the universe' (Зеленин 2005: 88), on the other.

A ***partial substitution backronym*** is an alternative expansion assigned to an acronym, with the original referent being left unchanged but evaluatively reinterpreted by means of replacing one or several of the lexical (or, occasionally, morphemic) elements within the expansion. This form of backronymy proves rare, its scope being seemingly confined to the source language of the poreionymic acronym, for instance, *bayerischer Müllwagen* 'Bavarian refuse lorry' or *Berliner Motorrad-Werke* 'Berlin motorcycle plant' for *BMW* (*Bayerische Motoren Werke*) in German (CE). Even less frequent (and undetected in Germanic languages as of now) are partial substitution backronyms possessing only one lexical replacement. Such is the case of the Russian backronym *Вьетнамский автозавод* 'Vietnamese Automobile Plant' for *ВАЗ* (PI), originally expanded to *Волжский автомобильный завод* 'Volga Automobile Plant'.

4.4 Semantic classification

Drawing upon the semantic (namely, axiological) approach, distinction is made between ***evaluatively positive backronyms***, ***evaluatively negative backronyms***, and ***evaluatively ambivalent backronyms***.

An ***evaluatively positive backronym*** is an expansion assigned to a pseudo-acronym or an alternative expansion assigned to an acronym, with the original referent being left unchanged but evaluatively reinterpreted so as to foreground the advantages of using a particular car brand. In Germanic languages, evaluatively positive PBs occur rarely.

First and foremost, driving a car of a certain make may be seen as a status marker, which is the case of the German *bringt mir Weiber* 'brings me chicks' (CE) or the English *brings me women* for *BMW* (CI), with the car seen as a "chick magnet". Along with the status goes the need for self-empowerment, therefore the car comes to be treated as a means of asserting one's superiority over others, which is perfectly obvious in the German *mein Auto zerstört dein Auto* 'my car is destroying your car' for *Mazda* (WA). The positive reinforcement may equally stem from the prestige associated with using a specific car brand, for instance the Icelandic *bílar meira en venjulega* 'cars more than usual' for *BMW* (BM) emphasizing the established international reputation of the German car manufacturer.

An ***evaluatively negative backronym*** is an expansion assigned to a pseudo-acronym or an alternative expansion assigned to an acronym, with the original referent being left unchanged but evaluatively reinterpreted so as to foreground the disadvantages of using a particular car brand. It is by far the most common type of backronym in Germanic languages. The car's highlighted negative characteristics include:

- a) dilapidated appearance, for instance the English *horrible old lump of decrepit engineering nonsense* for *Holden* (JA); the German *Bollerwagen mit Wackelkontakt* 'handcart with a loose connection' for *BMW* (CE); the Icelandic *fatlað og ryðgað drasl* 'crippled and rusty junk' for *Ford* (MB);
- b) poor design, for instance the English *Can American designers invent lovely lines? Apparently, can't* for *Cadillac* (JA);
- c) low quality control, for instance the English *all loosely fitted accessories remain on motorway enraging others* for *Alfa-Romeo* (JA); the German *bayerischer Mistwagen* 'Bavarian crap car' for *BMW* (CE); the Norwegian *laget av diverse avfall* 'made from miscellaneous rubbish' for *Lada* (VG);
- d) malfunctions, for instance the Danish *fejl i alle tandhjul* 'faults in all gears' for *FIAT* (TW); the English *just another gearbox under annual repair* for *Jaguar* (JA); the German *besser man wandert* 'it's better to go on foot' for *BMW* (CE);

- e) poor technical condition, for instance the Afrikaans *blik met wielen* 'tin-can with wheels' for *BMW* (CA); the Danish *skubbes konstant over danske arealer* 'push constantly over the lands of Denmark' for *Škoda* (HE); the Dutch *roest en narigheid achtervolgen u lange tijd* 'rust and misery will haunt you for a long time' for *Renault* (DS); the English *cracked heads, every valve rattles, oil leaks every time* for *Chevrolet* (CR); the German *Busen müssen wackeln* 'bosom must wobble' for *BMW* (CE); the Norwegian *fikset i alkoholisert tilstand* 'fixed in a drunken state' for *FIAT* (VG); the Swedish *vid olycka lämna vraket omedelbart* 'in case of an accident, leave immediately' for *Volvo* (ME);
- f) declining popularity, for instance the English *had one, never did again* for *Honda* (JA); the German *besser Mercedes wählen* 'it's better to choose Mercedes' (CE); the Letzeburgesch *Bomi mam Weenchen* 'Granny with a trolley' for *BMW* (HO); the Norwegian *kan ikke anbefales* 'cannot be recommended' for *Kia* (VG);
- g) lack of prestige, for instance the Danish *vel organiseret lort verden over* 'well-arranged shit world over' for *Volvo* (HE); the English *aging, unfulfilled dentists' investment* for *Audi* (JA); the German *fährt in Autoklasse Trabant* 'belongs in the "Trabant" vehicle class' for *FIAT* (CE); the Icelandic *félag ofstækis ruslasafnara og drusludýrkenda* 'enthusiastic junk collectors' and jalopy worshippers' club' for *Ford* (MB); the Swedish *sådan kan ofta döda atmosfären* 'such can often kill the atmosphere' for *Škoda* (ME);
- h) inadequate price, for instance the English *big money waste* for *BMW* (PS).

An ***evaluatively ambivalent backronym*** is an expansion assigned to a pseudo-acronym or an alternative expansion assigned to an acronym, with the original referent being left unchanged but evaluatively reinterpreted so as to foreground either its positive or its negative characteristics depending on the pragmatics of the context of use. Such is the case of the German *bin maßlos wichtig* 'I'm extremely important' and *bin mordswichtig* 'I'm so damn important' for *BMW* (CE), which, if used by the driver / passenger of the car, may translate either the positive idea of self-affirmation, or the

negative idea of ostentatiousness and, therefore, lack of dignity and inferiority complex manifestation. If the backronyms are uttered by persons other than the driver / passenger of the car, they will very likely have a negative semantic charge, deriding the car user as pretentious. Another German example, *Ferrari in außergewöhnlicher Tarnung* 'Ferrari in exceptional camouflage' for *FIAT* (CE), may similarly point either to the car's hidden features as well as its underestimation in the global automobile market on the plus side, or to its unappealing appearance or else implicitly expressed non-competitiveness on the minus side, since no comparison is relevant between a luxury car and an economy-class car. All in all, evaluatively ambivalent backronyms are rather uncommon in Germanic languages.

What may account for the absolute quantitative superiority of evaluatively negative backronyms over the other two groups stems from the very aim of backronymy, which consists, as Zelenin puts it, in simplifying the usual and even prestigious yet cumbersome acronyms so that they fit the speakers' axiological scale, often involving unsophisticated streetwise humour (Зеленин 2005: 88).

If an attempt is made to transgress the boundaries of linguistic axiology and immerse into pure semantics, the afore-mentioned expansions of the PBs may equally be treated as resulting from *metonymization* and *metaphorization*. For instance, in the English *big money wasted* for *BMW*, the connection between the CAR as a means of transportation and its PRICE, or, in a more abstract manner, between the OBJECT and ITS QUALITIES, can be treated as a metonymical one.

The other two examples, the German *bin maßlos wichtig* 'I'm extremely important' and *bin mordswichtig* 'I'm so damn important' for *BMW*, present a more complicated combination of semantic shifts. On the one hand, the CAR may be seen as *personified* (Lakoff & Johnson 2008: 44) and described with the characteristics of a human being (*maßlos wichtig*), the metaphorical reinterpretation being based upon the analogies

between the animate and inanimate world (conceptual metaphor A CAR IS A PERSON). On the other hand, the stereotype of feeling pride and self-importance associated with owning an expensive car evidences that the car is the reflection of its owner's status and may equally represent his or her character qualities. This case highlights the metonymical connection between the OWNER and the CAR AS A STATUS MARKER.

One more aspect of the semantic reinterpretation in the examples above is connected with the correlation between the formal structure of the backronyms and their semantics. In the case of the German *bin maßlos wichtig* 'I'm extremely important', the semantics of the backronym is condensed in the syntactically elliptic phrase with the nominal predicate expressed by the first-person singular present form of the auxiliary verb *sein* and the adjective *wichtig* modified by the adverb *maßlos*. In the second expansion, *bin mordswichtig* 'I'm so damn important', the meaning is enclosed in an almost identical syntactically elliptic phrase consisting of the nominal predicate expressed by the first-person singular present form of the auxiliary verb *sein* and the adjective *wichtig*. However, the modifying function of the adverb *maßlos* is delegated to the prefixoid *mords-*. Originally a free morpheme meaning 'murder', *mords-* undergoes desemantization and begins to function as a semi-free morpheme with a connotative evaluative meaning of a higher degree of the quality expressed by the main word *wichtig*. Prefixoids differ from prefixes in that they not only constitute root morphemes, but equally preserve their generalized meaning (Степанова & Фляйшер 1984: 150-153; Kürschner 2008: 67-68). Such examples are not uncommon in German, for instance *Affenhitze* (*monkey+heat*) 'scorching heat' or *hundekalt* (*dog+cold*) 'freezing cold'.

Another important feature of backronyms is code-switching, which allows the speaker to swiftly change the register of his or her speech – from the formal / neutral to the informal. Constituting per se a form of language game, backronymy also serves as a powerful tool of changing the sociolinguistic status of a speaker. The more ironic,

familiar, or even vulgar such reinterpretation sounds, the more self-contented the speaker feels, breaking free of the stereotypes of the "omnipresent" and ever-intruding brand publicity world where money and valuables fetishize the power and status of their owners. As a result, the conceptual metaphor MONEY IS POWER, deeply rooted in our consciousness, becomes wittingly neglected by the speaker. From a psycholinguistic perspective, use of backronymy and similar language games serves as a speaker's tool to relieve the burden of the ubiquitous materialism-based measurability of oneself as well as of the surrounding world in order to overcome the socially imposed stigma suppressing human will and encroaching upon freedom of choice.

In a similar vein, PBs frequently highlight lack of prestige, for instance the aforementioned Swedish *sådan kan ofta döda atmosfären* 'such can often kill the atmosphere' for *Škoda* and the German *fährt in Autoklasse Trabant* 'belongs in the "Trabant" vehicle class' for *FIAT*. The adequate technical characteristics of a car are nowadays seen as a must-have; any car lacking these is considered to be a "misfit", whereas its manufacturer, often spending exorbitant sums of money on luxury television commercials, becomes stigmatized as a liar. Therefore, the conceptual metaphor actuated is PROMISES ARE A FRAUD. The German example with *Trabant* is even more telling, since it conveys additional extralinguistic information. *Trabant* is a well-known car brand, commercially produced in the German Democratic Republic (GDR). The car had to satisfy the needs of the working class but still remained a symbol of an inexpensive yet technically unadvanced means of transportation, perfectly suiting the ideological slogans but poorly meeting average car quality standards. The implicit meaning of this backronym encloses the conceptual metaphor BIG POLITICAL SLOGANS ARE A BIG FRAUD, where the car brand *Trabant* becomes one of the elements of the Soviet communist ideology massively imposed on East Germans. Accordingly, the semantic range of these backronyms proves to be multilayered, immersing the recipient in the speaker's historical and cultural background. All the above proves that,

besides the intrinsic function of ludicity, backronymy equally serves as a powerful tool of semantic productivity.

The Danish *vel organiseret lort verden over* 'well-arranged shit world over' for *Volvo* also designates a car of poor quality. It is obvious that the negative connotation of this backronym is revealed by the utilization of a taboo word. Since the component *lort*, whether used as a simplex or as a part of a compound, is deemed totally unacceptable in standard language, the pejorative meaning of the whole backronym is made blatantly explicit. Generally speaking, negative emotions contribute greatly to the replenishment of colloquial lexicon (Materynska 2012: 161), since the expressiveness of derogatory or even downright obscene lexical units is driven by the speaker's urge to spontaneously respond to a situation in the most emphatic manner. Insufficient emotive charge of existing vocabulary proves an important factor in the formation of lexical and phraseological neologisms. As can be deduced from the evidence collected, all backronyms are nonce-formations. As such, these ad hoc units are structurally volatile and semantically variable, allowing for virtually random constituent substitution (for instance, component optionality in the German *Feuer / Fehler in allen Teilen* 'fire / faults in every part' for *FIAT*) and multiple interpretations (for instance, semantic versatility of evaluatively ambivalent backronyms) respectively.

5. Conclusions

The present findings confirm that the ambit of a PB has a binary nature, embracing an expansion assigned to a pseudo-acronym or an alternative expansion assigned to an acronym, with the original referent represented by a car brand being left unchanged but evaluatively reinterpreted. The key functions emanating from the definition of poreionymic backronymy include the semantically relevant ludicity, periphrasticity, and dysphemisticity as well as the structurally relevant redundancy.

The formation of poreionymic backronyms complies with one of the two transformational patterns, "original expansion phrase → acronym → resulting expansion phrase" or "non-acronym → pseudo-acronym → resulting expansion phrase", depending on whether the resulting unit expands an acronym or a pseudo-acronym. The closest periphrastic counterparts of backronymy are acrosticky and apronymy, which, nevertheless, are based on ontologically distinct patterns: "original expansion phrase → [implicit intermediary acronym] → resulting expansion phrase (→ explicit intermediary acronym)" and "original expansion phrase → ^{acronym/}resulting expansion phrase" respectively. In the meantime, there is ample evidence to claim that disabbreviation and recursive acronymy are nothing short of specific instances of backronymy.

The taxonomy of PBs proposed in the present article is premised on four approaches: genetic, graphic, structural, and semantic (axiological).

Genetically, PBs fall into two types: acronym-based, i.e. formed from shortenings constructed from the word-initial letters of a phrase and pronounced as a letter sequence or as an ordinary word, and non-acronym-based, i.e. stemming primarily from metonymic and metaphoric eponyms, and, to a lesser extent, from compounds, blend words, clippings, and borrowings. Graphically, PBs form two groups: graphically lucid and graphically obscure, depending on whether the conformity of the capitals in the (pseudo-)acronym to the initials in the expansion phrase is thorough or partial respectively. Structurally, distinction is made between complete substitution PBs and partial substitution PBs, with regard to the number of the lexical (or, occasionally, morphemic) elements replaced. Semantically, PBs are divided into evaluatively positive, negative, and ambivalent in compliance with the placement of the foregrounded characteristics on the collective axiological scale.

The results obtained yield conclusions about the cognitive semantic and sociolinguistic status of PBs as a powerful means of lexicon development.

Cognitively speaking, PBs result from the speaker's urge for lexical creativity and innovativeness. Following the fundamental principle of language economy, they reveal their unlimited capacity of storing information in a compressed yet multilayered explicit or implicit form. Semantic variability of PBs, based on the processes of metaphorization and metonymization, as well as their ad hoc character, make them an unfailing source of neologization, which is highly characteristic of present-day network communication and, thus, reflects the globalization and internationalization trends in today's society. Although the nonce word status of many of the units under investigation does not allow for approaching them as institutionalized or standardized, backronymy successfully exploits all the conventional matrices of lexicon replenishment as well as introduces new ones (e.g., novel conceptual metaphors), reflecting the speaker's demand for verbal ludicity.

The sociolinguistic status of PBs is connected with code switching from neutral to informal spoken language, which, in its turn, implies that the distinctions between functional language registers can be eliminated in accordance with the speaker's pragmatic intentions. Being both a linguistic and an extralinguistic source of information, backronyms equally serve as repositories of national cultural and historical legacies. Moreover, the Roman alphabet-based graphic representation of PBs expands the boundaries of the application of the universal semiotic code, contributing to its unification in a wide range of languages from diverse families. As a result, PBs may be rightfully treated as a potentially efficient tool of brand marketing and anti-marketing worldwide.

To sum up, the present paper is an attempt to enhance our understanding of backronymy as an important tool of language ludicity from a general linguistics

perspective. Future contrastive studies of the phenomenon should identify its isomorphic and allomorphic features across diverse languages and language groups. In addition, a pragmalinguistic context-based approach aimed at investigating the functional aspect of backronyms might prove an important area for further research.

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AN – <http://www.anyksta.lt/anyksta.hostingas.lt/naujienos/naujienos/63044-automobili-registrav-s-vyras-sulauke-itarim#!kmt-start=10>

BA – [https://banga.tv3.lt/lt/2forum.showPosts/832664.41.88-=\(16542980](https://banga.tv3.lt/lt/2forum.showPosts/832664.41.88-=(16542980)

BM – <https://www.bmwkraftur.is/spjall/viewtopic.php?f=1&t=31760&start=0>

BO – <https://boxerville.se/forum/viewtopic.php?id=9018>

CA – <https://www.carthrottle.com/post/12-car-acronyms-given-alternative-meanings/?comments>

CE – https://www.cellerscene.de/kk_abk.htm

CI – <http://www.city-data.com/forum/automotive/817298-auto-make-acronyms.html>

CO – <http://www.careofcars.com/145/funny-car-acronym-for-each-brand/>

CR – <https://crfsonly.com/forum/viewtopic.php?t=16857>

DI – <https://digilander.libero.it/OcchiVerdiSito/Barzelle/Frammenti.html>

DS – <https://www.dse.nl/~gjlammers/Humorbox/Automerkwaaardigheden.html>

EV – <http://evangeline-1234.tripod.com/smf/id33.html>

GA – <https://www.garaget.org/forum/viewtopic.php?id=30492>

GY – https://www.gyakorikerdesek.hu/felnott-parkapcsolatok__tarskeresesi-problemak__7218828-ferfikent-muszaj-elfogadnom-hogy-csak-nalam-rosszabb-kategoriaju-parom-lehetne__oldal-1

HE – https://www.hestegalleri.dk/forum/off-topic/1321836-sjove_forkortelser__

HO – <https://howlingpixel.com/i-lb/Backronym>

JA – <https://jalopnik.com/the-definitive-guide-to-derogatory-auto-acronyms-5879789>

MB – <https://mbclub.is/spjallid/3/3968>

ME – <http://www.mestmotor.se/bilsnack/forum/showthread.php?5132-Kul-om-bil-namn&s=fbd123866e2697ca7ad3f39f3edee865>

NO – <https://nonsa.pl/wiki/S%C5%82ownik:BMW>

PE – <https://www.pieldetoro.net/foro/index.php?threads/que-significan-las-siglas-de-las-marcas-de-coches.52135/>

PI – https://pikabu.ru/story/rasshifrovki_abbreviatur_mashin_2284410

PS – <https://www.pistonheads.com/gassing/topic.asp?h=0&f=226&t=244593&i=20>

QU – <https://www.quizz.biz/quizz-187125.html>

RC – <http://rc10.fi/index.php?topic=5353.90>

RI – http://www.rijmgein.nl/taalhumor/grappige_afkorting.html

SU – <https://www.super.kg/kabar/news/200169/>

TU – <http://www.tuning.bg/forums/index.php?/topic/60265-%D1%81%D0%B5%D0%BA%D1%82%D0%B0%D0%BD%D1%82%D1%81%D0%BA%D0%B8-%D0%B1%D1%8A%D0%B7%D0%B8%D1%86%D0%B8-%D0%B7%D0%B0-%D0%BC%D0%B0%D1%80%D0%BA%D0%B8%D1%82%D0%B5/>


TW – <http://www.tweak.dk/forum/board5-off-topic/67077-auto-betegnelser/>

VG – <https://vgd.no/forbruker/bil/tema/846956/tittel/bilmerkenes-forkortelser/innlegg/11141387/>


WA – <https://www.wattpad.com/133888788-witze-spr%C3%BCche-verarschte-lolige-abk%C3%BCrzungen>

ZK – <http://zkan.com.ua/sho/jaki-smishni-rozshifrovki-abbreviatur-vi-znaete.html>

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Résumé

The present paper examines the nature, formation patterns, types, and correlations of poreionymic backronyms (PBs) on both theoretical and empirical planes. A PB is treated as an expansion assigned to a pseudo-acronym or an alternative expansion assigned to an acronym, with the original referent represented by a car brand being left unchanged but evaluatively reinterpreted. Since backronyms are likely to be confused with other linguistic phenomena, namely acrostics, apronyms, disabbreviations, and recursive acronyms, the differences between these notions are clarified in the article. It is established that backronymy complies with two transformational patterns, "original

expansion phrase → acronym → resulting expansion phrase" or "non-acronym → pseudo-acronym → resulting expansion phrase", depending on whether the resulting unit expands an acronym or a pseudo-acronym. The closest periphrastic counterparts of backronymy are acrosticky and apronymy, which, nevertheless, are based on ontologically distinct patterns: "original expansion phrase → [implicit intermediary acronym] → resulting expansion phrase (→ explicit intermediary acronym)" and "original expansion phrase → ^{acronym}/_{resulting expansion phrase}" respectively. In the meantime, disabbreviation and recursive acronymy prove to be specific instances of backronymy. The database of the research presents a selection of 317 items from car users' and amateur linguists' Internet forums and humour compilations. The proposed taxonomy of PBs allows concluding that: genetically, PBs fall into acronym- and non-acronym-based; graphically, they consist of graphically lucid and obscure PBs; structurally, distinction is made between complete and partial substitution PBs; semantically, PBs are divided into evaluatively positive, negative, and ambivalent. Semantic variability of PBs, based on the processes of metaphorization and metonymization, as well as their ad hoc character makes them a rich source of lexicon expansion.

Key words: backronym, poreionym (car brand name), acronym, non-acronym, acrostic, apronym, disabbreviation, recursive acronym, language game.

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**FROM EXTRA-GRAMMATICAL TO EXPRESSIVE MORPHOLOGY:
PRAGMATIC EFFECT OF METAPHORICAL, METONYMIC, AND
METAPHTONYMIC BLENDS***Ewa Konieczna**University of Rzeszów, Rzeszów, Poland*

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Abstract: This paper presents the analysis of blends based on metaphorical and metonymic conceptualisations. Metaphor and metonymy reduce the semantic transparency of blends and necessitate a greater processing effort for their interpretation. Since, according to the principle of Optimal Relevance, extra processing effort is offset by extra effects, it is proposed here that the interpretation of metaphorical, metonymic, and metaphonymic blends entails a pragmatic effect.

Key words: expressive blends, metaphor, metonymy, pragmatic effect, transparency.

1. Introduction

Even though blending is by no means a new process because it dates back to the 16th century as attested by *blatterature* < *blatter* + *literature*, coming from 1512 (Cacchiani 2007: 103), and *foolosopher* < *fool* + *philosopher*, dating from 1592 (Adams 2001: 141), it became popular only much later with the publication of "Through the looking glass" (1871) by Lewis Carroll, well-known for its extensive use of blends, such as *slithy* and *mimsy*. In modern English, blending is a very productive word-formation process, taking place almost on a daily basis, as remarked by Lehrer (1996).

In spite of the considerable amount of literature on lexical blending in English, linguists still do not agree on a precise definition of this term. The existing approaches to the

definition vary from the adoption of a broader view on the nature of blending, according to which clipping of only one source word is sufficient to qualify as a member of the category (see, e.g., Brdar-Szabo & Brdar 2008 or Lehrer 2007) to the perspectives which put restrictions on various types of complex words (i.e. created from at least two word fragments) if they are to be included within the category of blends. Thus, for instance, according to Bat-El (2006) and Bauer (2012), a complex word can be referred to as a blend only when it is composed of inner edges, i.e. the beginning of source word 1 (which comes first in terms of the linear structure) and the end of source word 2 (which comes second). Ralli and Xydopoulos (2012) maintain that a complex word may be considered a blend as long as no source word remains intact; consequently, words such as *slanguage* must be excluded from the category. In the opinion of Arcodia and Montermini (2012), a word can qualify as a blend if there is overlapping of parts of source words, as in *froogle* < *frugal* + *google*. For Plag (2003) and Dressler (2000), only those lexemes that have coordinate semantics can be considered blends. Thus, in their view, *infotainment* < *information* + *entertainment* is a blend, while *motel* < *motor* + *hotel* is not.

Renner (2015) suggests that in the light of a large number of conflicting views on the nature of lexical blends, a prototype approach to their categorisation could be undertaken. Thus, a central member of the category displays clipping of source words at their inner edges, segment overlapping, and coordinate semantics. This perspective seems to echo the one taken by Lopez-Rua (2004), who additionally notes that a high degree of phonic integration of prototypical blends is iconically mirrored by the semantic fusion, as exemplified by *motel* or *smog*. In this paper an inclusive definition of blends is adopted, which means that a lexeme is considered to be a blend if at least one of its source words has been clipped irrespective of presence or absence of other features.

The present paper focuses on the occurrence of metaphor, metonymy, and metaphonymy in lexical blends because, to the best of my knowledge, there has been

scarcely any discussion in the literature on the use of these three conceptual mechanisms in the process of lexical blending. One of the few accounts dealing with this issue is Kemmer's study (2003) into semantics of *glitter* used in the lexical blend *glitterati* < *glitter* + *literati*. Kemmer argues that *glitter* metonymically evokes the world of high society while metaphorically it suggests a polished appearance and elegance.

Given a high degree of irregularity, many researchers assign the process of lexical blending to the category of extra-grammatical morphology. Since the extra-grammatical character of blends and their reduced transparency are closely intertwined, these two phenomena constitute the subject matter of Section 2 and 3, respectively. The next section, i.e. Section 4 is concerned with the description of the data collection, the adopted methodology as well as the aims of the present study. Section 5 offers the analysis of the selected blends created from source words which activate a metaphor, a metonymy, or a metaphonymy. Section 6 constitutes an attempt at explaining the reasons behind employing the aforementioned conceptual mechanisms in creating blends. Section 7 focuses on the relationship between semantic transparency and morphotactic transparency of blends. Finally, Section 8 offers concluding remarks.

2. Extra-grammatical character of blends

Despite the existence of several recurrent blending patterns, blends are typically denied the grammatical status on the grounds of their unpredictability and irregularity. Kemmer (2003: 71) admits that blending patterns are "[...] so varied that no neat taxonomy can do justice to the full range of the phenomenon". According to Ronneberger-Sibold (2006: 159), blends are excluded from morphological grammar on the grounds of their lack of transparency and "the impossibility of predicting the exact output of the blend, given its input".

The irregularities in blends can be presented in terms of the violation of major morphological rules, as outlined by Mattiello (2013: 129-131):

1. Morphological irregularity and output unpredictability. Blends are not only transparently unanalysable into morphemes since they are made up of "phonological strings that trigger meaning" (Kemmer 2003: 77), but also, they can be segmented in the way that violates morpheme boundaries, as in *info + tainment* < *inform-ation + entertain-ment*. Consequently, in contrast to compounds, composed of two or more concatenated and wholly identifiable morphemes, blend constituents are frequently very poorly recognisable due to their abbreviatory character. Moreover, the output of blends is difficult to predict as it allows several options, such as the combination of a full word with a splinter (i.e. a fragment of a source word), as in *chat-(sat)ire*, the occurrence of an overlapping segment (*-at-* in the previous example) and intercalation of a splinter, or a shorter word into a longer matrix word, e.g., *de(part)ure + start* > *destarture*.

2. Alternative outputs. The same source words are capable of producing more than one blended structure, depending on the order of elements, e.g., *moon + earth* > *moorth* vs. *earth + moon* > *earthoon*) or selection of the final segment (e.g., *zebra + donkey* > *zedonk* vs. *zonkey*, *Amerind* vs. *Amerindian*).

3. Non-morphematic analysis. In contrast to derivatives and compounds, which are morphosemantically transparent, *total*¹ and *intercalative* blends are made up of opaque fragments that frequently do not correspond to word syllables, as in *br(eakfast) + (l)unch* > *brunch*. Consequently, they cannot be divided into morphemes unless the source words of overlapping blends (e.g., *slanguage* < *slang + language*) and substitution blends (e.g., *bullionaire* < *bullion + billionaire*) are analysed as not being properly truncated.

4. Uncertain headedness. Unlike in prototypical derivatives and compounds, in which the head can be singled out almost automatically, much in accordance with Williams' (1981) Righthand Rule, in blends the head may be either the right-hand (as in *dancercise* < *dance + exercise*) or the left-hand constituent (as in *dishmobile* < *dishwasher + mobile*) due to the variable order of blend components. In some blends, where relationship between the elements is like that of exocentric compounds, the head

is outside the blend, as in *helilift* 'a group transported by helicopter', while coordinate blends have two heads (as in *dramedy* < *drama* + *comedy*).

5. Irregular subtraction. While regular morphological processes, such as backformation, delete small parts of their bases, blending makes use of words, substantial parts of which have been already removed. Besides, the subtraction of word parts is highly irregular because the following parts may be left out: the middle part, as in *fan* + (*maga*)*zine* > *fanzine*, two codas, (e.g., *mo*(*dulator*) + *dem*(*odulator*) > *modem*), the beginning of the word (e.g., (*we*)*b* + *log* > *blog*), or, very rarely, two beginnings (e.g., (*inter*)*net* + (*cit*)*izen* > *netizen*).

6. Discontinuity of bases. Intercalative blends allow discontinuous bases, which is not possible in regular word formation process, as exemplified by *chortle* > *chuckle* + *snort*.

7. Alternative input categories. While regular morphological processes operate on specific categories of bases, "blends allow any possible combination of lexical categories, including some that do not appear in compounds" (Bat-El 2006: 67). For example, the combinations of the following categories are allowed: adverbs (*so* + *ugly* > *sugly*), proper names (*Federico Fellini* + *fool* > *Federico Foolini*, *James Bond* + *industry* > *James Bondustry*, *Obama* + *economics* > *Obamanomics*), or titles (*Mrs* + *missile* > *Mrssile*).

3. Reduced transparency of blends

As stated above, one of the features of extra-grammatical formations is their non-morphemic composition, irregular subtraction and discontinuity of bases, all of which reduce their analysability. According to Langacker (1987: 448), "analysability pertains to the ability of speakers to recognise the contribution that each component structure makes to the composite whole". Thus, when confronted with blends, the language user finds it more difficult to recognise the contribution of their components, i.e. source words, from which they are made, than when faced with outputs of regular morphological processes, such as compounding or affixation.

Analysability of blends can be accounted for within the approach put forward by Dressler (2005), in which it is possible to measure the analysability of a linguistic expression by two sets of parameters. The first set, i.e. the signans parameters pertain to the phonological pole², which means that they involve the whole array of conditions imposed on the form, such as the degree of shortening, spelling, or phonotactic constraints. The second type is represented by signatum parameters that are applied at the semantic pole of an expression and they involve, inter alia, the relatedness of senses through metaphor and metonymy and the degree of compositionality (cf. Kardela 2016).

Because signans parameters specify the conditions on the form of a complex symbolic assembly³, they include the parameter of morphotactic transparency. As observed by Galeas (2001: 397), "[...] the parameter of morphotactic transparency distinguishes the various degrees of recognisability of the morphological base within the related complex signans".

When seen in this light, the analysability of many blends measured by means of signans parameters can be quite low on account of the fact that blends are composed of non-morphemic splinters, which are frequently difficult to recognise due to their shortness. For example, in the blend *flog* < *fake* + *blog* the splinter *f* coming from *fake* consists of a single letter. A reduced transparency of blends "[...] ranges from slight obscuration to complete opacity, depending on the technique applied" (Ronneberger-Sibold 2006: 161). Naturally, the least transparent are total blends, according to the taxonomy proposed by Mattiello (2013), which are identified by the reduction of both source words to splinters, as exemplified by *dawk* < *dove* + *hawk* or *swacket* < *sweater* + *jacket*. Partial blends are more transparent due to the fact that only one word is reduced and the other is left intact, as demonstrated by *blogerrific* < *blog* + *terrific* or *Amerindian* < *American* + *Indian*. The most transparent are overlapping blends, whose constituents overlap orthographically or/and phonologically with neither of them being shortened, as exemplified by *anecdottage* < *anecdote* + *dotage*, or *palimony* < *pal* + *alimony*.

The above claims are compatible with the results of psycholinguistic experiments conducted by Lehrer and Veres (2010), the participants of which were asked to identify source words in various types of blends, including both the novel ones and those which were – at the time of the experiment – fairly well established in the language. It has turned out that overlapping blends got the highest scores: the mean percentage of correct recognition of source words in this category was 64%. In contrast, the lowest scores were obtained by blends consisting of two splinters because the mean percentage for the correct recognition of source words was 44%.

As regards the signatum parameters, it can be postulated that the semantic transparency of many blends is far greater, and it can be even compared to that of compounds. This stems from the fact that even though lexemes constituting the conceptual structure of the blend are represented by splinters, they must be evoked in the mind of the language user in the course of unravelling the meaning of a blend. Once the underlying blend components have been decoded, i.e. the symbolic poles of the symbolic assembly triggered by their phonological poles have been figured out, the phonological poles can be treated as shortened compound constituents in accordance with the Lehrer's approach, within which blends can be treated as dormant compounds (2007). As a result, the semantics of the blend can be processed analogically to that of compounds. Thus, since in the blend *flog* FAKE⁴ has been activated by *f*- and BLOG by *-log*, the two source words, i.e. *fake* and *blog* are present at the signatum level, even though they are represented only in a shortened form at the signans level. Consequently, the meaning of *flog* is a 'fake blog', from which it follows that the blend *flog* has got a subordinative structure.

According to Kardela (2016), signatum parameters pertain to relatedness of senses through category extension, metaphorisation, metonymisation, and conceptual integration. Therefore, examining blends in terms of signatum parameters should

include looking at the processes of metaphorisation and metonymisation. They are discussed in Section 5.

4. Database, methodology, and aims of the study

As blending is a productive way of coining new words in modern English, I have chosen two websites aimed at collecting nonce-formations and neologisms as the sources of data, as I have expected that they will abound in blends. These are *Wordspy* and *The Rice University Neologisms Database*. While the former source registers words that have appeared in a wide variety of mass media, quoting the instances of their usage, and normally providing their earliest citation, the latter is clearly more restricted in its range. This is so because new words have been collected mainly by Suzanne Kemmer herself as well as by her students, and, as Kemmer notes, many of the neologisms are not used outside the Rice University campus. As for *Wordspy*, the time span ranges from 2006 to 2017, while Kemmer's dictionary of neologisms encompasses a far shorter period, of one year in 2004 with some sporadic additions from then on.

Having manually searched the two aforementioned bases I have collected a sample of 997 lexemes, which I classified as blends. In other words, I have analysed all the neologisms one by one with the aim of identifying blends and including them into the sample, meanwhile rejecting all other morphological formations. As pointed out in the Introduction, I consider the clipping of at least one source word to be a sufficient criterion to classify a lexeme as a blend. Next, I have narrowed down the sample to those blends, which are motivated by a metaphor, metonymy, or metaphonymy. This involves that such blends contain (a) splinter(s) corresponding to the source word(s), which make(s) use of at least one of the aforementioned conceptual mechanisms. The search has amounted to 146 blends, which constitutes 14.6% of the original sample.

In Cognitive Linguistics, as the basic framework of the present study, metaphor and metonymy are regarded to be conceptual in nature and ubiquitous in human speech and

thought (Kövecses 2010; Langacker 1993). A conceptual metaphor is defined as cross-domain mapping, which should be understood as perceiving the target domain in terms of the source domain (Kövecses 2015). It is also systematic, which means that there are correspondences between the conceptual elements of the target domain and the source domain. Metonymy is defined as a cognitive process "[...] in which one conceptual entity, the vehicle, provides mental access to another conceptual entity, the target, within the same idealised cognitive model" (Radden & Kövecses 1999: 21). The vehicle must be salient enough to be chosen for a metonymic conceptualisation. Goosens (1990: 323) makes the following observation: "although in principle metaphor and metonymy are distinct cognitive processes, it appears to be the case that the two are not mutually exclusive". In other words, both metaphor and metonymy can participate in the process of making conceptualisations, which is what the linguist refers to as *metaphonymy*.

As regards the purpose of the present study, it is to analyse metaphorical and metonymic blends in order to answer the following research questions:

1. How does metaphor, metonymy, and metaphonymy operate on source word 1 and source word 2?
2. Given that blends are far less transparent than the outputs of other morphological processes, such as affixation or compounding, what is the purpose of reducing their transparency even further by means of metaphor, metonymy, and metaphonymy?
3. In view of the fact that the semantic transparency of metaphorical, metonymic, and metaphonymic blends is so significantly reduced, how do they manage to preserve their intelligibility?

The next section (i.e. Section 5) aims to answer the first question, i.e. it offers the analysis of metaphorical, metonymic, and metaphonymic patterns that have been attested in the corpus of blends under the study. Section 6 and 7 constitute an attempt at providing the answer to the second and third research questions, respectively.

5. Metaphorical, metonymic and metaphonymic blends

5.1 Metaphorical blends

The analysis of the corpus of blends has demonstrated that the metaphor may operate on source word 1, source word 2, or – although far less frequently – on both source words. Since virtually all blends in the sample under analysis have got a subordinative structure, source word 2 functions as a syntactic and semantic head of the composite structure while source word 1 can be regarded as a modifier.

5.1.1 Metaphorical source word 2

Blends, containing a metaphorical source word 2, are not only the most numerous in the database (82 instances), but they also substantially outnumber all kinds of other blends, being at least four times as frequent as other metaphorical or metonymic blends.

One of representatives of this category is an institutionalised blend *gaydar* < *gay* + *radar*, denoting the ability to single out a gay individual on the basis of his actions, speech, or clothes. Thus, a skill attributed to homosexual people to identify a (fellow) homosexual person by interpreting subtle signals coming from their appearance or behaviour is conceptualised as a system for detecting the presence of distant objects. The metaphorical use of source word 2 is an example of the so-called ontological metaphor, which, according to Kövecses (2010: 38), "gives a new ontological status to general categories of abstract target concepts and brings about new abstract entities. What this means is that we conceive of our experiences in terms of objects, substances and containers [...]". Thus, an intuition to identify a homosexual person is conceptualised as a concrete device that sends out radio waves and processes their reflections to determine the position and speed of a moving object.

A very imaginative blend with a metaphorical source word 2 is *flunami* < *flu* + *tsunami*, which stands for an overwhelming number of flu cases in the same area at the same time. In this blend, the epidemic of flu is conceptualised as a tsunami. Consequently, it is possible to identify systematic correspondences between the elements of the target

and source domain: a tsunami causing destruction is the flu undermining people's health, waves coming over the land correspond to viruses attacking people, while victims of the tsunami are ill people who went down with the flu. The effectiveness of this metaphor results from visualising an infectious disease as a giant wave washing over and destroying everything on its way.

Yet another blend, in which it is possible to identify numerous correspondences between the source domain and target domain, is *mathlete* < *math* + *athlete*, which is used to refer to a person who takes part in a mathematic competition. In this blend, a maths scholar, taking part in a maths tournament is conceptualised as a person competing in sports. The source domain of athletics is mapped on the target domain of mathematics, producing a series of correspondences. The following elements of the source domain map onto the elements of the target domain: training hard before the sports competition maps onto studying maths and solving complicated maths problems prior to mathematical competition, physical activity of running, jumping, etc. corresponds to intellectual activity of solving mathematical problems, physical effort put into achieving the best result corresponds to intellectual effort undertaken in the process of mathematical analysis.

Due to the high productivity of the pattern (in which source 2 is metaphorical) and probably a high frequency of specific models, some splinters have been employed in analogical formations, e.g., *-gasm* ('an extremely pleasurable experience') from *orgasm* occurs in the following series of blends: *eargasm*, *flavourgasm*, *laughgasm*, *joygasm*. Another splinter *-pocalypse* ('a disaster, catastrophe') from *apocalypse* occurs in *browpocalypse*, *deerpocalypse*; *-rexia* ('unhealthy obsession') from *anorexia* can be found in *bleachorexia*, *bigorexia*, or *drunkorexia*; *-(ma)geddon* ('a bitter or fierce battle') from *Armageddon* occurs in *Eurogeddon*, *sockmageddon*, or *farmageddon*; *-rati* ('social elite') from *literati* and popularised by *glitterati* turns up in *vulgarati*, *geekerati*, and *-holic* ('an addict') from *alcoholic* can be found in *chocoholic*, *shopaholic*, etc. As remarked by Mattiello (2019: 24), "[...] analogy can provide some

regularity to the blending process and increase predictability in the formation of novel blends".

5.1.2 Metaphorical source word 1

The database contains 19 blends in which source word 1 is metaphorical. Most of these blends are characterised by a metaphorical relation between source word 1 and source word 2. For example, a blend *sheeple* < *sheep* + *people* conceptualises meek, easily persuaded people who tend to follow the crowd as sheep do. The basis for this conceptualisation is a well-known fact that sheep tend to congregate close to other members of a flock and are easily led. Thus, the meaning of the blend is based on perceiving similarity between a specific kind of people and sheep, in terms of their behaviour. Conceptualising people as sheep is activated by the conceptual metaphor that is a part of the system of the Great Chain of Being (Lakoff & Turner 1989) which proposes a hierarchical structure of the world. In the system a specific level of the chain is used metaphorically to conceptualise entities belonging to another level. For example, people are frequently defined via inanimate objects, plants, and animals. Thus, *sheeple* is motivated by the PEOPLE ARE ANIMALS conceptual metaphor, where conceptualisation proceeds from animals, i.e. a lower level to people, i.e. a higher level in the Great Chain.

Another example of a blend based on the metaphorical relation between source word 1 and source word 2 is *zombee* 'a bee which abandons its hive and dies after being infected by a parasitic fly' < *zombie* + *bee*. This blend, in which the bee is conceptualised as a zombie, is homophonous with *zombie*, establishing in this way a humorous association between the meaning of the entire blend and the meaning of source word 1 on which it has been modelled. The humorous effect of this blend stems from what Brone and Feyartes (2003) refer to as the association of incompatible domains, which in the case under discussion is the domain of popular culture, represented by a zombie, and the domain of animal kingdom, represented by a bee. The metaphorical construal consists in the mapping of a zombie's brain that has been

attacked by some sort of virus or bacteria, and therefore damaged, onto the insect's brain attacked by the larva of a parasite, called *Apocephalus borealis*, developing in the bee's body from an egg laid by the female fly and causing destruction of the bee's brain. Thus, the element of the source domain, which is the damaged zombie's brain, is mapped onto the element of the target domain, i.e. the damaged bee's brain. Other elements from the source domain that map onto elements of the target domain are the following: zombies' unusual manner of movement, such as shuffling their feet and lack of coordination, maps onto the bees' disoriented flying, such as going in circles, or losing their ability to stand and zombies' short life span corresponds to the bees' quick death after being infected by the parasite.

Yet another case of a blend containing a metaphorical source word 1 is a lexeme *blogject* < *blog* + *object*, which conceptualises an electronic device attached to an animate being and continually sending information concerning its state, location, and environment. In this construal a regular transmission of data by an electronic object is conceptualised as habitual updating one's blog. The *blogject* has been used in "The pigeon that blogs" project, in which a flock of pigeons was equipped with telecommunication devices and environmental sensors to track where it has been flying and to monitor its environmental behaviour. The data collected from the pigeons could indicate the level of toxins and the kind and extent of pollution in various areas, all of which could be seen on Google maps. In this metaphor, there are many correspondences between the source domain and the target domain: the pigeon maps onto the person, the pigeon's flight corresponds to events in the person's life and sending data matches up with blogging. Thus, the metaphor used here is an instance of personification because the activity that the animal is involved in is conceptualised as that being performed by a person, and, consequently, although indirectly, a non-human being is conceptualised as a person. As Lakoff and Johnson (1980) claim, personification is one of the most obvious ontological metaphors, as it makes it possible for us to understand quite a significant number of experiences with non-human entities in terms of human activities, interests, and motivations.

5.1.3 Metaphorical source word 1 and source word 2

The corpus has yielded a single instance of a blend in which both source word 1 and source word 2 are metaphorical: *meanderthal* 'an unintelligent individual who is without direction and focus in his or her life' < *meander* + *Neanderthal*. Thus, in this blend there are two source domains (meandering and a Neanderthal) and two target domains (aimless life and unintelligent person) with two subsequent sets of mappings. First of all, a winding course of a river is mapped onto the aimless life of a person unable to make up their minds as to the course of their lives, which is, for this reason, filled with numerous twists and turns. Secondly, the generally supposed crudeness and low intellect of Neanderthals are mapped onto the foolishness of young people that prevents them from making decisions concerning their future lives. This blend is often used to refer to people unable to choose their major area of study at college.

5.2 Metonymic blends

The corpus of blends contains 32 metonymic blends altogether. Like in the case of metaphorical blends, metonymy may operate either on source word 1 (23 exemplars), or source word 2 (9 exemplars).

5.2.1 Metonymic source word 1

An example of a blend with a metonymic source word 1 is *botax* 'a tax proposed in the United States Senate in July 2009 to tax botox and other cosmetic procedures' < *botox* + *tax*. In this blend *botox* serves as a salient reference point, which provides access to the target, namely a beauty treatment. *Botox* was chosen as a reference point since at the end of the first decade of the 21st century it was an extremely widespread procedure. According to the American Society of Plastic Surgeons, it was the most common cosmetic operation in the USA in 2007. Thus, the selection of this particular reference point is conditioned by the social context: there were both many cosmetic operations with the use of botox at the time, on which the tax was imposed and, consequently,

such a type of cosmetic surgery was considered to be representative for the whole industry.

Another blend *poorism* 'travel that includes tours of or accommodations in slums or dangerous urban neighbourhoods' < *poor* + *tourism* contains a modifier, i.e. the adjective *poor*, which is an instance of QUALITY FOR PLACE metonymy, because the quality of being poor metonymically represents poverty-stricken town areas which recently became popular destinations among some tourists. Yet another blend belonging to this category, *fiberhood* 'a neighbourhood that has Internet access via fiber-optic cable' < *fiber* + *neighbourhood* conceptualises access to Internet via fiber-optic cables, i.e. an essential part of the Internet infrastructure, which ensures high capacity and speed of transmission. Thus, this construal is motivated by INSTRUMENT FOR ENTITY metonymy.

5.2.2 Metonymic source word 2

A very interesting metonymic blend, in which source word 2 is construed metonymically, is *slizzard* 'a person who is very much intoxicated, mainly from alcohol' < *slutty* + *lizard*. The blend has been retrieved from Kemmer's dictionary of neologisms, according to which the motivation of the word *lizard* is mystifying. Kemmer says that because the word comes from the south of the USA it could be treated as an indication of its geographical origin, since the south is a place where lizards are common. In that case *lizard* would be the salient reference point, constituting an example of an ANIMAL FOR PLACE metonymy, and providing access to the target, which is the southern part of the USA. However, this metonymy does not denote the place but a person conceptualised as an animal that comes from this place, therefore, the process taking place here is multiple metonymic mapping, referred to as a metonymic chain (Barcelona 2002). ANIMAL has been selected as a reference point, providing access to the PLACE it comes from, as well as standing for PERSON, while at the same time PLACE metonymically stands for ORIGIN.

The *Urban Dictionary* provides numerous interpretations of this blend (e.g., a humorous one is that it denotes a person who 'is only able to live off beer and occasionally Jack Daniels') but the one I would like to concentrate on at this point is that *slizzard* denotes a person so intoxicated that they perceive themselves as a slutty lizard. When seen in this light, the whole blend is metonymical, being an instance of an EFFECT FOR CAUSE metonymy where the distorted perception of oneself as a slutty lizard is a salient result of being highly intoxicated, providing in this way access to the intoxication ICM (Idealised Cognitive Model), comprising elements, such as excessive consumption of alcohol, irrational thinking, loss of control over one's behaviour, getting drunk, post-alcoholic hallucinations, etc. Thus, one element within this particular ICM, i.e. post-alcoholic hallucinations representing EFFECT provides access to another element, i.e. getting drunk, which stands for CAUSE. In the process of the metonymic chain, the action of getting drunk represents a drunk person as a result of an ACTION FOR PERSON metonymy. Thus, the blend as a whole stands metonymically for a drunk person thinking that he or she is a slutty lizard.

Another instance of the blend with a metonymic source word 2 is *locapour* 'a person who drinks only locally produced wine or beer' < *local* + *pour*⁵, seemingly modelled on *locavore*. In this metonymic construal pouring domestic wines and craft beers into glasses stands for consuming them. As Radden and Kövecses (1999: 32) propose, "events may be [...] viewed as things which may have parts". The event of drinking wine or beer involves (as one of its subevents) opening a bottle, pouring its contents into a glass, taking its contents to one's mouth, swallowing it, etc. Thus, the initial phase of local wine or beer consumption stands for the whole experience of drinking it through the SUBEVENT FOR WHOLE EVENT metonymy. Being part of a metonymic chain, a subevent of pouring a liquid metonymically represents the person drinking it, which is ACTIVITY FOR PERSON metonymy.

The metonymic blend *menoporsche* 'angst and anxiety exhibited by some men upon reaching middle age' < *menopause* + *Porsche* is a humorous play on source word 1,

i.e. *menopause*. The blend draws on one of the most common symptoms of a middle life crisis experienced by men, which is the purchase of a sports car. This conceptualisation involves a chain of metonymies. First of all, Porsche, a make of high-performance sports cars, has been chosen as a salient point of the access to the category of sports cars (CATEGORY MEMBER FOR CATEGORY). Secondly, the category of sports cars represented metonymically by Porsche stands for a middle life crisis experienced by men, which constitutes an instance of EFFECT FOR CAUSE metonymy.

5.3 Metaphonymic blends

The corpus under study contains only nine metaphonymic blends. One of them is *twitchfork* 'an angry or aggressive protest on Twitter, particularly one seeking justice or vengeance' < *twitter* + *pitchfork*. The construal of this particular blend is affected by the historical and social context. In the past, the pitchfork, one of the most important farm tools, was frequently used by peasants as their basic weapon in various uprisings and rebellions, such as, for example, the Peasants' Revolt in 1381 and the Pitchfork Uprising in 1920. Even in modern times we can still see traces of this old tradition: in Sicily there is an informal association of farmers and breeders, called the "Pitchforks Movement" (Italian: *Movimento dei Forconi*), which in 2012 organised a protest against the economic crisis and a rise in the price of fuel. Thus, as an important asset of farmers, and, if the need arises, a weapon, a pitchfork is an instance of the INSTRUMENT FOR ACTION metonymy, representing the farmers' protest. Then through the conceptual metaphor, the source domain of the farmers' protest is mapped onto the target domain of an Internet protest and, consequently, Internet users seeking justice are conceptualised as farmers seeking justice.

While in the blend *twitchfork* metaphonymy operates on source word 2, in another blend *giraffiti* 'graffiti painted in a very high spot' < *giraffe* + *graffiti*, it is source word 1 that is metaphonymic. *Giraffe*, the tallest animal in the world, whose most salient attribute is its towering height, metonymically represents the high altitude, at which a spray painting has been done, constituting an instance of the ENTITY FOR CHARACTERISTIC

metonymy. Besides, the activity of painting and subsequent displaying of graffiti in an extraordinarily high location is conceptualised as if it had been done by or meant for giraffes. Therefore, it can be argued that the source domain of animal behaviour is mapped onto the target domain of human behaviour. At the same time, human activity of painting graffiti at a very high spot is conceptualised in terms of its output, which is an instance of PRODUCT FOR ACTIVITY metonymy.

6. Rationale behind the use of metaphor and metonymy

Opting for metaphorical and metonymic blends in the conceptualisation process may be explained by means of the Relevance Theory (Sperber & Wilson 1986). As Sperber and Wilson maintain, each aspect of human cognition and communication is governed by the search for relevance, defined in terms of contextual effects and processing effort. Contextual effects are achieved when new information interacts with the context of the already existing assumptions by strengthening them, contradicting them, or combining with them. The processing effort indispensable for the comprehension of an utterance depends basically on the effort of memory and imagination, necessary for constructing an appropriate context, and also on the psychological complexity of an utterance, understood as the linguistic complexity, and also, the frequency of occurrence of a linguistic unit – less complex and more frequent items are easier to be processed than more complex and rarely encountered ones.

Since every act of overt communication builds up an expectation of relevance, looking at it from the perspective of effort and effect, the reader or hearer quests for what Sperber and Wilson (1998: 286) label Optimal Relevance, defined in the following way: "An utterance, on a given interpretation, is optimally relevant if and only if:

- (a) it achieves enough contextual effects to be worth the hearer's attention;
- (b) it puts the hearer to no gratuitous processing effort in achieving those effects".

A logical consequence of point b) is that an extra effort demanded from the hearer on processing the linguistic unit entails additional effects that could not be achieved otherwise.

When seen in this light, the processing of metaphorical and metonymic blends involves additional processing effort in terms of:

1. Memory and imagination. The interpretation of blends motivated by metaphorical or metonymic construals requires relying on memory if one wants to make use of encyclopaedic knowledge that a given linguistic unit provides access to. For instance, in interpreting the meaning of the blend *piem* 'a poem in which the length of each word corresponds to a digit in the decimal expansion of the mathematical constant pi' < *pi* + *poem*, it is necessary to look into one's encyclopaedic entry for *pi*, which would not be possible without the extra processing effort of memory. The conceptualiser needs to remember that *pi* is an irrational number that cannot be represented by a fraction. As regards the additional processing effort of imagination, metonymic and metaphorical construals require imagination on the part of the recipient of the message, needed to draw parallels and establish conceptual links between various concepts both within one domain and across different domains.
2. Psychological complexity (understood as the ease of cognitive processing). Taking into account the fact that blending belongs to the domain of extra-grammatical morphology and blends are characterised by many irregularities (unpredictability of their outputs, non-morphematic analysis, irregular subtraction, discontinuity of bases, etc.), their complexity in terms of signans parameters is greater than that of other morphological processes, such as compounding or affixation, which are far more regular and transparent. Consequently, blends are relatively difficult to be processed.

Besides, as observed by Wilson (1994: 49),

"The linguistic structure of an utterance is not the only source of psychological complexity. In fact, a linguistically simpler utterance may nonetheless be psychologically more complex. For instance, it is well known from psycholinguistic experiments that frequently-encountered words are easier to process than rarely-encountered ones".

As regards the frequency of occurrence, many blends do not go beyond the status of nonce-formations, as they are highly dependent both on the linguistic and extra-linguistic context. Consequently, the frequency of such blends is quite low.

Given this, forming conceptualisations "packaged" in the form of metaphorical and metonymic blends requires extra processing effort in terms of memory, imagination, and psychological complexity. If the principle of Optimal Relevance is to be obeyed, the effort that the recipient of the message needs to make in order to work out the meaning of the blend cannot be gratuitous: their extra processing effort must be offset by extra effects (Sperber & Wilson 1986). I argue that extra effects can be perceived in terms of what Zwicky and Pullum (1987) call a *pragmatic effect*, which is a distinctive feature of expressive morphology.

Even though expressive morphology is mainly considered to rank on a par with extra-grammatical morphology, these two terms are not mutually interchangeable despite the fact that they share a majority of features, such as promiscuity with regard to input category, promiscuity with regard to input basehood (i.e. lack of constraints on the grammatical category of bases), forming alternative outputs, imperfect speaker's control, and interspeaker variation. Regardless of numerous similarities between extra-grammatical and expressive morphology, Mattiello (2013) takes the view, which is also shared here, that these two branches of morphology do not come under one and the same heading, as only expressive morphology encompasses composite structures characterised by what Zwicky and Pullum (1987: 335) refer to as pragmatic effect, defined by them as "an expressive, playful, poetic, or simply ostentatious effect of some kind". Zwicky and Pullum (ibid.) exemplify their claim with whimsical coinages of commercial names, created by means of the suffix (-e/t/eria), such as *basketeria*, *groceteria*, *candyteria*, *honeyteria*, *caketeria*, *cleaneteria*, which in their view evoke the pragmatic effect that is absent from the plain derivational morphology. They argue that the outputs of this analogical affixation process are humorous (by being a play on

a well-established lexeme *cafeteria*), which is not the feature of non-expressive derivations.

The pragmatic effect can also be defined as "[...] mental/internal activity taking place in a person, traceable to his or her encountering figurative as well as other language, usually when receiving it (e.g., as an addressee, hearer, overhearer, reader, etc.) but also when he or she produces or even thinks about it" (Colston 2015: 6). As result of additional mental activity undertaken by a conceptualiser, "[...] additional complex meaning is produced" (ibid., 5). Since the interpretation of metaphorical and metonymic blends requires that the conceptualiser gets involved in extra mental activity, which gives rise to additional complex meaning, I argue that metaphorical and metonymic blends trigger the pragmatic effect. Since such blends belong to expressive morphology, I refer to them as *expressive blends*.

Thus, in order to decode the meaning of an expressive blend, such as *haycation* 'holiday spent on the farm, during which guests often help with daily farm tasks' < *hay* + *vacation*, it is not sufficient to identify successfully the blend components, i.e. the two source words it has been based on, which is only the first step towards decoding the blend's semantics. Once this has been done, it is necessary to engage in additional mental activity aimed at working out the meaning of the blend, which is only partly compositional. According to Kardela (2012: 308),

"[...] a linguistic unit with a low degree of compositionality requires a greater involvement on the part of the speaker/hearer to recognise the contribution of each unit to the expression's overall meaning. The recognition of this contribution [...] relies heavily on the context-dependent discourse and involves everything what Langacker calls the Current Discourse Space (CDS), i.e. '[...] everything presumed to be shared by the speaker and the hearer as the basis for communication at a given moment (2008: 466)'".

The CDS relied on in the interpretation of the blend *haycation* is the knowledge of the cultural and social context, which prompts the use of both conventional and novel metaphors (Kövecses 2018: 133). In this particular case, it is the knowledge that

agrotourism has recently become a fashionable form of tourism, that it involves staying on the farm to experience country life, that feeding cattle is an indispensable part of country life and that staple food of cattle is hay.

Thus, this shared knowledge enables arriving at the metonymic conceptualisation of agrotourism, in which *hay* constitutes a salient reference point (in the sense of Langacker 1993) to the ICM of country life.

7. Semantic transparency versus morphotactic transparency

The analysis of expressive blends has demonstrated that a decrease in their semantic transparency is counterbalanced by an increase in morphotactic transparency with the aim of preserving their intelligibility. The morphotactic transparency of blends amounts to the recognisability of their constituents, which basically depends on two factors: preserving as much from the source word(s) as possible⁶ and preserving the prosodic structure of the so-called matrix word (Ronneberger-Sibold 2006). An example of such a blend is *decknician* 'a disc jockey who is admired for skilful manipulation and mixing of music on turntables' < *deck* + *technician* (Borys 2018: 3).

As regards the first factor, preserving the maximum of source words can be achieved either by means of overlapping, or by a minimal deletion of phonological material from source words in the absence of overlapping. The analysis of the sample has shown that a majority of metaphorical and metonymic blends, i.e. 110 out of 148, are characterised by overlapping, which amounts to 74.3% of the blends under study. The following degrees of overlapping have been distinguished:

1. complete overlapping in which both words remain intact, as exemplified by *bromance* < *bro* + *romance*;
2. partial overlapping in which a few segments (marked in bold) of both source words are shared in the blend, as in *fiberhood* < *fiber* + *neighbourhood*;
3. contrastive overlapping by which I mean that the blend, characterised by the occurrence of this phenomenon, differs from one of its source words merely in one or

two phonemes, bearing a very close resemblance to it, as exemplified by *floordrobe* < *floor* + *wardrobe* or *shuicide* < *shoe* + *suicide*. I have decided to refer to this type of blends as contrastive on account of the fact that they minimally contrast with either source word 1, or source word 2.

While complete and partial overlapping seem to be aimed exclusively at maximising recoverability of source words, and consequently facilitating blend comprehension, contrastive overlapping enhances the pragmatic effect by adding a touch of humour to the metaphorical or metonymic construal. In fact, blends, which are the products of contrastive overlapping, can be perceived in terms of surface analogy (see Motsch's (1981: 101) *Oberflächenanalogie*), defined as the process "[...] whereby a new word (called *target*) is coined that is clearly modelled on a precise actual model word (hence model, base, analogue, source, or trigger)". The humorous character of these blends consists in the perceived incongruity⁷ between the spelling and pronunciation of the target word (the blend) and the model (the source word). The target is intended as a phonologically and graphically distorted "variant" of the model, alluding to it very clearly, which creates a humorous and playful effect.

Almost all overlapping blends (103 out of 110) are also contour blends in the sense of Ronneberger-Sibold (2006). In contour blending one lexeme functions as the so-called *matrix word*, providing the rhyme and the overall rhythmic contour of the blend, understood as its main stress, the number of syllables, and the stressed vowel. The other lexeme is usually inserted in the pretonic part of the matrix (e.g., *sexcursion* < *sex* + *excursion*), but it may also be positioned in its posttonic part, rarely changing its stressed vowel (*facejack* < *facebook* + *hijack*). Contour blends also ensure a high degree of transparency because even though the matrix word is not entirely present in the blend, it can be easily tracked down by several phonological features highly conducive to its recoverability, such as overall rhythmical contour determined by the place of the main stress and the overall number of syllables, the stressed vowel, and the rest of the syllable's rhyme.

A minimal deletion of phonological material from source words without the occurrence of overlapping has been found in 31 expressive blends, which constitutes 21% of the sample. In these blends one of the source words is usually retained in full and the other is only insignificantly reduced, as can be exemplified by *hooterlicious* < *hooter* + *delicious*, *floorcest* < *floor* + *incest*, *bridezilla* < *bride* + *Godzilla*, etc. Besides, the splinter, which represents source word 2 of the blend is iteratively used in other blends, which enhances its recognisability, e.g., *-zilla* ('selfish arrogant and obnoxious woman') reappears in *promzilla* < *prom* + *Godzilla*, while *-cest* ('sexual relationship between people who study together, or inhabit the same living quarters') occurs also in *sidcest* < *Sid* (*Sid Richardson College*) + *incest*, *suitecest* < *suite* + *incest*, *dormcest* < *dorm* + *incest*, and *trincest* < *Trinity* (*Trinity College*) + *incest*.

Consequently, as the analysis of the data has demonstrated, there exists a very strong correlation between signatum parameters of semantic transparency and signans parameters of morphotactic transparency. This should be taken to mean that the reduced semantic transparency corresponds to the increase in the morphotactic transparency. The tendency to make source words maximally recognisable may be explained in the light of the Grice's Cooperative Principle (1975). The Cooperative Principle is governed by, among other things, a conversational maxim of manner, according to which obscurity of expression should be avoided. Given indirect semantics of expressive blends, hidden behind conceptual processes, such as metaphor, metonymy, or metaphonymy, morphotactic transparency of blends counteracts their obscurity to the point at which their meaning can still be decoded. If the source words can be easily retrieved, because they are recognisable, they can be used as access points to metaphorical or metonymic conceptualisations. Otherwise, the reader, or listener would not succeed in inferring the intended meaning of the blend.

Expressive blends need to be morphotactically transparent for one more reason. Source word 1 and source word 2 do not co-occur in the discourse (Beliaeva 2014) because

they are conceptually distant from each other. For example, two source words of a metaphorical blend *apostrofly* 'an errant or misplaced apostrophe', i.e. *apostrophe* and *fly*, represent two incompatible concepts, i.e. WRITING and INSECTS, respectively. Given this, there is hardly any possibility that there exists any conceptual or semantic relationship between both source words prior to the blend formation (Cacchiani 2011).

Lack of semantic correspondence between source words in metaphorical and metonymic blends can be contrasted with the occurrence of a variety of semantic relationships demonstrated by non-expressive blends, whose components are related semantically being co-hyponyms of a hyperonym, as in *breakfast + lunch > brunch*, synonyms, as in *giant + enormous > ginormous*, or antonyms, e.g., *friend + enemy > frienemy*. As Beliaeva (2014) insightfully remarks, if there is no semantic link between the source words, the formation of the blend based on them, automatically entails the creation of such a link, and this calls for a high degree of recognisability of both source words. "Recognisability is not so vital in the first case [i.e. when the source words are related semantically - explanation mine] because the semantic link is already there and the main aim of the formation of a new lexeme is merging the source words together in a compact form" (ibid., 49).

Thus, it is apparent that the reduction of blends transparency at the signatum level is compensated by maximising their transparency at the signans level. Because the pragmatic effect of expressive blends depends on the intelligibility of their source words, they cannot be opaque which is the feature of many blends aimed at condensing information and serving a purely referential function, such as *pluot < plum + apricot* or *freppy < frat + preppy*.

8. Concluding remarks

In the corpus of blends collected for the purpose of this analysis, metaphorical blends are the most frequent amounting to 101 examples, with 82 instances of blends in which the metaphor operates on source word 2, e.g., *floordrobe < floor + wardrobe*

(*floordrobe* conceptualises one's collection of clothes not hung, or folded, but dumped into a pile), and 19 containing a metaphorical modifier, e.g., *flashpacker* < *flash* + *backpacker* (*flash* metaphorically represents smartness and high class). The number of metonymic blends is by far smaller as it amounts to 32 instances: 23 blends contain a metonymic modifier, as exemplified by *fiberhood* < *fiber* + *neighbourhood*, (*fiber* stands for the Internet) and in 9 it is source word 2 that is metonymic, as e.g., *menopaws* < *menopause* + *paws* (*paws* represent the female cat). Besides, there are 9 metaphonymic blends: in 5 metaphonymy operates on the modifier, as in *giraffiti* < *giraffe* + *graffiti*, and in 4 source word 2 is metaphonymic, as in *twitchfork* < *twitter* + *pitchfork*. Finally, the corpus contains merely 2 blends, in which metonymy operates on one source word, while metaphor on the other, as in *pajamahideen* 'reactionary activist blogging from home' < *pajama* + *Mujahideen* and one blend, in which both a blend and source word 1 are metaphorical: *meanderthal* < *meander* + *Neanderthal*.

Despite the fact that expressive blends are not prevalent in the database, used for the purpose of the present analysis, as they constitute just 14.6% of the sample, high token frequencies of some blends (in terms of Google hits obtained on August 20, 2020), such as *bromance* (11 200 000), *gaydar*, (31 400 000), or *bankster* (2 130 000) are a clear indication that they have caught on in the speaking community. This can be taken to mean that they have turned out to be successful in producing the pragmatic effect for which they were primarily coined. Describing expressive blends in terms of the pragmatic effect evoked, they are playful because the whole blend can be a play on one of its source words. They are also poetic in the sense of Zwicky and Pullum (1987) since the occurrence of a metaphor and metonymy entails rich imagery. Besides, they turn out to be ostentatious due to the fact that they have the attention-catching potential. It has been argued that the use of metaphorical and metonymic blend constituents produces a pragmatic effect, which can be achieved only if the blend is morphotactically transparent, i.e. if its source words can be easily identified. Thus, a decrease in semantic transparency is counterbalanced by an increase in morphotactic transparency, which is in line with the conversational maxim of manner, stating that

the obscurity of expression should be avoided. Maximising morphotactic transparency is achieved by preserving as much from the source words as possible either by modelling the whole blend on the matrix word so that there is an overlap between source word 1 and source word 2, as in *trampede* < *trample* + *stampede*, or by reducing source words only minimally, as can exemplified by *loligator* < *lol* + *alligator*.

Since blends analysed in this paper come from two different sources: *Wordspy*, a source of journalistic coinages and *The Rice University Neologisms Database*, which is a database of neologisms used mainly by the students of Rice University, the reasons behind evoking the pragmatic effect seem to be different depending on the database. As regards the journalistic blends, they are motivated, like many mass media coinages, by the desire to catch the reader's attention and create an interpersonal closeness between the author of blends and the reading public, built in the course of processing these blends. Expressive blends created by students are meant to produce a humorous effect, to show off, or to create a sense of belonging to the group of the initiated (and at the same time to exclude outsiders).

Because of the moderate size of the sample, on which this study has been based, the results concerning the frequency of attested morphological and metonymic patterns should be treated with caution. In order to obtain a more conclusive evidence it would be necessary to collect a larger sample of expressive blends also from sources other than those used for the purpose of the present analysis. Further, the suggested approach could be applied to the analysis of correlation between morphotactic transparency and semantic transparency of expressive blends in languages other than English.

Notes

1. Mattiello (2013) proposes that total blends are those in which all source words are reduced to splinters, the best-known of which are *brunch*, *Oxbridge*, and *smog*.

2. In Langacker's (1987) model of Cognitive Grammar a linguistic expression has a bipolar structure, consisting of the phonological pole and the semantic pole, which correspond to the form and meaning, respectively.
3. In Langacker's (1987) theory of grammar symbolic assembly is a fundamental unit of grammar made up of a semantic pole and a phonological pole.
4. In accordance with the well-established convention, the semantic pole of a linguistic expression is represented by capital letters.
5. This blend is an example of the combination not occurring in compounding, i.e. an adjective followed by a verb.
6. It has already been demonstrated by Lehrer (1996) that there exists a direct correlation between preserving a substantial amount of material from the target word(s) and the ease of identifying the blend.
7. According to Attardo (1994), one of the principles underlying humour can be incongruity.

List of abbreviations

CDS – Current discourse space

ICM – Idealised cognitive model

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Résumé

The paper presents a study of innovative metaphorical and metonymic blends in English. The analysis is based on the corpus of blends derived from two Internet webpages aimed at collecting nonce-formations and neologisms: *Wordspy* and *The Rice University Neologisms Database*. In the study, the most inclusive definition of blends is adopted, which means that a lexeme is regarded as a blend even if only one of its source words has been clipped. In general, blends belong to extra-grammatical morphology and are characterised by a lot of irregularities, including non-morphematic analysis, discontinuity of bases, alternative input categories, etc., all of which reduce their morphotactic transparency. However, as the present study has shown, metaphorical and metonymic blends are different in this respect. The reduction in the semantic transparency of such blends – entailed by the occurrence of metaphor and metonymy – is counteracted by the increase in their morphotactic transparency, which is aimed at preserving their intelligibility. Reduced semantic transparency of blends demands a greater processing effort required for their interpretation. Since, according to the principle of Optimal Relevance, extra processing effort is offset by extra effects, it is proposed that the interpretation of metaphorical and metonymic blends entails a pragmatic effect. Because pragmatic effect is a feature of expressive morphology, blends involving metaphorical and metonymic construals are referred to as expressive blends. The analysis has shown that metaphor and metonymy can operate both on source word 1 and source word 2, represented by the splinter, which comes first and

second, respectively, in the linear structure of the blend. However, in the sample under analysis the most predominant pattern is the metaphorical use of source word 2 (probably because of the fact that source word 2 represents the semantic head of the blend).

Key words: expressive blends, metaphor, metonymy, pragmatic effect, transparency.

Appendix

Table 1. Metaphorical, metonymic, and metaphtonymic blends
(arranged in the order in which they appear in the paper)

Blend	source word 1	source word 2
<i>glitterati</i>	<i>glitter</i>	<i>literati</i>
<i>gaydar</i>	<i>gay</i>	<i>radar</i>
<i>flunami</i>	<i>flu</i>	<i>tsunami</i>
<i>mathlete</i>	<i>math</i>	<i>athlete</i>
<i>eargasm</i>	<i>ear</i>	<i>orgasm</i>
<i>flavourgasm</i>	<i>flavour</i>	<i>orgasm</i>
<i>laughgasm</i>	<i>laugh</i>	<i>orgasm</i>
<i>joygasm</i>	<i>joy</i>	<i>orgasm</i>
<i>browpocalypse</i>	<i>brow</i>	<i>apocalypse</i>
<i>deerpocalypse</i>	<i>deer</i>	<i>apocalypse</i>
<i>bleachorexia</i>	<i>bleach</i>	<i>anorexia</i>
<i>bigorexia</i>	<i>big</i>	<i>anorexia</i>
<i>drunkorexia</i>	<i>drunk</i>	<i>anorexia</i>
<i>Eurogeddon</i>	<i>Europe</i>	<i>Armageddon</i>
<i>sockmageddon</i>	<i>socks</i>	<i>Armageddon</i>
<i>farmageddon</i>	<i>farm</i>	<i>Armageddon</i>
<i>vulgarati</i>	<i>vulgar</i>	<i>literati</i>
<i>geekerati</i>	<i>geek</i>	<i>literati</i>
<i>chocoholic</i>	<i>chocolate</i>	<i>alcoholic</i>
<i>shopaholic</i>	<i>shop</i>	<i>alcoholic</i>
<i>sheeple</i>	<i>sheep</i>	<i>people</i>
<i>zombee</i>	<i>zombie</i>	<i>bee</i>
<i>blogject</i>	<i>blog</i>	<i>object</i>
<i>meanderthal</i>	<i>meander</i>	<i>Neanderthal</i>
<i>botax</i>	<i>botox</i>	<i>tax</i>
<i>poorism</i>	<i>poor</i>	<i>tourism</i>
<i>fiberhood</i>	<i>fiber</i>	<i>neighbourhood</i>
<i>slizzard</i>	<i>slutty</i>	<i>lizard</i>
<i>locapour</i>	<i>local</i>	<i>pour</i>
<i>menoporsche</i>	<i>menopause</i>	<i>Porsche</i>
<i>twitchfork</i>	<i>twitter</i>	<i>pitchfork</i>
<i>giraffiti</i>	<i>giraffe</i>	<i>graffiti</i>

<i>piem</i>	<i>Pi</i>	<i>poem</i>
<i>haycation</i>	<i>hay</i>	<i>vacation</i>
<i>bromance</i>	<i>bro</i>	<i>romance</i>
<i>fiberhood</i>	<i>fiber</i>	<i>neighbourhood</i>
<i>floordrobe</i>	<i>floor</i>	<i>wardrobe</i>
<i>shuicide</i>	<i>shoe</i>	<i>suicide</i>
<i>facejack</i>	<i>facebook</i>	<i>hijack</i>
<i>hooterlicious</i>	<i>hooter</i>	<i>delicious</i>
<i>floorcest</i>	<i>floor</i>	<i>incest</i>
<i>bridezilla</i>	<i>bride</i>	<i>Godzilla</i>
<i>promzilla</i>	<i>prom</i>	<i>Godzilla</i>
<i>sidcest</i>	<i>Sid</i>	<i>incest</i>
<i>suitecest</i>	<i>suite</i>	<i>incest</i>
<i>dormcest</i>	<i>dorm</i>	<i>incest</i>
<i>trincest</i>	<i>Trinity</i>	<i>incest</i>
<i>apostrofly</i>	<i>apostrophe</i>	<i>fly</i>
<i>flashpacker</i>	<i>flash</i>	<i>backpacker</i>
<i>menopaws</i>	<i>menopause</i>	<i>paws</i>
<i>pajamahideen</i>	<i>pajama</i>	<i>Mujahideen</i>
<i>bankster</i>	<i>banker</i>	<i>gangster</i>
<i>trampede</i>	<i>trample</i>	<i>stampede</i>
<i>loligator</i>	<i>lol</i>	<i>alligator</i>

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Language yesterday, today, tomorrow

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STRUCTURAL LEXICAL REDUCTION IN INFORMAL ON-LINE COMMUNICATION¹

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Abstract: The paper establishes a taxonomy of structural lexical reductions in informal on-line communication and substantiates that initial parts of lexemes are more important than others. If a word is reduced, then the central and the final reductions prevail over the initial reductions, and the initial parts of lexemes, as major information carriers, remain predominantly unchanged. In addition to this, the reduced parts of lexemes are dominated by vowels because they carry less information than consonants.

Key words: clipping, grapheme, lexeme, on-line communication, reduction, substitution, syllable.

1. Introduction

This paper represents a probe into the economy principle that was found to operate on the lexical level of the English language, particularly with clipped lexemes. The economy principle is based on the tendency toward minimizing the amount of energy necessary to achieve the optimum result. It is regarded as a common principle shared by all living organisms, not only in biology, but also in language (Lančarič & Pavlík 2016; Zipf 1936).

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The study of economy mechanism, which operates in language, has a long tradition, and deals with the creation of a variety of reduced language forms existing at all linguistic levels (Borys 2018; Fischer 1998; Gavurová 2013; Hrbáček 1979; Lančarič 2008; Lančarič & Pavlík 2016; Ološtiak 2005; 2011 inter alia). Since the communicants use shorter, incomplete, or even defective language units, utterances are contracted or ellipted (e.g., *Can't find my phone* ← *I cannot find my phone*) (cf. Šipošová & Bojo 2016), and often completely defective structures occur (e.g., *Name?* ← *What will the baby's name be?*). In this regard, Hancerová (2018: 34) highlights that the grammar of a language should not be viewed simply as a list of certain rules regarding the particular forms and grammatical structures, but should be understood more complexly, taking into account lexical semantics and pragmatics. On the level of lexis, polysyllabic lexemes are clipped (e.g., *app* ← *application*), multiword lexemes are initialized or acronymized (e.g., *VGA* ← *video graphics array*). Our preceding research (cf. Lančarič 2008; 2011; 2015; Lančarič & Pavlík 2016) confirmed that in informal on-line communication the process of lexical reduction is associated with the process of substitution, which means that some sounds or graphemes are replaced by graphemes or numbers (e.g., *cr8ng* ← *creating*).

Minimizing articulatory activity by structurally reducing language units on various levels results from man's innate tendency to make the most of his communicative resources with the least expenditure of physical, cognitive, and social effort (cf. Zipf in Danesi 2012: 260). The principle of least effort is often counterbalanced by the principle of distinctiveness, since linguistic forms in effective communication must not only be sufficiently simple, but also sufficiently distinct (Lančarič & Pavlík 2016: 60). However, despite the fact that structurally reduced forms have fewer distinctive elements, the members of the same social group can use them with ease or without any significant limitations in understanding, because they share the same social context, in which both the speaker/writer and the hearer/reader predict the context of the ongoing discourse. Below is a short example of an on-line chat room discussion:

A: *Hi ppl, I send you gbh; everything be ok, gbh*

B: *Hi 2 all in the room 2day how r u?*

A: *25 swf nc lookin to chat*

B: *Tnks, cw2cu, lol*

(Twitter <https://twitter.com/>)

In the first sentence of the above example, "ppl" is a skeleton clipping (i.e. a group of consonants functioning in the derivational base as a skeleton of all graphemes) standing for "people". The following "gbh" is an initialism (i.e. a sequence of initial graphemes of the multiword motivating lexeme) representing "great big hug"; "ok" is a multiword initialism of "all correct".

In the second sentence, "2" is used twice: It is a number substituting for the preposition "to" and the first syllable of "today". The graphemes "r" and "u" function as substitutive reduction representing the sound realization of "are" and "you".

In the third sentence, the initialism "swf" stands for "single white female" and "nc" means "no children". The word "lookin" is a final clipping of "looking".

In the last sentence, "Tnks" is a skeleton clipping of "Thanks"; "cw2cu" standing for "Can't wait to see you" can be considered a sentential initialism (i.e. a sequence of initial graphemes of a sentence) combining alphabetic signs and numbers; "lol" is an initialism substituting "laughing out loud".

As can be seen from the example above, the process of online reduction may occur within a simple lexeme or it may exceed the level of lexis. For the purpose of our research, we have focused on the reduction processes taking place on the level of simple lexemes.

The aim of this paper is to work out a taxonomy of lexical reductions in informal on-line communication, which results from a detachment of a part of the derivational base (clipping). The analysis also concerns the lexemes which are the product of substitution of one part of the original lexeme and simultaneous production of a shorter, reduced variant (substitutive reduction). Our objective is to identify the lexeme segments which are the dominant information carriers. Some substitutions though result from language puns and do not contribute to the economy of language. Such instances of substitution will not be regarded. This paper is also aimed at testing the prevalence of the types of clippings and the types of clipped segments in an effort to identify the "information carriers" of lexemes.

2. The economy principle on the lexical level

There is a great formal variety of structural reductions in English lexis without any clear-cut rule of what is to be removed and what is to remain within the reduced variant. Nevertheless, since the initial part of lexemes in English carry more important information than their final part it is the final part of simple lexemes which usually disappears in the process of reduction (Ološtiak 2005: 47). In addition to this, structurally reduced units usually preserve consonants since they are more important information carriers and have a lower degree of predictability than vowels (Lančarič 2008: 14; Ološtiak 2005: 48).

As far as multiword (complex) lexemes are concerned, their structural reduction is normally conducted through the alphabetisation of individual constituents, which highlights the communicative need for brevity and speed. The final product of this process is acronyms in the case of the orthoepic realization of phonemes, and initialisms in the case of their orthographic realization (Lančarič & Pavlík 2016: 24-25).

Contrary to multiword lexemes, simple lexemes are typically reduced through the process of clipping and, in the case of informal communication, also through the process of

substitutive reduction. The latter phenomenon results from graphemic replacement which, at the same time, leads to the reduction of the derivational base constituents and thus contributes to language economy; it is especially effective in computer keyboard-to-screen communication, during which pressing one letter or number key instead of a sequence of letters saves space and may also save time (cf. e.g., *l8r* ← *later*; *ur* ← *you are*).

In this paper, we will concentrate on two basic types of structural reduction of simple lexemes: clipping and substitutive reduction.

2.1 Clipping

Clipping is a process which represents a complex area of research in English. Different social, age, and professional groups generate clippings, just as different groups tend to create their own languages, their slangs, or jargons. Arnold (1986: 135) defines the process of clipping as the reduction of a lexeme to one of its parts, as a result of which the new form acquires some linguistic value on its own. Thus, the new form consists of one or more syllables (or phonemes/graphemes) of the derivational base. According to Štekauer (2000), clipping is the process of shortening the original word retaining the same meaning and word class. Katamba (2005: 180) adds that clipping denotes the formation of a new word-form, with the same meaning as the original lexeme, by lopping off a portion and reducing it to a monosyllabic or disyllabic rump. We share Bauer's opinion (1983: 233) who also states that clipping refers to the process whereby a lexeme is shortened retaining its original meaning. However, following Lappe (2010: 27), the conceptual meaning of clippings often deviates from the conceptual meaning of the derivational base. As the author posits, *credibility*, for instance, generally refers to "the quality of being credible", while *cred* refers to credibility in a very specific context, meaning "reputation or status among one's peers". Similarly, the meaning of *exam* is

restricted to "testing knowledge only", whereas its motivating counterpart *examination* has a broader range of reference.

Since the conceptual meaning or the semantic range of clipped units may deviate from the conceptual meaning or the semantic range of their derivational bases, and since the clipped units are more economical in language, the longer derivational base may disappear from the language. The clipped forms thus become lexicalized and completely replace the base form (e.g., *bus* replaces *omnibus*, and *car* is used instead of *motorcar* (Jackson & Amvela 2000: 88). In addition to this, lexicalized clipped units can adopt all the features of regular lexemes (e.g., *vegetarian* → *vegan*), and a further semantic derivation of the already clipped unit or its further clipping may even lead to the process of remotivation and appearance of etymological doublets (e.g., *shadow* → *shade*; *courtesy* → *curtsy*; *defence* → *fence*; *history* → *story*; etc.) (Lančarič & Pavlík 2016: 108-109).

The process of clipping may be affected by different processes in language. Regarding hypocoristics, for example, clipping may be combined with suffixation: first we remove one fragment, and then we add another fragment (e.g., *ammunition* /ˌæmjʊˈnɪʃ(ə)n/ → *ammo* /ˈæməʊ/, *mercenary* /ˈmɜː(r)s(ə)n(ə)ri/ → *merc* /ˈmɜː(r)k/, *husband* /ˈhʌzbænd/ → *hubby* /ˈhʌbi/). On the orthographical level, clipping may lead to a change in spelling without substantially changing the pronunciation of the remaining part of the derivational base (e.g., *cocaine* /kəʊˈkeɪn/ → *coke* /kəʊk/; *details* /ˈdiːteɪlz/ → *deets* /ˈdiːts/; *delicious* /dɪˈlɪʃəs/ → *delish* /dɪˈlɪʃ/; *tranquilizer* /ˈtræŋkwɪlaɪzə(r)/ → *trank* /ˈtræŋk/; *naturally* /ˈnætʃ(ə)rəli/ → *natch* /ˈnætʃ/; *because* /bɪˈkɔːz/ → *cos* /kəz/) (cf. Borys 2018). However, since the elimination is merely cognitive, the examples of hypocoristics are not included in our corpus.

2.2 Substitutive reduction

On-line communication also uses numbers to substitute the derivational base (e.g., *great* → *gr8*; *tomorrow* → *2morrow*). In many cases the process of structural reduction is thus accompanied by grapheme or number substitution (e.g., *because* → *bcuz*; *forget* → *4get*), or a combination of grapheme and number substitution (e.g., *together* → *2getha*), which most typically affects the spelling of the lexeme retaining the same or similar pronunciation.

3. Material, methods, and hypotheses

The research is conducted as a quantitative corpus analysis of structurally reduced lexical items in informal communication. A thorough analysis of structural reductions is applied to examine the corpus on the type of structural reduction. The data are tested statistically; a statistical chi-square goodness of fit test will be applied to compare the inspected categories against expected frequencies and to identify the statistical significance of the difference between the observed and the expected counts. Since the number of groups exceeded two, we used the post-hoc test and calculated the significance level for all individual comparisons to lower the error rate.

In order to verify the issues outlined in the research aims, the following hypotheses are proposed:

We assume the prevalence of non-initial clipping types in informal online communication, because in English, the initial parts of lexemes usually carry the most important segment and thus tend to be preserved. We also assume the prevalence of consonants over vowels in the clipped units of informal online communication, because they are important carriers of information and are not as predictable as vowels.

H₁ (null hypothesis): All lexeme segments are equal information carriers; all types of clippings are distributed equally.

H₁ (alternative hypothesis): Informal online communication is marked by a significant prevalence of final and central clippings as "less important" information carriers.

H₂ (null hypothesis): In informal online communication, clippings are marked by an equal removal of vowels and consonants.

H₂ (alternative hypothesis): Informal online communication is characterized by a significantly prevalent removal of vowels as less important information carriers.

3.1 The corpus

We concentrated on online computer-mediated discourse on Twitter, which became one of the dominant social networks in 2006, and which can be communicatively asynchronous (asynchronous communication does not require communication to be held at the same time in order to send and receive a message) and also quasi-synchronous. By quasi-synchronicity we mean that the communicants issuing messages are co-present and expect immediate reactions; however, they cannot see the reaction while it is being produced but only when it has been transmitted (Jucker & Dürscheid 2012: 3).

Clipping and substitutive reduction are marked by many irregularities along with sound and grapheme assimilation associated with special sound and graphic iconic symbols. We focused on asynchronous and quasi-synchronous chat messages whose span is restricted to 140 signs. Out of 800 tweets analysed, we selected 228 clipped units which were divided into six basic categories: initial, final, central, edge-clipping, combined central and final clipping and substitutive reduction, with the reference to sequential or non-sequential character of the reduction on the one hand, and the derivational base monosyllabic and polysyllabic structure on the other.

3.2 Procedure

At the first stage, online lexemes in question will be sorted out. Next, they will be divided into types based on the common features they display and the taxonomy will then be

established. The further stages will be devoted to testing the hypotheses on the prevalence of the above-outlined lexical items.

4. Corpus analysis

Our analysis is descriptive and taxonomic; we have therefore not studied the frequency of occurrence of individual tokens within particular categories and types. Since the aim was to eliminate all nonce words and coinages, only the types represented by at least two tokens in at least two different tweets and used by at least two different tweeters have been incorporated into our taxonomy.

The selected units will be categorized and treated within the following forms of linear lexical reduction: initial clipping, final clipping, central clipping, edge-clipping, and substitutive reduction.

4.1 Initial clipping

Initial clipping may occasionally be referred to as "fore-clipping" (Algeo & Algeo 1993: 8; Borys 2018: 26; Hauptman 1993: 21; Jamet 2009:18; Mattiello 2013: 74, etc.), or "front clipping" (Kvetko 2009: 39). In addition, the denomination "apheresis" is used by Hauptman (1993: 21) and Jamet (2009: 18), and "initial truncation" by Lančarič & Pavlík (2016: 36).

The formation of this kind of clipping process involves the deletion of the initial segment of the derivational base while the final part remains intact. In contrast to final clipping, this type of clipping is not so productive (Lančarič & Pavlík 2016: 36-37), which might be explained by the fact that it is easier to identify final clipping (the beginning of the lexeme is enough) than initial clipping.

In our corpus, we have identified several types of initially clipped units. The majority of them have been sequential, which means that the eliminated element is uninterruptible and is moved in a specific position in the lexeme.

4.1.1 *Sequential initial clippings*

In the sequential initial clippings, the eliminated element is the first uninterruptible part of the derivational base.

4.1.1.1 *Type **puter** (computer)*

In this type of clipping the first part of the derivational base is deleted. The following initially clipped sequential units have been found in our corpus. All of them are reduced variants of a polysyllabic derivational base:

a) monosyllabic derivational base:

none;

b) polysyllabic derivational base:

appen ← happen; *appy* ← happy; *Bama* ← Alabama; *bout* ← about; *droid* ← android; *puter* ← computer; *wich* ← sandwich.

4.1.1.2 *Type 'cause (because)*

In this type of initial clipping the deleted element is marked by an apostrophe:

a) monosyllabic derivational base:

none;

b) polysyllabic derivational base:

'*cause* ← because; 'fraid ← afraid; 'tween ← between.

4.1.1.3 *Type **xcellent** (excellent)*

From the orthographic point of view, this type is represented by initially clipped lexemes. Nonetheless, from the orthoepic point of view, the related clipped units exhibit a sort of

sound iconicity of the first grapheme, and thus can be considered as a partial substitutive reduction. In our corpus, this type was represented by lexemes beginning with *ex-* and *any-*:

a) monosyllabic derivational base:

none;

b) polysyllabic derivational base:

ngage ← *engage*; *ny* ← *any*; *nywhere* ← *anywhere*; *xam* ← *exam*; *xcellent* ← *excellent*; *xcept* ← *except*; *xcite* ← *excite*; *xcuse* ← *excuse*; *xquisite* ← *exquisite*; *xtreme* ← *extreme*.

4.1.2 Non-sequential initial clipping

In the non-sequential clippings, the eliminated element is interruptible and multiple, as in random clipping (cf. Borys 2018: 9). In our corpus, we have not found any initially clipped non-sequential units.

Table 1. Initial clipping – summary

Initial clipping – type			
Sequential	Type <i>puter</i>	Monosyllabic derivational base	0
		Polysyllabic derivational base	7
	Type <i>xcellent</i>	Monosyllabic derivational base	0
		Polysyllabic derivational base	10
Non-sequential			0
			Σ 17

4.2 Final clipping

The phenomenon is equally known as "back-clipping" (Hauptman 1993: 21; Jamet 2009: 17; Kvetko 2009: 39; Mattiello 2013: 72) "apocopation" (Jamet 2009: 17), "apocope" (Arnold 1986: 138; Hauptman 1993: 21; Jamet 2009: 17), "hind clipping" (Algeo & Algeo 1993: 8), "terminal clipping" (Cannon 1989: 108), or "final truncation" (Lančarič & Pavlík 2016: 36). Final clipping is a very productive type of structural reduction in English, whose product is that part of the derivational base, which is retained after the final part of the same base is omitted.

In our corpus, we have identified the following types of finally clipped units:

4.2.1 *Sequential final clipping*

In the sequential final clippings, the eliminated element is the final uninterruptible part of the derivational base.

4.2.1.1 *Type vid (video)*

The clipping process of this type does not correspond to syllabic or morphological boundaries of the derivational base. The clipped counterpart mostly ends in one or two consonants, which belong to the subsequent syllable of the derivational base. Our corpus has proved that this is a frequent process. The following finally clipped sequential units have been found:

a) monosyllabic derivational base:

none;

b) polysyllabic derivational base:

ac ← account; *adv* ← advanced; *app* ← application; *availab* ← available; *cert* ← certificate; *cont* ← continue; *cred* ← credit; *deg* ← degree; *dev* ← developer; *diff* ← difficult; *dig* ← digital; *disc* ← discussion; *elem* ← elementary; *grad* ← graduation; *hon* ← honey; *incl* ← including; *int* ← intermediate; *meth* ← method; *obv* ← obviously; *opp* ← opportunity; *opt* ← optional; *poss* ← possibilities; *poss* ← possible; *proj* ← project; *reg* ← regularly; *req* ← requirement; *specif* ← specific; *unf* ← unfortunately; *vid* ← video; *voc* ← vocabulary.

4.2.1.2 *Type digi (digital)*

Clippings belonging to this type end in a vowel and, in contrast to, for instance, Type *vid*, they correspond to the syllable boundaries of the derivational base:

a) monosyllabic derivational base:

none;

b) polysyllabic derivational base:

cosmo ← cosmopolitan; *diffi* ← difficult; *digi* ← digital; *eco* ← ecological; *emo* ← emotional; *obse* ← obsession; *perso* ← personal; *tea* ← teacher.

4.2.1.3 Type **lan** (language)

This type represents clippings ending in one or two consonants marking the boundary of the first syllable retained:

a) monosyllabic derivational base:

none;

b) polysyllabic derivational base:

lan ← language; *pic* ← picture; *ques* ← question.

4.2.1.4 Type **sub** (substitute)

Clippings of this type are coined from derivational base prefixes which are retained after the final part of the derivational base is clipped. They thus follow syllabic as well as morphological boundaries of the derivational base:

a) monosyllabic derivational base:

none;

b) polysyllabic derivational base:

con ← conversation; *dis* ← disrespect; *mid* ← midway; *sub* ← substitute

4.2.1.5 Type **w** (week)

This type of final reduction is on the boundary between initialism and final clipping since the initial grapheme represents the whole lexeme:

a) monosyllabic derivational base:

t ← to; *w* ← week;

b) polysyllabic derivational base:

b ← birthday; *e* ← everybody.

4.2.1.6 Type *hav* (*have*)

The number of derivational base syllables is preserved in this type of a clipped form. Similarly to Type *xcellent*, some of these clipped units may exhibit a function of sound icons if pronounced alphabetically, and thus the process of clipping partially overlaps with the process of substitutive reduction (cf. *mayb* ← *maybe*). In our corpus we have found the following examples:

a) monosyllabic derivational base:

ar ← are; *bac* ← back; *doz* ← doze; *fo* ← for; *hav* ← have; *lov* ← love; *ther* ← there; *tho* ← though;

b) polysyllabic derivational base:

befo ← before; *mayb* ← maybe.

4.2.1.7 Type *comin* (*coming*)

This process of clipping results in the omission of "g" grapheme from the derivational base "-ing" suffix. Thurlow (2003: 3) posits that such units serve both the need for reduction and phonological approximation:

a) monosyllabic derivational base:

none;

b) polysyllabic derivational base:

bein ← being; *blazin* ← blazing; *comin* ← coming; *cookin* ← cooking; *dyin* ← dying; *helpin* ← helping; *interestin* ← interesting; *leavin* ← leaving; *lovin* ← loving; *playin* ← playing; *rollin* ← rolling; *steppin* ← stepping.

4.2.2 Non-sequential final clipping

In our corpus, we have not found any non-sequential final clippings.

Table 2. Final clipping – summary

Final clipping – type			
Sequential	Type <i>vid</i>	Monosyllabic derivational base	0
		Polysyllabic derivational base	30
	Type <i>digi</i>	Monosyllabic derivational base	0
		Polysyllabic derivational base	8
	Type <i>lan</i>	Monosyllabic derivational base	0
		Polysyllabic derivational base	3
	Type <i>sub</i>	Monosyllabic derivational base	0
		Polysyllabic derivational base	4
	Type <i>w</i>	Monosyllabic derivational base	2
		Polysyllabic derivational base	2
	Type <i>hav</i>	Monosyllabic derivational base	8
		Polysyllabic derivational base	2
	Type <i>comin</i>	Monosyllabic derivational base	0
		Polysyllabic derivational base	12
Non-sequential			0
			Σ71

4.3 Central clipping

Central clipping is the process by which the derivational base's medial segment is removed. The process manifests itself in the reduction of the number of syllables or graphemes in the derivational base as well as in the violability of its syllable boundaries (Borys 2018: 22). Thus, both the initial and the final parts of the derivational base are retained. The process is also called "internal clipping" (Algeo & Algeo 1993: 9), "medial clipping" (Arnold 1986: 138; Cannon 1989: 108; Kvetko 2009: 40), "median clipping" (Jamet 2009: 18), "syncope" (Arnold 1986: 138; Hauptman 1993: 21), or "central truncation" (Lančarič & Pavlík 2016: 37). The following subtypes of central clipping have been detected.

4.3.1 Sequential central clipping

In the sequential central clippings, the eliminated element is the central uninterruptible part of the derivational base.

4.3.1.1 Type **grp** (group)

This type of clipping involves the omission of one monophthong or one diphthong of the derivational base. In contrast with final clipping, central clipping is not only typical of polysyllabic lexemes but frequently occurs with monosyllabic lexemes, too:

a) monosyllabic derivational base:

bck ← back; *btch* ← bitch; *clm* ← calm; *cme* ← come; *fcts* ← facts; *frm* ← from; *grp* ← group; *grt* ← great; *hve* ← have; *jst* ← just; *knw* ← know; *nxt* ← next; *pln* ← plan; *prs* ← pairs; *scrn* ← screen; *snds* ← sounds; *thn* ← than; *thn* ← then; *thnk* ← think; *thr* ← their; *txt* ← text; *wrds* ← words;

b) polysyllabic derivational base:

abt ← about; *bettr* ← better; *givn* ← given; *lttle* ← little; *nevr* ← never; *pple* ← people; *reasn* ← reason; *rlly* ← really; *schdule* ← schedule; *secnd* ← second; *shring* ← sharing; *supposd* ← supposed; *tcher* ← teacher.

4.3.1.2 Type **sthing** (something)

This is a type of morphological clipping process (cf. Type *gf*) in which only one morpheme of the polymorphemic derivational base is clipped:

a) monosyllabic derivational base:

none;

b) polysyllabic derivational base:

bday ← birthday; *classrm* ← classroom; *itslf* ← itself; *sthing* ← something.

4.3.1.3 Type **yr** (year)

Units falling within this type have a framed form (cf. "frame abbreviations" in Lančarič 2008) because they consist of the initial and the final grapheme of the derivational base, thus representing its formal margins.

a) monosyllabic derivational base:

bk ← book; *cn* ← can; *dd* ← did; *fr* ← for; *ft* ← fight; *gd* ← good; *hr* ← hour; *hw* ← how; *keep* ← kp; *nd* ← need; *nt* ← night; *nt* ← not; *pt* ← point; *wd* ← would; *wk* ← week; *yr* ← year;

b) polysyllabic derivational base:

qn ← question; *sr* ← senior; *tr* ← teacher.

4.3.1.4 Type ***cud*** (*could*)

Clipped units of this type exhibit omission of at least one grapheme representing a consonant and one grapheme representing a vowel.

a) monosyllabic derivational base:

cud ← could; *mth* ← month; *pse* ← please; *sml* ← small; *shud* ← should; *tnks* ← thanks;

b) polysyllabic derivational base:

teachg ← teaching.

4.3.2 Non-sequential central clipping

As already mentioned above, in the non-sequential clippings the eliminated element is interruptible and similar to random clipping. In contrast to some other types of clipping, the non-sequential central clipping is very productive, which has been proved by the examples in our corpus.

4.3.2.1 Type ***tchr*** (*teacher*)

This is the type of clippings coined from polysyllabic lexemes. They consist of a group of consonants which mark the formal skeleton or the supposed structure of the unreduced derivational base (cf. "skeleton abbreviations" in Lančarič 2008). Graphemes in the clipped unit represent all the consonants of the polysyllabic derivational base. In our corpus we have found the following clippings of this type:

a) monosyllabic derivational base:

none;

b) polysyllabic derivational base:

chngd ← changed; *dwntwn* ← downtown; *fbk* ← facebook; *nvr* ← never; *ppl* ← people; *prblm* ← problem; *rsrch* ← research; *sggst* ← suggest; *smtms* ← sometimes; *tchr* ← teacher; *wrkld* ← workload.

4.3.2.2 Type *smts* (sometimes)

In contrast to Type *tchr*, clippings belonging to this type have preserved only some of the graphemes representing consonants of the derivational base:

a) monosyllabic derivational base:

none;

b) polysyllabic derivational base:

btr ← butter; *fbk* ← facebook; *fdbk* ← feedback; *hmwk* ← homework; *lkg* ← looking; *lrng* ← learning; *pjct* ← project; *rmbr* ← remember; *rqmt* ← requirement; *smtg* ← something; *smts* ← sometimes; *tmrw* ← tomorrow.

4.3.2.3 Type *mngment* (management)

This is another type of skeleton clippings (cf. type *tchr*) which preserve not only derivational base consonants but also vowels:

a) monosyllabic derivational base:

none;

b) polysyllabic derivational base:

appt ← appointment; *awrness* ← awareness; *hwy* ← highway; *mngment* ← management; *pbly* ← probably; *whitbd* ← whiteboard.

Table 3. Central clipping – summary

Central clipping – type			
sequential	Type <i>grp</i>	Monosyllabic derivational base	22
		polysyllabic derivational base	13
	Type <i>sting</i>	monosyllabic derivational base	0
		polysyllabic derivational base	4
	Type <i>yr</i>	monosyllabic derivational base	16
		polysyllabic derivational base	3
	Type <i>cud</i>	monosyllabic derivational base	6
		polysyllabic derivational base	1
Non-sequential	Type <i>tchr</i>	monosyllabic derivational base	0
		polysyllabic derivational base	11
	Type <i>smts</i>	monosyllabic derivational base	0
		polysyllabic derivational base	12
	Type <i>mngment</i>	monosyllabic derivational base	0
		polysyllabic derivational base	6
			Σ 94

4.4 Edge-clipping

Edge-clipping (Mattiello 2013: 75) is also referred to as "mixed clipping" (Kvetko 2009: 39), "syncope" (Jamet 2009: 18), or "combined truncation" (Lančarič & Pavlík 2016: 37). This type of clipping is rare in English (Mattiello 2013: 75). It consists in simultaneous deletion of the initial and the final parts of the derivational base (e.g., *flu* ← *influenza*; *van* ← *advantage*), and thus leads to the conservation of the central part of the derivational base (cf. Borys 2018). In our corpus, we have found no example of this type.

Table 4. Edge-clipping – summary

Final clipping – type	
Edge-clipping	0
	Σ 0

4.5 Combined central and final clipping

This is a process of clipping that involves omission of the central and the final part of the derivational base.

4.5.1 Type **dn** (*done*)

This type of clipping involves omission of two vowels: middle and final. In our corpus it occurred only with monosyllabic derivational bases:

a) monosyllabic derivational base:

cm ← come; *dn* ← done; *hr* ← here; *mr* ← more; *sm* ← some; *thr* ← there;

b) polysyllabic derivational base:

none.

4.5.2 Type **pp** (*paper*)

Clippings of this type originate from disyllabic derivational bases and contain consonants representing the beginning of each of their syllables. Similarly to Type *dn*, this process combines central and final clipping (cf. Type *dn*):

a) monosyllabic derivational base:

none;

b) polysyllabic derivational base:

bb ← baby; *mb* ← mobile; *pp* ← paper.

4.5.3 Type **eqt** (*equity*)

Clippings of this type originate from polysyllabic derivational bases and combine central and final clippings:

a) monosyllabic derivational base:

none;

b) polysyllabic derivational base:

droppn ← dropping; *eqt* ← equity; *prap* ← perhaps; *spk* ← speaking; *txtin* ← texting.

4.5.4 Type **gf** (*girlfriend*)

This is a type of morphological clipping (cf. "morphological abbreviations" in Lančarič & Pavlík 2016: 27), following the boundaries between the morphemes of the derivational

base. Morphological clippings thus consist of graphemes which function as initial graphemes or phonemes of the derivational base's morphological constituents:

a) monosyllabic derivational base:

none;

b) polysyllabic derivational base:

ath ← anything; *bg* ← background; *dl* ← download; *gf* ← girlfriend; *ho* ← hangout; *nth* ← nothing; *ts* ← transcript.

Table 5. Combined central and final clipping – summary

Combined central and final clipping		
<i>Type dn</i>	monosyllabic derivational base	6
	polysyllabic derivational base	0
<i>Type pp</i>	monosyllabic derivational base	0
	polysyllabic derivational base	3
<i>Type eqt</i>	monosyllabic derivational base	0
	polysyllabic derivational base	5
<i>Type gf</i>	monosyllabic derivational base	0
	polysyllabic derivational base	7
		Σ 21

4.6 Substitutive reduction

In standard written communication, graphemes are elements without a causal relation to the sound they represent. This apriori conventionalized feature of the grapheme may be used as the phonic icon in a different graphematic context (e.g., *enuf* ← *enough*; *ezy* ← *easy*; *nrg* ← *energy*) (cf. Lančarič 2015: 107). Phonic iconicity, which simplifies informal keyboard-to-screen communication, is a frequent phenomenon. It can be defined as an analogy or similarity between the form of a derivational base and its target reduced variant. In our corpus, we have identified units manifesting their sound iconicity in combinations of graphemes as well as graphemes and numbers whose phonic makeup represents the sound nature of the derivational bases or syllables (ibid., 106). This type of phonic replacement contributes to the economy of language when the units not only

imitate the original phonic structure of the derivational base, but reduce the number of its graphemes. Since this type of reduction is represented by both graphemes and numbers, we have subdivided it into two categories: alphabetic substitutive reduction and alphanumeric substitutive reduction.

4.6.1 *Alphabetic substitutive reduction*

Through the process of alphabetic substitutive reduction, we do not only reduce the number of graphemes, but also change the spelling so that it corresponds to the pronunciation of the derivational base.

4.6.1.1 *Type **tyga** (tiger)*

This type represents sequential final alphabetic substitutive reductions. The process operates at the end of the derivational base but some graphic changes may occur in the medial parts:

a) monosyllabic derivational base:

none;

b) polysyllabic derivational base:

eva ← ever; *ova* ← over; *sista* ← sister; *tyga* ← tiger; *weneva* ← whenever.

4.6.1.2 *Type **leet** (elite)*

This type clipping involves sequential central alphabetic substitutive reductions combined with initial clipping:

a) monosyllabic derivational base:

none;

b) polysyllabic derivational base:

leet ← elite; *varsity* ← university.

4.6.1.3 Type *bcome* (*become*)

This type represents sequential medial alphabetic substitutive reduction associated with letter iconicity. The process operates in the middle of the derivational base. In our corpus we have found only one example of this type:

a) monosyllabic derivational base:

none;

b) polysyllabic derivational base:

bcome ← become.

4.6.2 Alphanumeric substitutive reduction

4.6.2.1 Type *2day* (*today*)

This type involves sequential numeric initial substitutive reductions. Both monosyllabic and polysyllabic derivational base variants have been identified in our corpus:

a) monosyllabic derivational base:

Ice ← once;

b) polysyllabic derivational base:

2day ← today; *2gether* ← together; *2night* ← tonight; *4ever* ← forever; *4get* ← forget.

4.6.2.2 Type *4evr* (*forever*)

This type represents non-sequential initial numeric substitutive reductions combined with central clipping. In our corpus we have identified only polysyllabic units of this type:

a) monosyllabic derivational base:

none;

b) polysyllabic derivational base:

2nt ← tonight; *4evr* ← forever.

4.6.2.3 Type *gr8* (*great*)

This sequential final numeric substitutive reduction was represented several times but only by one form:

a) monosyllabic derivational base:

gr8 ← *great*;

b) polysyllabic derivational base:

none.

4.6.2.4 Type *l8tr* (*later*)

This type represents non-sequential central numeric substitutive reduction combined with central clipping:

a) monosyllabic derivational base:

none;

b) polysyllabic derivational base:

cr8ng ← *creating*; *b2wn* ← *between*; *l8tr* ← *later*; *b3* ← *battery*.

Table 6. Substitutive reduction – summary

Substitutive reduction – type			
Alphabetic substitutive reduction	Type <i>tyga</i>	Monosyllabic derivational base	0
		Polysyllabic derivational base	5
	Type <i>leet</i>	Monosyllabic derivational base	0
		Polysyllabic derivational base	2
	Type <i>bcome</i>	Monosyllabic derivational base	0
		Polysyllabic derivational base	1
Alphanumeric substitutive reduction	Type <i>2day</i>	Monosyllabic derivational base	1
		Polysyllabic derivational base	5
	Type <i>4evr</i>	Monosyllabic derivational base	0
		Polysyllabic derivational base	2
	Type <i>gr8</i>	Monosyllabic derivational base	1
		Polysyllabic derivational base	0
	Type <i>l8tr</i>	Monosyllabic derivational base	0
		Polysyllabic derivational base	4
			Σ 21

H₁ – testing

Table 7. H₁ – testing

Type	No:
Initial clipping	17
Final clipping	71
Central clipping	94
Combined central and final clipping	21
Edge-clipping	0
Substitutive reduction	21
	Σ224

Due to the nature of the hypothesis (Informal online communication is marked by a significant prevalence of final and central clippings as "less important" information carriers), central and final clipping have been organized into one category. Also, the category of edge-clipping has been removed because it contains 0 tokens. The results may be observed in the table below.

Table 8. H₁ – results

Type	No:
Initial clipping	17
Final clipping / central clipping / combined central and final clipping (merged)	186
Substitutive reduction	21
	Σ224

The results will be statistically verified using the Chi-square goodness-of-fit formula.

Table 9. Chi-square goodness-of-fit test

	<i>Observed</i>	<i>Expected</i>	<i>Difference</i>	<i>Difference Sq.</i>	<i>Diff.Sq./Exp Ft.</i>
Initial	17	74.7	-57.00	3249.00	43.32
Final + central + combined	186	74.7	111.00	12321.00	164.28
Subst. reduction	21	74.7	-54.00	2916.00	38.88
					246.480

The results of the goodness-of-fit test are the following: $\chi^2 = 246.480, p < .00001$. The result is significant at $p < .01$. This means that there is a significant difference among the inspected categories compared to the expected frequencies. To find out which particular categories are different, a series of post-hoc pair-wise goodness-of-fit tests have been carried out. Since there are 3 categories, the significance level was reduced to $0.05/3 = 0.0166$.

Table 10. Post-hoc pair-wise goodness-of-fit tests

	<i>Observed</i>	<i>Expected</i>	<i>Difference</i>	<i>Difference Sq.</i>	<i>Diff.Sq./Exp Ft.</i>
Initial	17	19	-2.00	4.00	0.21
Subst. reduction	21	19	2.00	4.00	0.21
					0.421

	<i>Observed</i>	<i>Expected</i>	<i>Difference</i>	<i>Difference Sq.</i>	<i>Diff.Sq./Exp Ft.</i>
Initial	17	101.5	-84.50	7140.25	70.35
Final + central + combined	186	101.5	84.50	7140.25	70.35
					140.695

	<i>Observed</i>	<i>Expected</i>	<i>Difference</i>	<i>Difference Sq.</i>	<i>Diff.Sq./Exp Ft.</i>
Final + central + combined	186	103.05	82.50	6806.25	65.76
Sub. reduction	21	103.05	-82.50	6806.25	65.76
					131.522

The results of the post-hoc pairwise goodness-of-fit tests are the following:

Initial vs. Non-initial (final + central + combined): $\chi^2 = 140.695, p < .00001$.

Initial vs. Substitutive reduction: $\chi^2 = 0.421, p = .51641$.

Non-initial vs. Substitutive reduction: $\chi^2 = 131.522, p < .00001$.

In the post-hoc test we compared all categories individually. The partial comparison shows statistically significant differences in 2 out of 3 categories.

This means that there are statistically significant differences among tested categories. In terms of the tested hypothesis, we can state that non-initial clipping is indeed more frequent than any other type of clipping. H₁ has been confirmed.

H₂ – testing

H₂ tests the assumption that consonants are primary carriers of the meaning. Thus, when a lexeme is reduced (clipped), in clipped parts, vowels prevail over consonants while consonants (the main carriers of meaning) remain. To test this assumption, the total number of vowels and consonants in all clipped lexemes will be identified and their ratio will be determined. The obtained values will be statistically tested for the significance of the difference in the distribution of vowels and consonants in clipped elements.

Table 11. H₂ – testing

Type of clipping	Lexeme count	Clipped vow. count	Clipped cons. count
Initial clipping	17	19	12
Final clipping	71	135	144
Central clipping	94	177	45
Combined (central+final)	21	45	35
Sub. reduction	21	34	27
	Σ224	Σ410	Σ263
Total number of clipped elements	673		

Table 12. H₂ – results

Type of clipping / reduction	Clipped/reduced vow. count	Clipped/reduced cons. count
	410	263

Table 13. Chi-square goodness-of-fit test

	<i>Observed</i>	<i>Expected</i>	<i>Difference</i>	<i>Difference Sq.</i>	<i>Diff.Sq./Exp Ft.</i>
Clipped / reduced vowels	410	336.5	73.50	5402.25	16.05
Clipped / reduced consonants	263	336.5	-73.50	5402.25	16.05
					32.108

The Chi² value is 32.108. The p-value is < .00001. The result is significant at $p < .05$. The results of the goodness-of-fit test are the following: Chi² = 32.108, $p < .001$. This means that vowels are dropped significantly more often than consonants during clipping. H₂ has been confirmed.

6. Conclusions

The linguistic economy principle applies to different levels of language as a consequence of our tendency to take the least effort to most of our communicative resources. This paper has been concerned with economizing processes operating during computer-mediated on-line communication, which often requires spontaneous reactions and such utterances are thus condensed, ellipted or clipped. In particular, lexemes are initialized, acronymized or structurally reduced. In English, however, there is no clear-cut rule of how to reduce the lexical units. The processes are marked by many irregularities as well as phonological approximation and orthographic assimilation associated with special sound and graphic iconic symbols. In addition to this, the phonetic realization of the reduced lexeme does not usually perfectly correspond to the sound of the original unreduced lexeme. However, the reductions are interpreted with ease in understanding within the given social group sharing the same communicative context.

We have identified and categorized the structural reduction of simple lexemes with a focus on clipping and substitutive reduction processes. We have described 224 reduced units and grouped them into initial, final, central clippings, edge-clippings, combined central and final clippings and substitutive reductions, with respect to sequential or non-sequential nature of reduction as well as monosyllabic and polysyllabic structure of the derivational base.

Within the pilot study, we had assumed the prevalence of final clipping types, because in English the initial parts of lexemes usually carry the most important segment and thus tend to be preserved. We had also assumed the prevalence of consonants in the reduced units because they are important carriers of information and are not as predictable as vowels. Since the research was descriptive and taxonomic, we did not study the frequency of the occurrence of individual tokens. Particular categories and types were determined and all the nonce coinages were eliminated.

The taxonomy we suggested consists of six major types of structural reductions of lexemes. Two hypotheses were tested; H_1 focused on the prevalent type of clipping which supposedly determines certain parts of lexemes as primary information carriers. The category of central clipping was linked to the category of final clipping. In accordance with the previous assumption that initial parts of lexemes are the primary information carriers whereas the remaining parts, in this respect, come as secondary, the complex category of final + central + combined clipping was tested as prevailing over the other categories. This finding was tested statistically. The level of statistical significance, the p -value $< .00001$ and $< .00005$ proved that the observed counts are significantly disproportional against the expected counts. These findings provide enough evidence for the falsification of H_0 (All lexeme segments are equal information carriers; all types of clippings are distributed equally) and acceptance of H_1 (Informal online communication is marked by a significant prevalence of final and central clippings as "less important")

information carriers). Since the initial parts of lexemes appear to be primary information carriers, these would less likely be clipped. Clipped lexemes will predominantly involve the remaining parts of lexemes, which, with respect to the information-carrier status, come as secondary.

H₂ focused on a dominance of information carriers on the vowel and the consonant level. Consonants, as the primary information carriers were supposed to be clipped less frequently than vowels. Aggregate categories of clipped vowels (410) and clipped consonants (263) were established, counted out of all clipped lexemes. The research identified the category of vowels as prevalent in clipped parts of lexemes. This finding was tested statistically with the p -value $< .00005$ proving its significance. The level of significance provided us with the evidence for the falsification of H₀ (In informal online communication, clippings are marked by an equal removal of vowels and consonants) and the acceptance of H₂ (Informal online communication is characterized by a significantly prevalent removal of vowels as less important information carriers).

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Résumé

Present-day English is quite remarkable for various processes of language economy. This modern phenomenon is strikingly significant in on-line chat communication where the message delivered by a lexeme appears to be more relevant than its actual make-up. As a result, lexemes of various lengths are commonly structurally reduced. This article presents a two-level research into the processes of lexical reductions of lexemes, particularly regarding clippings and substitutive reductions. In the introductory part, six major categories of structural reductions of lexemes were established based on corpus findings. The second part of the research assumed that, with respect to carrying information, some

parts of lexemes are more important than others. H_1 tested the assumption that final clippings, as less relevant from the message-carrying perspective, will be the prevalent types of clippings. The category of central clipping appears to overlap between the initial and final clippings. To secure the objectivity of the category, it was coupled with the final clipping category and was tested against the other types of clippings. The findings proved the joint category of final and central clippings significantly prevalent, which provided evidence for the acceptance of H_1 . H_2 tested the assumption that consonants are primary information carriers and thus they tend not to be clipped or are clipped less frequently than vowels. The research identified vowels as significantly prevalent in the clipped parts over consonants, which provided us with enough evidence for the falsification of H_0 and the acceptance of H_2 . Based on the research findings, a generalization may be made that even though the decision, on which part of a lexeme is to be reduced may appear quite arbitrary, it is still governed by the semantic values of the lexical parts which are to be removed.

Key words: clipping, grapheme, lexeme, on-line communication, reduction, substitution, syllable.

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**COVID-19 AS A MEDIA-CUM-LANGUAGE EVENT:
COGNITIVE, COMMUNICATIVE,
AND CROSS-CULTURAL ASPECTS**

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Abstract: The authors study the ways the COVID-19 pandemic is represented in the media in seven languages (Russian, Ukrainian, Slovak, Polish, German, English, and Italian) with the aim of throwing light on its universal and culturally specific features. The media part of the article considers the COVID-19 pandemic as hard news, while its linguistic section focuses on the literal and metaphoric representation of this phenomenon and its instantiation in the Internet memes.

Key words: coronavirus, COVID-19, pandemic, infodemic, online media, fake news, concept, conceptual metaphor, humour, Internet meme.

"The coronavirus epidemic is a kind of 'Five Point Palm Exploding Heart Technique' attack on the global capitalist system – a signal that we cannot go on the way we were up until now, that a radical change is needed"

Slavoj Žižek

"The main way of spreading coronavirus is Facebook"

(from the Internet)

1. Introduction

Though COVID-19 came as an abrupt shock to millions of people, experts refuse to grant it the "black swan" status, which is given only to events characterized by low likelihood and disastrous consequences. The pandemic that has been rocking the planet for almost a year certainly meets the second requirement. The first condition, however, is not satisfied: the pandemic is a quite predictable result of globalization, which has created conditions both for the emergence of the pandemic, which is of a zoonotic origin and was caused by a change of the habitat of certain species, and for its spread, enabled by intensive contacts between people of different countries.

A powerful agent of the globalized society, which ensures information supply and enables public debate, is news media. They have responded to the pandemic with a flood of information, alongside disinformation and misinformation. This powerful flow, among other things, is a rich source of linguistic data on how COVID-19 is perceived, evaluated, and conceptualized by speakers of different languages. In this paper, we attempt to throw light on two interconnected issues – COVID-19 from the media and linguistic perspectives – by considering the data of the Russian, Ukrainian, Slovak, Polish, German, English, and Italian languages.

1.1 Pandemic through infodemic

During historical pandemics (e.g., Justinian Plague, Antonine Plague, Black Death, Spanish Flu) the spread of information was much more limited than it is today, when practically nothing impedes information flows, which, as it happens, is potentially dangerous, as it can result in an excess of information, mis-/ disinformation, fake news and the like. Effectively, as Andreoni and Nardone (2020: 88) contend, "on a social level, the contagion of fake news is no less epidemic than a virus".

In this communicative reality, we have to face the current COVID-19 pandemic, accompanied by a relative type of self-developed "infodemic", i.e., "the dissemination of a huge amount of information from different sources and from the often unverifiable basis" (Grandi & Piovan 2020), or in other terms, "information bulimia on social networks and in quasi journalism" (Andreoni & Nardone 2020: 25). The infodemic, in its turn, does not serve to inform, warn, or influence; instead, it develops a kind of pandemic subconscious in people that sharpens their perception of pandemic phenomena, stimulates the creation of new linguistic labels, definitions, and conceptualizations.

Most of these effects are achieved through language and other semiotic systems used in media communication. Television is probably the most influential of them (in terms of the size of the audience across all age groups); then comes Internet hypertextual and multimodal communication (a universal medium that could theoretically absorb television and other video and speech transmission channels), followed by social networks (which do not actually exist without the Internet). To a lesser extent, this also applies to the radio and traditional press, which should not be overlooked as they continue to be popular, even in times of plague, among the older or more "demanding" part of the population. Besides, it should be remembered that the press in particular, but also the radio, are doing well on the Internet. Ergo, the Internet, and, especially, various kinds of newspapers published online are certainly the media that should be given due attention in the analysis undertaken here.

1.2 The linguistic side of the infodemic

Ever since the outbreak of the worldwide pandemic caused by coronavirus disease 2019, commonly referred to as coronavirus or COVID-19 (in our paper we use these terms interchangeably), the media all over the world have been flooded with news releases concerning the health situation of populations in countries in all corners of the world. The news has presented facts and figures concerning the number of infections, the death toll, as well as the number of people who have been cured. These coverages are awash with medical terminology. However, to relay the messages in a more engaging way, the mass media have started to form a specific type of discourse characterised by "user-friendly" designations of the COVID-19-related phenomena, in particular, metaphors and neologisms as well as a significant dose of humorous interpretations of the issue in different languages and socio-cultures.

One of the objectives of this research is to explore the commonalities and differences of metaphorical conceptualizations of COVID-19 across the Slovak, Polish, Ukrainian, Russian, English, Italian, and German languages. As more neologisms are coined, medical terms become popular and the number of metaphors grows, the linguistic aspect of the issue has gained in importance for linguists of all creeds (see Sections 3 and 4 for more detail).

Another aspect of our research is connected with humour, because, as we have noticed, the mass media treat the pandemic not only seriously, but in a humorous tonality as well. One of the genres in which COVID-19 has obtained a humorous interpretation is that of the Internet memes. The humour of the Internet memes has both universal and nationally specific features, which are brought to light here by considering Russian, Ukrainian, Slovak, Polish, German, English, Italian, and French memes.

1.3 The structure of the paper

Structurally, this paper consists of two parts, which consider the perceptions of the coronavirus pandemic by the people of seven cultures speaking different languages from two perspectives: first, as a media event (Section 2), second, as a linguistic phenomenon (Sections 3, 4, and 5). The second line of inquiry presupposes studying linguistic units that designate COVID-19 and related phenomena from cognitive, communicative, and cross-cultural viewpoints.

2. COVID-19 as a natural vs. media phenomenon

Our analysis of the information about COVID-19, which is presented in all kinds of media, shows that this phenomenon has three aspects. As far as it is a disease, it has a **physical aspect**. There appeared several definitions of this disease, its symptoms, descriptions of its waves and, consequently, medical terms known mainly to specialists in different branches of medicine: infectiologists, microbiologists, epidemiologists, and the like; here also belong names of specific equipment which became known to the general public (cf. Kacprzak 2000; Serianni 2005; 2007; Turley 2020).

Being very often a breaking news item, COVID-19 can definitely be treated from the viewpoint of **communication**; thus, it has a **social** aspect. Pieces of news presented in the media of any kind can be attributed to analytical or emotive journalism. Some journalistic messages belong to hard news as a typical genre of emotive journalism. However, the information found in the media, especially digital ones, can sometimes be distorted and later turns out to be fake.

2.1 Physical aspect

2.1.1 COVID-19: a fact file

When certain disease names are established or conventionally absorbed into a language, neutrality cannot be maintained. This is borne out by the names of historical viral pandemics, such as Spanish Flu, numerous eponymous names associated even with the name of the doctor or scientist who discovered and classified the disease, or

the names of other entities, including those created by mythology and human imagination (e.g., such names as *Donohue syndrome*, discovered in 1948 by Canadian doctor William L. Donohue, also called *leprechaunism* from the Irish word *leprechaun* – kind of a gnome, dwarf). It is not a form that leads to an origin and territorial link, as is the case with the etiologically close MERS.

The elements of the COVID-19 definition can be multiplied and developed, proceeding from objective to more subjective elements and being modified by new circumstances and discoveries. In this way, COVID-19 becomes a collection of contents that forms a chain of encyclopaedic links based on the principle of cognitive purport (see Croft & Cruse 2004: 100-101) or, in other words, a list of sequences that are readable to specialists, but only selectively understandable and known to the average language user. Anyway, the latter pays more attention to all kinds of subjective information, often culture specific and scientifically unsubstantiated (cf. accumulation of references to this phenomenon within the *charge culturelle partagée* – the shared cultural burden, as formulated by (Galison 1998).

The least developed version of the COVID-19 definition states that it is 'a condition caused by SARS-CoV-2'. According to the WHO study (Origin of SARS-CoV-2, 2020), this definition can be extended to various other specifications such as:

- SARS-CoV-2 belonging to the beta-CoV coronavirus group (a member of the *Coronaviridae* family);
- a probable zoonotic origin (in this case hypothetically linked to bats from the *Rhinolophus* genus or scales, but according to the popular-science news, these may also be "young wolves, camels, koalas, golden cicadas, bamboo rats, squirrels, foxes, civets, hedgehogs, turtles, scorpions, salamanders, and crocodiles" (Lipiec 2020);
- a time frame for the first big numbers of infected people between December 2019 and January 2020 at the Huananan Wholesale Seafood Market in Wuhan City in China;

- appearance of the symptoms of the disease in up to 14 days after contracting the virus;
- presence of such symptoms as fever, dry cough, loss of smell or taste (anosmia and dysgeusia), in more severe cases, pneumonia and respiratory problems, in extreme cases leading to serious complications and death (for more information see Symptoms of coronavirus, 2020);
- the outbreak of a pandemic, which has taken a heavy death toll and shocked social and economic life worldwide.

In principle, no alternative names to COVID-19 have been recorded, apart from the metonym "coronavirus". Outside the realm of metaphors, spontaneity and colloquiality of the language have no bearing on such a widespread acronym.

In many communicative situations, a metonymic transfer is used, as in the opposite case of SARS and MERS, specifically when talking about COVID-19, the name of the cause is used, i.e. *coronavirus*, often shortened to *corona*; in the English language, the shortening process went even further producing the clipping *rona* in common language usage.

It is also worth noting that the blend COVID-19 is very often reduced to COVID, also being the basis of derivatives (e.g., Pl. adj. *covidowy*; see, e.g., Pl. *covidowe palce* – COVID fingers, *post-covidowa rzeczywistość* – post-COVID reality, *ustawa covidowa* – COVID law (<https://portal.abczdrowie.pl/covidowe-palce-nietypowy-objaw-zakazenia-koronawirusem>; <https://crido.pl/blog-taxes/zatrudnianie-pracownikow-w-post-covidowej-rzeczywistosci-pytania-i-odpowiedzi-z-webinarium-crido/>; <https://everethnews.pl/newsy/nowa-ustawa-covidowa-w-sejmie-jakie-zmiany-sie-w-niej-znalazly/>).

From a purely linguistic point of view, COVID is a noun in the form of an acronym with the attributes of a proper name; it designates an extra-linguistic object in an

individualized way; however, it functions as a common noun, especially because it is based on the lexical meaning presenting a comprehensive definition of a concept (to be considered in more detail in Section 3).

As much news in the world reports, the name COVID-19 is constructed in such a technical and neutral way (see above) that it is not associated with any geographical location or cultural circles, let alone any social group or individual.

On February 11, 2020 the WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus announced in Geneva, "We had to find a name that did not refer to a geographical location, an animal, an individual or group of people, and which is also pronounceable and related to the disease." Ghebreyesus added, "Having a name matters to prevent the use of other names that can be inaccurate or stigmatizing. It also gives us a standard format to use for any future coronavirus outbreaks". The World Health Organization, under a set of guidelines, advises against using place names such as Ebola, Zika, or Spanish flu – where diseases were first identified – as they can stigmatize regions or ethnic groups" (Tucker 2020).

2.1.2 COVID-19 waves

We can define the time frames of different surreal eras that have become real (cf. Andreoni & Nardone 2020: 127): the pre-coronavirus era, the pandemic era, inter-phase pandemic era, and we can already predict a post-coronavirus era, despite some views expressed primarily by the World Health Organization (WHO). Each of them is shaped by a certain media message. As a result, Italians, as well as people from other European countries, realized how much the virus mocked them. At the beginning of the pandemic, they mocked it, leading public and private lives defying limitations. Through media messages, they learned about the effects of COVID-19 spread. The media have elucidated the role of doctors, hospitals, and various services in the pandemic era. Alas, it is also due to an easy form of communication and dissemination of information that they are exposed to scientifically unproven data, which are

medically dangerous and riddled with superstitions, etc., e.g., a recommendation to drink lemon juice with soda to protect against infection and other absurd tips that came out of weeks of "viral psychosis" (ibid., 49).

A specific kind of communication can be observed in the case of the evolving COVID-19 pandemic, entering into successive phases of its reign practically on the whole Earth, with the intensity changing in space and time because virus carriers appear within individuals and social gatherings. When it was expected not to return, as a result of the quarantine measures, i.e., the global lockdown between March and May 2020, the pandemic hit again, with consequences similar to those observed during its first phase.

The second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic set in in the autumn of 2020 amidst persistent dynamics and uncertainty about the present and the past, but at the same time, it is the phase, in which hope for a medical defeat of the coronavirus increases. In fact, scientific and industrial processes started towards the production of drugs that inhibit disease development, as well as vaccines to prevent the virus that causes the infection.

What is important, however, is what the WHO stresses that in reality we should not talk about phases or waves of COVID-19 but about the growing pandemic that is claiming more and more victims and affecting different social and age groups – the statistics are inexorable and change from one day to the next; there are also some trends that we would like to see as permanent, but they are not, e.g., the alleged lower susceptibility to the disease among 60-70-year-olds, as well as ambiguous perception of the disease symptoms and risk assessment.

The WHO briefing on August 18, 2020 showed that "the coronavirus pandemic is now being driven by people in their 20s, 30s, and 40s who don't know they are infected. [...] The coronavirus has infected nearly 22 million people worldwide and killed at

least 774,600 [...]. Earlier this [sic.] month [August 2020], the WHO published the analysis of 6 million infections between February 24 and July 12 and found that the share of people between ages 15 and 24 rose to 15% from 4.5%" (Lovelace 2020).

COVID-19 is one of the most dynamic pandemics affecting mankind, of which as much is known as not, and the accompanying infodemic is a clear *signum temporis* in the world that immediately transmits and absorbs information.

2.1.3 "Patient zero"

In our opinion, "Patient zero" includes the definition of this disease, its waves, the information about the so-called "zero patient", who a pandemic usually starts with, different and common features of COVID-19 and other serious diseases.

The question of priority in the emergence of a new virus among the Chinese is not clear enough. If only truthful information had reached the rest of the world, another case considered the initial one in raising the alarm about the spread of COVID-19 was Dr. Li Wenliang, who was devoted to patients and died because of the virus (Santevecchi 2020).

In Poland, according to the official findings, Mieczysław Pałka remains "patient zero"; he was diagnosed on 4 March 2020 after his return trip by bus from Germany to Poland (Zielona Góra: "pacjent 0"... 2020). In Italy, the hypotheses for "patient zero" included a German citizen and a couple of the Chinese who arrived in Italy in January 2020 (Funaro 2020).

There is no clear indication of a "patient zero" in Italy. Some social circles and individuals are even contesting this status. Among the patients of Italian origin, there is a 38-year-old patient from Codogno (one of the "red zones" in Italy) who, after being admitted to hospital, infected nearly 30 other patients in the same ward (Centini 2020). However, the problem of identifying Italy's "patient zero" has not been solved. There

is speculation that it was somebody within the reach of some towns and therefore they could be from Codogno, Vo' Euganeo, Albettone, Lodi, etc. (Coronavirus, svolta paziente zero... 2020).

2.1.4 COVID-19 vs. other diseases

For the sake of accuracy, it may be noted that the HIV / AIDS discourse is currently relatively regulated and, thanks to many years of social campaigns, now it conveys a fairly clear message, which effectively eliminates false information about viruses and diseases, even among average users of a language.

Both types of discourse (HIV / AIDS and coronavirus / COVID) still have to be confronted with many stereotypes and prejudices that also translate into language. For instance, being "positive" in both cases is completely the opposite of the usual understanding of positivity because it indicates being infected with the virus. Also problematic are certain phobias directed towards social groups, in the case of COVID-19 equally towards national groups, mainly Chinese ("sinophobia"), but also Italian ("italophobia"), which from a historical perspective is something unusual, because so far there was talk of "italomania" (cf. Longo 2020).

As a matter of fact, the coronavirus / COVID-19 discourse is getting out of control and presents many facets, behind which there is mainly journalistic, but also scientific and pseudo-scientific information, which even institutional bodies, such as the WHO at the international level or health ministries at the national level have failed to keep in check so far. Furthermore, the problem is that COVID-19 is moving from phase to phase, and its future is unpredictable, as well as people's reactions to its social and individual impacts. Similar unpredictability is characteristic of the information layer under which COVID-19 is described and presented to the public, which needs reliable data but readily absorbs any kind of information, primarily for its security (see 2.2.3 about fake news).

2.2 Social aspect

The current info-/pandemic situation can be modelled as the following schema. The senders of the message on coronavirus are primarily representatives of governments, basing their data and recommendations, orders, decrees, laws on the opinions of official health services in a given country and international health organizations, especially the WHO; then the medical service, scientists, and specialists of various categories in institutional communication; politicians and journalists in committed and professional communication; and finally, a relatively average and smart (inter)locutor who is the author of various videos, pictures, commentaries, slogans, memos, and messages in public and private communication. The receivers are societies on the whole, viewers, listeners, and citizens sensitive to the information; often they are simply the authors of messages taking on a different communication role. The communication channel and the code remain as defined above. Its centre is still the message, its content and extended reference, which shows repercussions in many spheres of life, i.e., contexts, temporarily assuming other cognitive values, as well as creating prospects for similar dimensions in the near future.

It is also worth noting that COVID-19 has had a significant impact on already ossified or missing intentions in such everyday communication situations as the conventional question of well-being in Romance languages: Fr. *Comment ça va?*, It. *Come stai?* / *Come va?*, Sp. *¿Cómo estás?*, Port. *Como está?*, etc. Due to the pandemic shock, such a neutral and *bona fide* welcome can be an expression of concern to both the sender and recipient. Especially during the lockdown, it sounded as if other questions were lurking behind: *Are you (still) healthy?*, *You don't you have symptoms of coronavirus, do you?*, *How do you deal with it all?*. All of a sudden, it turned out that the expression of politeness took on a completely different pragmatic charge, becoming, in a way, a protection tool in anticipation of an honest answer. The pre-virus communication did not take anything similar into account.

2.2.1 COVID-19 as hard news in media texts

Discussing the COVID-19 phenomenon in the communication aspect inevitably leads us to journalism and its types. Traditionally it is divided into the journalism of analytical and emotive character, with each type having a specific set of journalistic messages (see publications, which have now become classical: Kadnár 1988; Tušer & Follríchová 2001; Veľas 2000, and recent publications: Panasenko 2016; Pravdová & Ungerová 2018; Višňovský 2014).

Hard news mainly belongs to the journalism of emotional type and has, as Turow claims (2011: 88), such features as **timeliness** (a hard news event is supposed to have happened recently – typically within the past day or so); **unusualness**; **conflict** (conflicts – struggles between opposing forces – often lie at the centre of hard news stories), and **the proximity of the incident**. As for the topics of hard news, they are very often connected with different disasters, war conflicts, terrorism, etc. (Panasenko et al. 2018). Hard news is very often opposed to soft news. In making a comparative analysis of hard news and soft news, Mills-Brown (2014) states that the difference is based on the topics the respective type of news covers. Soft news usually centers on the lives of individuals and has little, if any, perceived urgency. Hard news generally concerns politics, economy, international relations, welfare, and scientific developments. Soft news is often believed to be presented by female journalists and is addressed to women.

Thus, we see that information on COVID-19 presented in the mass media has all the features of hard news and, therefore, of emotive journalism. This leads us to an overview of the topic of COVID-19 and ways of its presentation in different sources.

2.2.2 COVID-19 and its presentation in some of the world media

Sources of COVID-19 information. Since the first days of February 2020, the media, including the press, have disseminated news about coronavirus via the Internet and traditional media, reported on the progressive development of the epidemic affecting

individual countries of the world, followed by the outbreak of the pandemic, which, on the rolling ball principle, has engulfed the whole world. The years 2019 and 2020 have been marked by a particular sign named COVID-19 (about the evolution of the phenomenon from the point of view of a medical journalist, see MacKenzie 2020). We have learned a great deal about the disease over the past months, but at the same time, we do not know everything because it surprises us both at the level of etiology, conditions of infection, symptoms and their deficiencies, the treatment and effects it leaves behind, not only of a purely physical nature. The reliability of information the public is getting about the epidemic and the pandemic situation depends on many factors.

The scientific press should be the hardest and most authoritative source of information, but it is also subject to the law of hypothesis and changing perspectives on the state of the phenomenon. Such knowledge is then processed and disseminated by the press and other forms of media discourse, which is of popular-scientific or simply informative nature, but which ranges from neutral to committed, often highly superficial and even scandalous. The quality of the message and its further processing depends on the type of the press and communication forum. Information passes through channels and in forms that reproduce announced, proven or untested knowledge, and then becomes a source of further information exchange and disinformation; thus "in the long run, it's only science that keeps us out of fake news. Unfortunately, however, in the short term – i.e. in the time it takes to do experiments, evaluate data, and draw certainties from them – news that anticipates dangerous theories and suppositions often wins out, because it is more suggestive, until science comes to prove otherwise" (Andreoni & Nardone 2020: 87).

The USA and the UK. The American and British media show several similar trends in presenting COVID-19 news; they do not just help people go through the hard times staying informed but reflect who they are as a nation. Apart from most trusted official health bodies and the WHO sites (Most trusted sources... 2020), official media such

as CNN in the USA and BBC in Britain tend to present mere facts about the coronavirus while the yellow press and social networks mostly offer a mix of fakes and reliable news (Social media firms... 2020). There is evidence that as of May 8, 2020 "nearly half of U.S. adults (49%) say the media's COVID-19 coverage has been largely accurate" (Americans' views... 2020) and "most Americans (59%) say the news media are providing them with the information they need about the coronavirus" (ibid.). It is worth noting that "nearly three-quarters (72%) of those who rely on the White House for COVID-19 news say journalists have been exaggerating the risks of the virus and the crisis has been overblown" (Americans who rely... 2020). In addition, President Trump endorsed the unproven anti-malaria drug hydroxychloroquine on Fox News and Twitter and "this misinformation appeared eventually harmful" (Tracking hydroxychloroquine... 2020).

Meanwhile in Britain, the most common kind of false claims was about how public authorities were responding to the pandemic-related crisis. The second most frequent kind concerned the spread of the disease among communities, including posts that blamed certain ethnic groups (Coronavirus: Call for apps... 2020). Besides, "most (59%) of the misinformation involved various forms of reconfiguration, where existing and often true information is spun, twisted, recontextualised, or reworked. Less misinformation (38%) was completely fabricated" (Types, sources, and claims... 2020). At the same time, in comparison to the USA, the government bodies in Britain are still seen as reliable sources of accurate information on the pandemic. However, according to the research (Public trust... 2020) "levels of trust in individual politicians have fallen, providing increased space for conspiracy theories". Both countries (Coronavirus: Fact vs fiction, *s.a.*; UK aid... 2020) are trying "to tackle fakes on coronavirus". Thus, the pandemic in question has made the media create new ways of reaching people and gaining their trust. Meanwhile, the public is trying to learn how to identify the blurring line between facts and fakes to stave off fears and stress.

Ukraine. As the COVID-19 pandemic is raging around the globe and the value of news is growing, the Ukrainian media sector is facing both challenges and opportunities. On the one hand, the print media share is reaching its minimum point while going digital is the only, though not unprofitable, way to thrive during the quarantine period. Government-run and official Internet, TV, and radio sources tend to succeed in regaining popularity. The survey conducted by the Institute of Mass Information held in Ukraine in March 2020 (25% of news... 2020) showed that official authorities' and state elected officials' websites as well as press service were most frequently used in searching and quoting COVID-related news. President Zelensky delivered "messages oriented towards every community member and every doctor with the appeal to show readiness to act together and support each other" (Stashko et al. 2020). It is noteworthy that "4% of news about the coronavirus contained signs of being paid stories promoting businessmen, politicians, and public figures" (39% of speakers... 2020). Additionally, the Ukrainian media seem to have successfully adopted new ways of reaching people via social networks and messengers that not only duplicate official sites but also allow censorship-free information and allegations. On the other hand, the mass media got a chance to be exonerated.

Aiming at informing and developing safety and media hygiene propaganda, there appeared specialised sites (e.g., По той бiк пандемiї, *s.a.*) that provide fact checking of coronavirus news. According to the monitoring results (25% of news... 2020), "every fourth news item in regional online media addresses the topic of the COVID-19 pandemic". Compared to March, "the amount of news items on coronavirus in May almost doubled – from 25% to 43%" (39% of speakers... 2020). At the same time, "4% of coronavirus news in March contained manipulative headlines or emotions and evaluative judgments" (25% of news... 2020). Already in May, there could be "10 to 20 fakes for refutation within one news text" (What fakes... 2020). Since mid-March, five main types of false information about the coronavirus have been disseminated in Ukraine: conspiracy theories, fakes about drugs and medicines, fakes about treatment, fakes against Ukraine, and fake jokes (*ibid.*). Specialists say fakes are cyclical and

repeatedly occur in a modified form. Fakes are also evolving and becoming more complex, because what people believed in January or March is now perceived as a joke. That is, Ukrainians develop a certain immunity to the simplest fakes (ibid.). Conspicuous is the fact that humour in the media is actually friendly, informative, and based on self-criticism, which can even help Ukrainians "communicate".

Slovakia. The topic of coronavirus resonated significantly in the local media. In addition to news programs, the topic was also covered by the media in specialized journalistic and special programs featuring experts in epidemiology, virology, as well as in the diagnosis and prevention of COVID-19. Later, politicians, economists, and sociologists joined them. Together, they discussed the effects of the coronavirus on Slovakia (especially on the economy), as well as the necessary measures and steps taken to eliminate the spread of the new disease. Great attention was also paid to this topic by the online media, especially news portals.

The Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic and the Public Health Office of the Slovak Republic also regularly published official reports. There were press conferences of the Slovak Republic Government Office and the Prime Minister of the Slovak Republic. There appeared official web sites, see, e.g., Slovak Republic Government Office Website (www.korona.gov.sk), which informed about the current state and development of the pandemic, measures taken, planned steps and performed tests of COVID-19.

As far as the volume of information in the languages under discussion in this article is extremely large, we have chosen Slovak as a typical example, and now we will make a detailed analysis of the media output in Slovakia.

Analysis of media outputs. During the period from March 1 to May 31, 2020, a total of 200,504 media outputs were published in the Slovak media on the topic of coronavirus / COVID-19. Most articles were published in the online media (174,222

media outputs), followed by the print media (15,032 media outputs), television (5,165 media outputs), and the radio (1,234 media outputs). News agencies issued 4,851 reports on this subject. The largest number of media outputs was recorded in the week from March 16 to March 22, 2020, namely 23,073. The first case of COVID-19 in our territory was confirmed on March 6, 2020 (see Fig. 1).

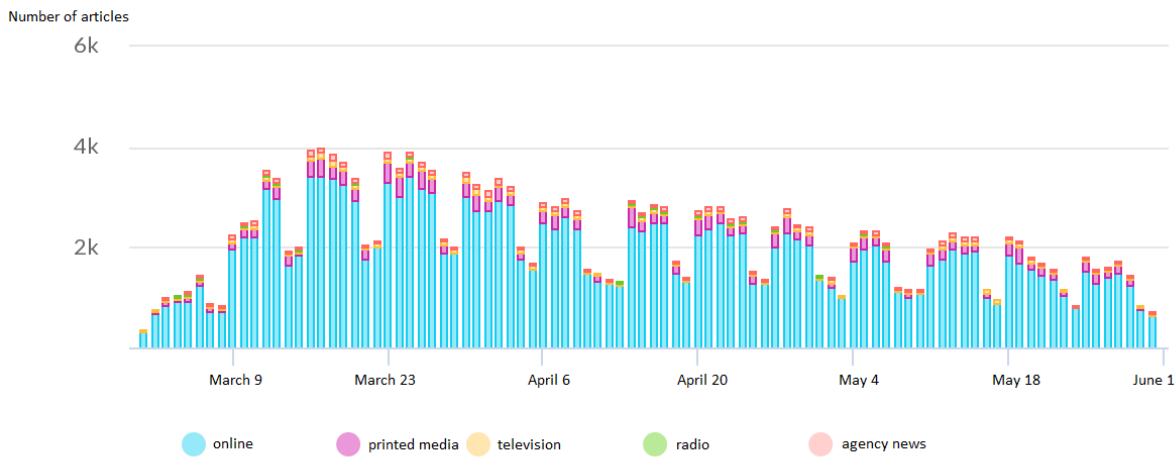


Figure 1. Number of articles on COVID-19 and coronavirus in the period March 1 – May 31, 2020 (MONITORA² 2020)

Among the publishers, most articles were printed by the Petit Press publishing house, whose portfolio includes the daily news SME, the news portal sme.sk and several regional dailies and weekly magazines. The news portal sme.sk was also the most frequent source of information about coronavirus / COVID-19 (see Fig. 2 and Fig. 3).

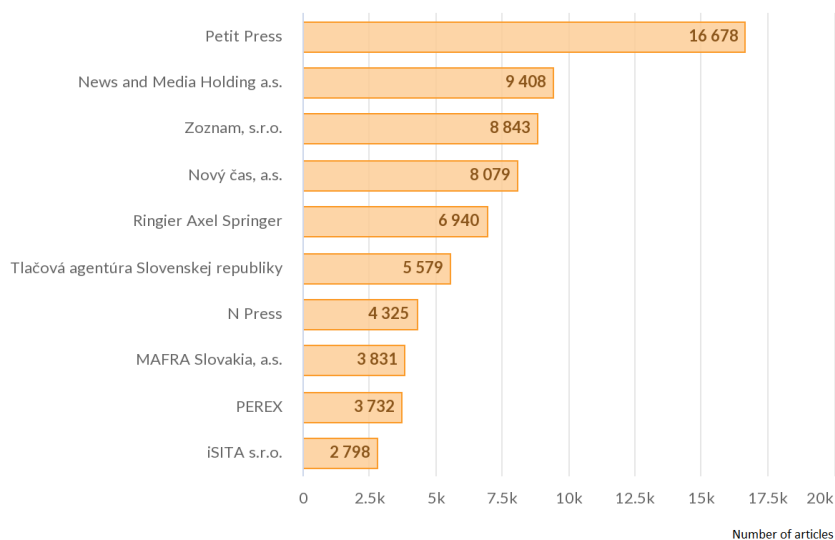


Figure 2. The most frequent publishers of articles on the topic of COVID-19 or coronavirus in the period March 1 – May 31, 2020 (MONITORA 2020)

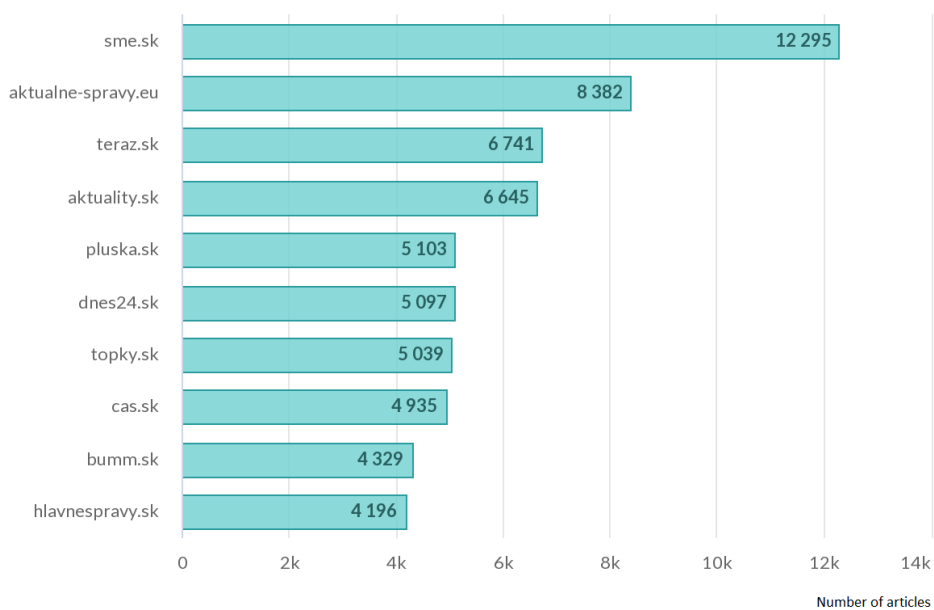


Figure 3. The most frequent sources of contributions on the topic of COVID-19 or coronavirus in the period March 1 – May 31, 2020 (MONITORA 2020)

Most articles were published on Tuesday, Thursday, and Wednesday. On the contrary, the smallest number of articles was published over the weekend, Saturday and Sunday (see Fig. 4).

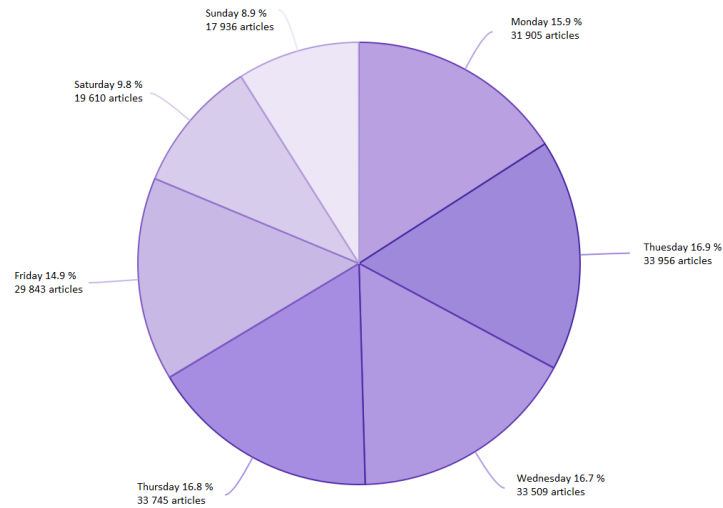


Figure 4. An overview of the number of articles on the topic of COVID-19 or coronavirus in the period March 1 – May 31, 2020 (MONITORA 2020)

Contributions published in the media on the topic of coronavirus / COVID-19 in the period from March 16 to March 22, 2020 were also the most shared on social networks. A total of 3,844,660 shares were recorded at this time (see Fig. 5).

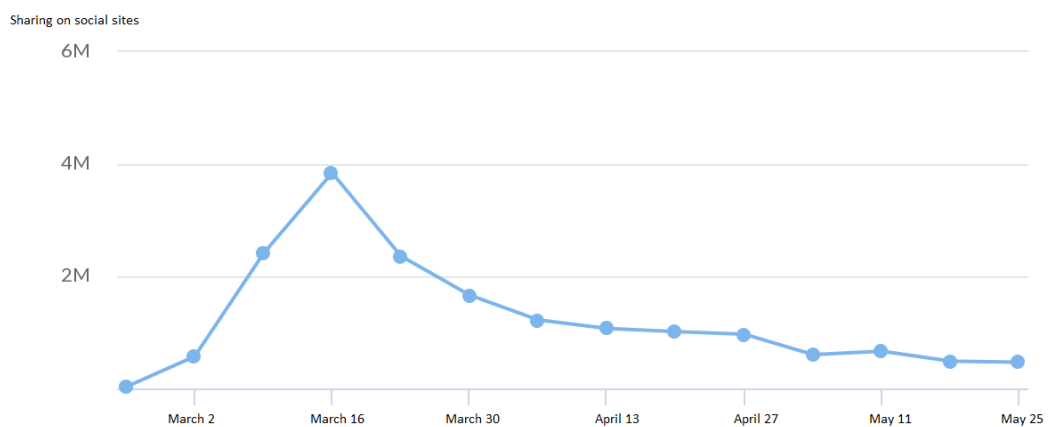


Figure 5. Sharing contributions on the topic of coronavirus on social networks in the period from March 1 to May 31, 2020 (MONITORA 2020)

Coronavirus / COVID-19 and media monitoring. The increased media interest in the topic of coronavirus was related to the effort to inform the public about the current situation, but it was also related to the interest of the viewers (readers and listeners alike) themselves in the up-to-date information.

According to the MEDIAN SK agency, which is engaged in research of the media market and media viewing, the media behaviour of the population also changed in the period after the outbreak of the pandemic caused by the new coronavirus. In the week of March 16 – 22, 2020, viewers spent an average of 7 hours and 15 minutes watching television, listening to the radio, and using the Internet and Web applications. It reached almost 8 hours at the weekend. They spent most of their time watching television, almost 3 hours and 15 minutes on average (MEDIAN SK 2020).

The results of the research also show that during the monitored period, the viewership of all TV channels increased. At the same time, TV stations also increased the daily reach, which means that more viewers watched television broadcasts in real time-mode. The largest increase was recorded in the case of public television, around noon and four to seven o'clock in the afternoon, when news programs were broadcast.

An interesting situation played out in radio broadcasting, which recorded an increase of approximately 25% ATS (average time spent watching media) relative. Though radio broadcasts did not attract new listeners, people spent more time listening to radio news.

In the case of the Internet, there was a growth in the number of people visiting various Internet sources in the period under review, especially news portals, as well as social networks and the social media. In the case of news portals, according to the MEDIAN SK agency, it is not only the intervention, or the number of visitors, that increased, but also the time spent on reading the news (MEDIAN SK 2020).

A notable interesting finding is that the coronavirus pandemic has stimulated readers' interest in serious news. In the first days since the confirmation of the first positive case of COVID-19 in Slovakia, readers searched for information mainly in the serious news and tabloid media. The conspiracy media significantly lagged behind.

The results are shown in the analysis of Daily news N in Fig. 6.

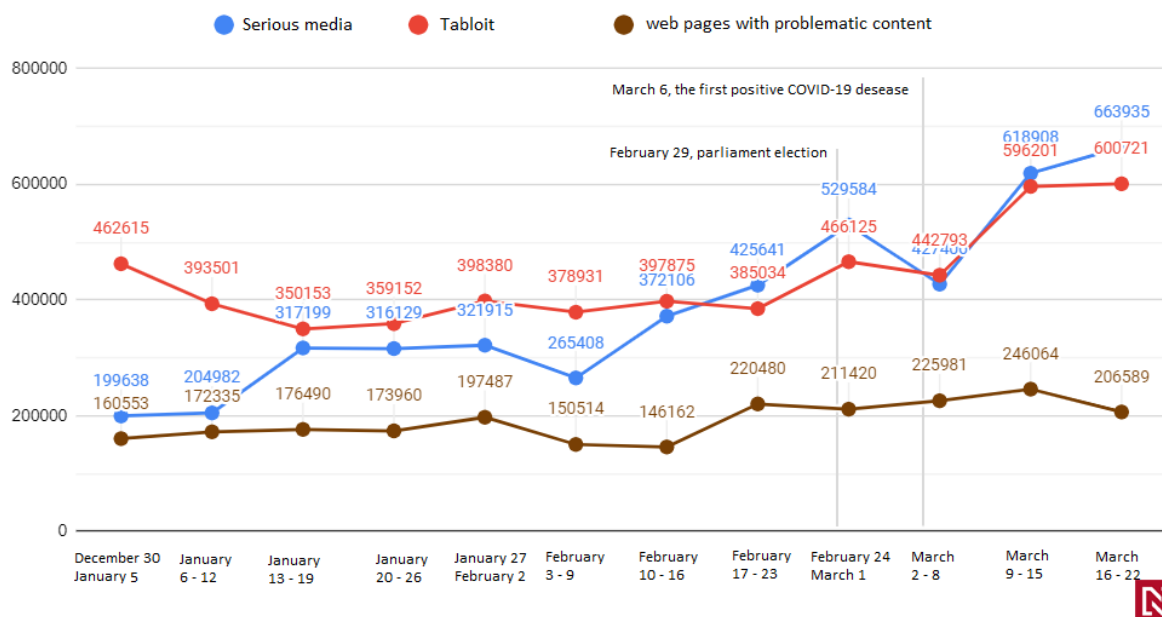


Figure 6. Number of interactions (shares, comments, and shares) for 10 Facebook pages from the category of trustworthy media, tabloid and lifestyle, and web pages with problematic content. Available at: www.dennikn.sk

2.2.3 COVID-19 as fake news

The data presented above vividly show that any piece of news connected with COVID-19 was read and followed carefully all over the world, not only in Slovakia. But how reliable was this information? Fig. 6 shows reliability of information presented in the trustworthy media, tabloids, and some dubious sources.

Disinformation on the life-threatening disease created and reproduced in the mass media, e.g., in the form of fake news, affects humanity and is harmful both on the intellectual and physical levels. In making analysis of news values in Slovak television news, Greguš and Mináriková (2016: 81) write that "[a] professional journalist is supposed to bring truthful information; to be honest, to respect other people's freedom of expression; to respect human dignity; to be responsible for their own actions and the consequences, and to serve the public interest". In the examples presented below, we will demonstrate how all these professional features are ignored and human dignity is violated.

Contesting reliable information. It is rightly stressed that the most reliable news on COVID-19 should come from the WHO, but this source is often undermined or discredited, sometimes from political and rhetorical perspectives that can serve socio-manipulatory, economic, and strategic purposes. This kind of contestation of the most legitimate source of medical knowledge is used by some world decision-makers, e.g., Donald Trump, who has repeatedly referred to the findings of the WHO, and even drawn COVID-related arguments into his electoral game and manipulated facts by seemingly mindless expression of his thoughts. Without sufficient restraint, Trump attacked the WHO but did not fully anticipate the ricochet effect of public opinion, which generally trusts global organizations, and this is the case with COVID-19. These are the reports of the data-processing press on this issue: "The president unloaded on the WHO on April 7, first on Twitter and then in his daily coronavirus briefing"; "The WHO really blew it," Trump tweeted, blasting the 'China centric' agency for offering 'faulty recommendations' early in the crisis. "Fortunately, I rejected their advice on keeping our borders open to China early on," he claimed. He expanded his critique, falsely alleging that the WHO had called the initial Wuhan outbreak "no big deal". "They called it wrong... they missed the call," he continued. "And we're going to put a hold on money sent to the WHO" (Stewart 2020). Trump has committed what we would call "institutional defamation" in this case, as is often the case with personal defamation in the news media (see Wesley 2013). Unfortunately, it was an untold attempt to apply the technique of charisma to his manipulative political rhetoric (Beck 2005).

The research on war conflicts (Panassenko et al. 2018) confirms the opinion of Dobronichenko that there are three types of media narrative: media reflection, media transformation, and media myth (Доброниченко 2014). Readers expect the truth from public sources and hope that honest journalists give valid information (media reflection). Some publishers do not check the sources of information and share dubious materials. In the case of war conflicts, specific techniques (media transformation) are used, which justify military action and victims it claims (Panassenko et al. 2017). Some

pieces of information are false: they are called fake news (media myth). The problem is that at first it may not be clear if this information is false, and it is only later that it becomes obvious (Brennen et al. 2020). In order to 'sell' false information various techniques are used. Kushnirov (2019) describes linguistic and discursive means used with a view to distorting facts and influencing the addressee's point of view. Among linguistic means of falsifying information, he enumerates phonological, morphological, lexical, syntactic, and textual ones; the most common are, to his mind, euphemisms and dysphemisms, hyperboles, litotes, etc. (ibid., 211-212).

The situation with fake news became so serious that the European Commission created the High Level Group on fake news and online disinformation; the Group's 44-page report analyzes disinformation as a phenomenon that goes well beyond the term "fake news". Disinformation, as defined in this report, includes all forms of false, inaccurate, or misleading information designed, presented and promoted to intentionally cause public harm or for profit (A multi-dimensional approach to disinformation... 2018: 5).

The research of Bakić Tomić et al. (2019) highlights the situation with fabricated news in Croatia and compares the reliability of news in the media and social networks. They offered their respondents three criteria to evaluate the truthfulness of news: the news cannot be checked online; the news has a sensational title and the news is not logical (ibid., 29). They came to the conclusion that "various sorts of fake news definitely affect people's emotions" (ibid., 30); the purpose of fake news is harassment and intimidation of the individuals as well as deceit, propaganda, and manipulation of the general public" (ibid., 31).

Below we present a short overview on fake news, which appeared in Slovakia and illustrate its key points with examples. There were false reports about coronavirus in the media. They appeared mainly on the Internet and in the social media, which spread false news among their users. Such reports most commonly contained information related to the use of drugs and the origin of coronavirus, announcements of the closure

of the Slovak capital, tips on various preventive measures and options to protect against the virus, notifications of early school opening, etc. (Krajčovič 2020).

The police of the Slovak Republic, which monitor the occurrence of false reports in Slovakia, state that they identified 65 statuses of disinformation published in connection with the coronavirus / COVID-19 in the period from March to May 2020 (<https://www.facebook.com/hoaxPZ>).

According to the survey conducted in Slovakia (ibid.), almost 80% of the respondents encountered fake news or false reports related to COVID-19. Only 52% of respondents were able to immediately identify fake news. Almost 38% did not know it was a hoax, though the information was suspicious. The rest of the respondents (10%) could not identify it was a false report and learned about it only later. Almost half of the respondents (47%) who encountered fake news about the coronavirus and COVID-19 expressed concern about these reports. One-fifth of the respondents (20.6%) even began to doubt the correctness of the steps taken by the competent authorities in the fight against the coronavirus because of hoaxes.

The following examples illustrate fake news that appeared on the Internet and in the social media. The first example is an extract from the text, whose author offers breathing exercise designed to fight this disease.

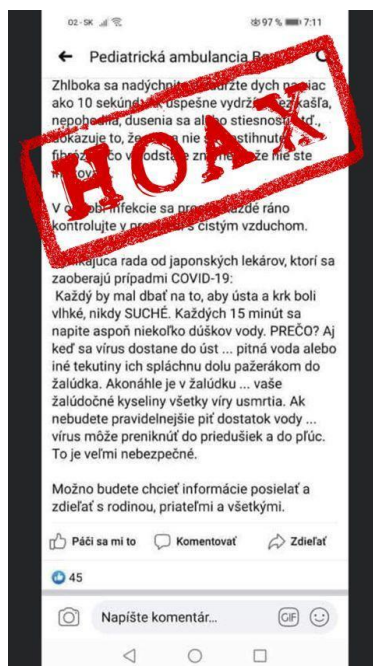


Figure 7. An example of fake news spread through the social media.
Available at: <https://www.facebook.com/hoaxPZ/photos/a.317666309061243/656426055185265/?type=3&theater>

(1) Sk. *Zhlboka sa nadýchnite a zadržte dych na viac ako 10 sekúnd. Ak úspešne vydržíte bez kašľa, nepohodlia, dusenia sa alebo stiesnenosti, atď., dokazuje to, že pľúca nie sú postihnuté fibrózou, čo v podstate znamená, že nie ste infikovaný.* – Eng. Take a deep breath and hold your breath for more than 10 seconds. If you successfully survive without coughing, discomfort, suffocation, or tightness, etc., it proves that your lungs are not affected by fibrosis, which basically means that you are not infected.

This fake news looks naïve and humorous, but the problem is that some people took it seriously and instead of visiting a doctor and taking medicine followed these instructions.

The second example looks like a joke because in this case the author mentions pesticides which will be sprayed by military helicopters. We present a translation of its fragment. In fact, it belongs to the so-called unprofessional journalism and some sentences can hardly be translated properly.

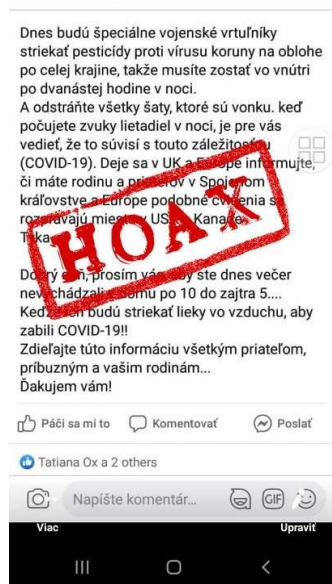


Figure 8. An example of fake news spread through the social media. Available at: <https://www.facebook.com/hoaxPZ/photos/a.317666309061243/665254867635717/?type=3&theater>

(2) Sk. *Dnes budú špeciálne vojenské vrtuľníky striekať pesticídy proti vírusu koruny na oblohe po celej krajine, takže musíte zostať vo vnútri po dvanástej hodine v noci. A odstráňte všetky šaty, ktoré sú vonku, keď počujete zvuky lietadiel v noci, je pre vás vedieť, že to súvisí s touto záležitosťou (COVID-19).* – Eng. Today, special military helicopters will spray pesticides against coronavirus in the sky all over the country, so you have to stay inside after twelve o'clock at night. And remove all the clothes that are outside when you hear airplanes at night; it is for you to know that it is related to this matter (COVID-19).

This piece of fake news, alongside others, is now blocked by the Slovak police. Though the link provided in the caption is valid, one can see and read it only within 3-5 seconds. We find it wise because it stops spreading fake news on the Internet and saves some naïve people from reckless actions.

We can also mention a false report about COVID-19 that says that the virus was artificially created and that is a biological weapon. This fake news was circulated in the so-called "conspiracy media". It also spread through the Internet and the social media. There are different techniques of creating fake news. Very often, various

stylistic means, including graphical ones, are employed making this piece of news a fake. Thus, considering COVID-19 from the communicative perspective is an interesting and promising area of research.

3. Designating coronavirus: Semantic and conceptual aspects

Capturing the designative aspect of COVID-19 is undoubtedly a very interesting task, which attracts the attention of scholars all over the world. One can see that there is a wide range of medical terms in different languages accompanied by newly coined topic-related words. Thus, Zhabotynska (2020) considers COVID-19 as a narrative multimedia concept instantiated in discourse. Škvareninová (2020) divides the 'coronavirus lexis' in media texts into six thematic areas: medical environment, struggle and war, cooperation, work and education, social contacts and easing restrictions, creative play on words.

A linguistic exploration of COVID-19, quite naturally, starts with its denomination. We have already discussed the medical aspect of this phenomenon hereinabove. However, it is obvious that all the three aspects – physical, social and linguistic – are interconnected. With the spread of COVID-19, respective medical terms flooded the media; there also appeared many neologisms and metaphors (see Section 4), jokes and memes (see Section 5) on the Internet.

Naming COVID-19. In response to the words of the President of the United States, who tried to stigmatize the origin of the disease by referring to it as a "Chinese virus", the WHO gave the disease a technical name 'COVID-19'. It takes on all the denotational and connotational meanings, including those previously carried by such terms as "Wuhan virus", "foreign virus" or "mysterious lung disease" (de Paula da Silva Martins 2020: 26-27). Such names clung like labels to coronavirus after its discovery with the subsequent coverage in the world media in December 2019. The important thing is that the virus that causes COVID-19 is one in a line of coronaviruses, and probably not the last of those to be dealt with, among others, by the language of medicine. Some of them

bear special names, especially those that recently caused more serious epidemic effects, such as SARS-CoV-1 (2002–2003) and MERS-CoV (2012–2013). In their use, such denominations are also metonymically treated as the names of the viruses themselves and the health consequences they generate. This becomes clearer when the acronyms are developed: SARS stands for Severe Acute Respiratory Coronavirus Syndrome; MERS – Middle East Respiratory Coronavirus Syndrome (Katella 2020).

The virus, allegedly discovered only at the end of 2019, was initially described simply as a "novel coronavirus" and was given the code 2019-nCoV on the basis of two extended versions of SARS-CoV and MERS-CoV. Due to its similarity to SARS, it is ranked as SARS-CoV-2. The need for terminology internationalization and, at the same time, introduction of a more practical term has resulted in the reorganization of the morphological components of the code 2019nCoV, resulting in COVID-19, where the elements "CO" and "VI" invariably point to the first syllables of "corona" (Lat. *corōna* 'crown, chaplet') and "virus" (Lat. *virus*), while the letter D is the initial of "disease". The new code is to be read as "coronavirus disease nineteen", thus providing nothing more than a general indication of the biological agent causing the disease and not suggesting its pathogenic potential. Etymologically and neologically neutral, the name COVID-19 seems no less technical than the previous 2019-nCoV, in any case, it is no longer a multi-stage composition that could function well in the written and specialized language, but would be difficult and uneconomical to implement in speech (de Paula da Silva Martins 2020: 17-20). The COVID-19 construction is an alphanumeric neologism that is simple to pronounce and use as a conceptualized expression (for a classification of contemporary neologisms, see, e.g., Adamo & Della Valle 2017; Kerremans 2015; Levchenko 2010; Neology in specialized communication 2012).

3.1 The spread of medical terms related to COVID-19

Information and linguistic sources try to remedy the lack of understanding of the language used by the authors of the COVID-19 discourse. On the one hand, these are more or less advanced attempts to collect a corpus of relevant material, on the other

hand, terminology dictionaries and compendia that provide comprehensive definitions of terms, their contexts and formal specificity.

For instance, the Coronavirus Corpus of English is currently a huge reservoir of cognitive and communicative data that comes from different media sources: online media, scientific and popular, institutional and authorial discourse. This corpus shows what people say about COVID-19 in 20 English-speaking countries. The corpus resource includes more than 530 million words and is being expanded within the English-Corpora.org project. As one can read on the project site (<https://www.english-corpora.org/>), the Coronavirus Corpus is "[d]esigned to be the definitive record of the social, cultural, and economic impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) in 2020 and beyond."

The corpus can be a starting point for many linguistic and interdisciplinary studies of a very spontaneous and ad hoc vocabulary resource. We would consider this resource to be a linguistic collection, which, on a cognitive level, has to and shows great similarities between different languages, and formally uses various tools, mainly terminology (see, e.g., Cabré Castellví 1999; Des fondements théoriques de la terminologie... 2004; Superanskaya et al. 2012; Zanola 2018) to create and describe the new phenomenon of the COVID-19 pandemic with all its circumstances and consequences.

Research in this area of new knowledge about the world around us can be interlingual. Taking into account different languages, it is possible to establish a model of cognitive description of phenomena, entities, and events caused by the COVID-19 pandemic (see, e.g., French COVID dictionary *Le Dictionnaire du Covid-19* by Henri Gourseau, *Le DiCovid-19* (2020), with a list of professionally described 242 terms in the form of single words or nominal groups, e.g., Fr. *quarantaine* 'quarantine', *quatorzaine* 'a 14-day virus incubation period', *effets secondaires* 'side effects', *distanciation sociale* 'social distancing', *désinformation* 'disinformation', etc. as well as the Italian

compendium *Le parole del Coronavirus* coordinated by Vera Gheno on the Treccani Enciclopedia, the section of the project *#leparolevalgono*, with the "pandemic words" as *contagio* 'contagion', *letalità* 'lethality', *mascherina* 'mask', *curva epidemica* 'epidemic curve', etc. (http://www.treccani.it/magazine/parolevalgono/Le_parole_del_Coronavirus/index.html?page=1#listing-grid).

A telling example is the use of the term "dyspnea" in official information from the Italian Ministry of Health to describe one of the main symptoms of COVID-19, namely "difficulty breathing", or "suffocation". The language of the media message was only simplified in this respect around mid-March 2020. Looking at how this language evolved may prove valuable in determining general communication trends, which are important in the fight against the coronavirus, mainly, the negative effects of the infodemic. As Grandi & Piovan (2020) assert in their study, "there is a direct causal link between the poor 'readability' of institutional communication and the infodemia, i.e. the proliferation and dissemination of news that often alter reality and give it a partial or distorted image. This infodemia predominantly affects those who find it difficult to access official channels of communication (institutional and scientific, primarily), which serve as an instrument to verify the truthfulness of the news".

3.2 Appearance of neologisms

With the spread of COVID-19, there appeared many newly coined words. Some of them are nonce words formed by blending or compounding with the situational context, typical of the journalistic language (see, e.g., Adamo & Della Valle 2003; 2005), but also for the hypertextual Internet reality (see, e.g., Kerremans 2015; about the production and role of neologisms in contemporary languages, see, e.g., Gałkowski 2009; 2014; 2015; Guilbert 1975; Sablayrolles 2000; 2017; 2019; cfr.).

This is true of the Italian neologism *coglionavirus*, which served as a keyword for a compilation and newspaper interpretation by a very controversial Italian author Antonio Giangrande, a sociologist suspicious of conspiracy in many aspects of Italian

reality. The term *coglionavirus* is a mocking contraction that blends the vulgar Italian *coglione* (lit. 'testicle'; slang 'fool') and the internationalism *virus*. Under this title, the Italian protester published from March to August 2020 ten parts of a truly "infodemic" paper (over 5000 pages in total!). Its subtitles express the subject matter under consideration, e.g., *Il Virus nel Mondo* 'The virus over the world', *Le Vittime* 'The victims', *La Cura* 'The treatment', *Gli Untori* 'Plague-spreaders', *Gli Esperti* 'The experts', *Gli Improvvisatori* 'The improvisers', *Senza Speranza* 'Hopeless'. The publication was driven into clandestine existence; around mid-August 2020, it was withdrawn from sale on amazon.com. Despite that, it is still available on books.google.

This is only one of the spectacular examples of infodemic activity and irresponsible play on words that eloquently resounds through the otherwise interesting neologism *coglionavirus*. It seems that no one and nothing is pointed out in this way, but the mockery in the face of a serious problem is obvious and relatively harmful, such as talking about COVID-19 in war terms (Cassandro 2020; Dotti 2020; Henderson 2020).

However, the coronavirus / COVID-19 discourse, especially as disseminated by the press, is not exempt from disclosing information that marks places, institutions, events, and people. It includes, among others:

- the towns particularly affected by the COVID-19 outbreak and its tragic consequences (e.g., Wuhan in China, Bergamo in Italy and Lleda in Spain);
- single hospitals receiving seriously infected with COVID-19;
- wedding ceremonies and other gatherings, during which numerous cases of infection transmission were recorded; in Polish the term *koronawesele* 'coronawedding' was coined for wedding receptions, at which sick guests were present (cf. Eng. *corona party* / *lockdown party* and Pl. *koronapogrzeb* 'coronafuneral', such as the funeral of the famous inhabitant of Zakopane in the Tatras Mountains Zofia Karpiel-Bulecka at the beginning of July 2020, during which one of the infected participants led to the quarantine of 460 other event attendees (see *Koronawesela – już ponad...* 2020);

- persons whose personalities are disclosed, e.g., the names of so-called "patients zero" (see 2.1.3) and – for a more understandable purpose – the names of researchers working on various biological and medical aspects of the virus and the disease; it is not difficult to find the name and surname of Chinese "patient zero" – Wei Guixian, a 57-year-old female shrimp vendor at the Wuhan fish market (Ważna 2020).

The German database, for instance, helps analyze the frequency and meaning of the so-called *coronacoinages* (cf. the German part of this study), such as *coronababies* (6 occurrences), i.e. children born during the COVID-19 pandemic (cf. the cases of It. *coglionavirus*, Pl. *koronawesele*, and similar forms mentioned above). The mentioned Coronavirus Corpus allows finding information about the token *generation coronababy*, as well as the perspective of the so-called *quaranteens* in 2033, i.e. young people started their life during the COVID-19 quarantine in 2020. The blending *covidiot* is popular as well (Ro 2020). The term refers to people who do not follow the rules of conduct during the COVID-19 pandemic, e.g., violating the ban on leaving home during the lockdown. The frequency of *covidiot* in the news according to The Coronavirus Corpus is 166 occurrences.

3.3 Pandemic of concepts and a new COVID-19 language

Alongside the coronavirus pandemic, one can observe a pandemic of ideas and concepts that within a fairly short span of time have stemmed from the COVID-19 shock experienced by societies and economies. The pandemic has shown that it is important for humanity to look for a new language to describe new phenomena. For successful communication, humanity needs not only new terms to understand the changing reality, but also new concepts to cope with global problems and build a joint future. It should be admitted that under the circumstances, the coronavirus pandemic did not lead to radical transformations in language but rather established a certain discursive dominant influencing ethical, social, religious forms of communication (Kröll et al. 2020), collective empathy (Mierzwa 2020), verbal and non-verbal rituals of interaction, etc. (Katila et al. 2020: 3).

The concept CORONAVIRUS, which captures our knowledge of the disease, has penetrated deeply into many areas of social and personal communication, and we are directly involved in generating new meanings around it (Zhabotynska 2020). With its verbalizations, the concept began penetrating into various spheres of human communication, which is indicative both of its dynamism and gradual adaptation in different cultures and of its impact as an abstract idea or conceptual trigger, which launched radical changes in public consciousness, social systems (Прощай, COVID? 2020; Horton 2020; Zizek 2020: 40-41), and encourages reflection, understanding and consideration of its role in our lives.

According to Zizek, the coronavirus epidemic has triggered an epidemic of ideological concepts: FAKE NEWS, CONSPIRACY THEORIES, RACISM. However, there is also a positive effect of the pandemic, namely, thinking about an alternative society outside the nation-state, a society of global cooperation (2020: 39).

In this section, we focus on the specifics of conceptualizing the concept CORONA, which is the form of conceptualizing CORONAVIRUS – COVID-19 by the speakers of German. We consider the types of adaptation of new CORONA-related concepts instantiated in the German media during the pandemic. The study is based on the "New Vocabulary of the Corona Pandemic" (Ger. "Neuer Wortschatz rund um die Coronapandemie") of the Leibniz Institute for the German Language consisting of a total of 660 units available on the open platform Online-Wortschatz-Informationssystem Deutsch (hereinafter – OWID) (OWID 2020).

In our approach to the study of instantiations of the concept CORONAVIRUS in the media, we consider CORONAVIRUS as a concept, using a well-developed methodology of concept studies (Карасик 2004; Петлюченко et al. 2017; Степанов 2004). The term "coronavirus" has indeed been conceptualized quite quickly and can be reconstructed quite successfully by motivational, notional, figurative, value-based and other characteristics in respective linguistic cultures / communities. The objective is to reveal

the universal and nationally specific features of this fast-born "corona" + "virus" + "disease" concept, and its interpretation in media discourse as hard news would allow developing the cognitive and linguistic mechanisms of its adaptation in media discourse.

3.4 How COVID-19 affects the German language

Every crisis gives birth to its vocabulary, for example, the man-made disaster at the Chernobyl power plant caused by improper interaction between humans and nuclear technology led to the need for rapid interstate interaction and prompted the International Atomic Energy Agency (hereinafter – IAEA) to develop a glossary, which included basic terms on radiation protection and their definitions in English, French, Russian, and Spanish (IAEA radiation protection glossary 1986). There appeared new glossaries on COVID-19 in many languages; now we will give some examples from German.

Since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, which supposedly occurred due to the improper interaction of man and nature, German vocabulary researchers have identified many typical terms – from *Abstrichzentrum* 'testing center' through *Immunitätsausweis* 'immunity card' to *Öffnungsdiskussionsorgien* 'opening discussion orgies'. In pre-COVID times, only a few medical laymen knew what *Triage* 'triage' or *Übersterblichkeit* 'excess mortality' meant while today the terms *Spuckschutzscheibe* 'face shield' or *Distanzschlange* 'distance line' are rather widespread in everyday German (Wie Corona unsere Sprache beeinflusst, *s.a.*).

3.4.1 Corona as a term-forming element

According to the Leibniz Institute for the German Language (IDS), the word "corona" alone in a short time brought about 180 new compound nouns with the element "corona" to the German language and with them new concepts, such as (1) CORONA-HYSTERIE = "general (nervous) excitement triggered by the fear of being infected with the COVID-19 virus and the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic"; (2) CORONA-BABY

= 1. "child conceived during isolation restrictions in home quarantine; 2. "child of a COVID-19 patient"; (3) CORONA-ABITUR = 1. "university entrance qualification issued without final exams due to the school closings caused by the COVID-19 pandemic"; 2. "final exams at grammar schools taken under special conditions and possibly with a delay due to the ban on contacts" (Neuer Wortschatz rund um die Coronapandemie, *s.a.*).

According to IDS, the concept CORONA instantiated in German is enriched by short-lived concepts, for example, the concept CORONA-PARTY ("celebrating together, mostly young people, despite and possibly as a kind of protest against the extensive contact and exit restrictions during the COVID-19 pandemic") was used for only a few days, and *Gabenzaun* ("fence on which bags with (food) donations for the needy are hung") will hardly be used after the acute exit restrictions are lifted. Some, like the hotly debated *Immunitätsausweis* 'immunity card' appeared on the list of coronavirus-related terms just recently in the form *digitaler Immunitätsausweis* ("official electronic document confirming a person's immunity to the SARS-CoV-19 virus").

3.4.2 Corona & Denglish

Coronavirus endangers not only the health of people and their economic well-being, but also the German language. The pandemic has enhanced the expansion of English vocabulary and strengthened the position of Denglish champions in the fight against German purists led by the *Verein Deutsche Sprache* (Eng. The German Language Association), which is responsible for the regulation of the types and proportions of Anglicisms in the German language (Петлюченко 2018).

Many of the newly-formed CORONA-concepts are borrowed from the English language, as it was pointed out by Walter Krämer with the reference to German television channels ARD and ZDF which "rolled out a verbal carpet of Anglicisms and pseudo-anglicisms" (Stoldt 2020), for example, (1) *social distancing* ("deliberately created spatial or physical distance between people to prevent the spread of infectious

diseases"); (2) *lockdown* ("period when almost all economic and social activities are shut down by political order, e.g., "to protect against infection"); (3) *hotspot* ("acute center of a spreading disease, point with the highest number of sick people"); (4) *face shield* ("a visor-like, curved, rectangular disk made of clear plastic, which is attached to the head and worn in front of the face to protect against infection").

One of the most prominent of them is the pseudo-anglicism HOME OFFICE concept and its sub-concepts HOMEWORKER ("person who works in a home office"), HOMEWORKING ("professional activity carried out from home using modern media and telecommunications"), HOME-WORK-OUT ("fitness training conducted at home"), etc. This term also exists in the United Kingdom, where it refers to both a desk at home and the Home Office (Ger. *das Innenministerium*). "These pseudo-anglicisms are not just bad English, explains Henning Lobin. On the contrary, they give a very differentiated designation to something that obviously needs *to be named*" (Wie Corona unsere Sprache beeinflusst, *s.a.*).

3.5 Classification of CORONA-concepts in German according to the type of their appearance

We distinguish between the following types of appearance of CORONA-concepts in German during the pandemic: (1) new German CORONA-concepts, which appeared during the pandemic, (2) old German concepts that have been adapted to new COVID conditions, (3) German CORONA-concepts that will disappear after the COVID-19 crisis is over, (4) German CORONA-concepts that will remain after the COVID-19.

Such CORONA-concepts as *Balkonmusik* ("public and partly collaborative music-making (at a fixed time) from open spaces in buildings"), *Coronaer* ("person who has been infected with COVID-19"), *Gabenzaun* ("fence on which bags with (food) donations for the needy are hung"), and *Infodemie* ("worldwide, rapid spread of fake news") clearly rated by German researchers as new concepts of the decade.

The concept SOCIAL DISTANCING certainly belongs among the key ones: it is instantiated particularly frequently in reports on the COVID-19 pandemic in the German media. Although the term "social distancing" is currently regularly used in the media in German, the expression is not included as a keyword in the neologism dictionary but researchers continue to observe its further development. Klosa-Kückelhaus (2020b) believes that the decisive factor for possible inclusion of neologisms into the dictionary of corona-related terms will be whether the term is also used after the end of the coronavirus crisis, not only with historical reference to the 2020 crisis but also separately from it.

Some new concepts appear spontaneously, for example, in political discourse, such as Angela Merkel's divisive word *Öffnungsdiskussionsorgien* 'opening discussion orgies' ([by Chancellor Angela Merkel] as an overly and disproportionately assessed dispute on the easing of the exit and contact restrictions imposed during the COVID-19 pandemic) (Neuer Wortschatz rund um die Coronapandemie, *s.a.*). The Chancellor sharpened her position on the issue sparking a debate about her choice of words. The remark came in a non-public discussion about *Exit-Strategie* 'exit strategy', an issue that is existential for many Germans.

While BALKONMUSIK 'balcony music', CORONAER 'corona-infected', and INFODEMIE 'infodemic' are clearly new concepts of the decade, the GABENZAUN 'gift fence' has only been documented for three years and almost exclusively with reference to Hamburg where such a fence is actively used at the main railway station. Against the backdrop of the coronavirus crisis, this social support model seems to have expanded to other cities in Germany, which is why the word can still be observed (Klosa-Kückelhaus 2020a).

It is interesting to trace how old German concepts have adapted to the new COVID-19 conditions, e.g., GEISTERSPIEL ("game of football, basketball or ice hockey which takes place without spectators") is an example of a concept that has been used in the

context of sport for a long time, but is now blossoming in the German media in the context of the coronavirus crisis (ibid.).

According to IDS, only a few weeks after the first recording of the word *coronaer* in the dictionary of corona-related terms, it can already be assumed that it has no linguistic future; it is no longer used in the German-speaking media to designate people infected with the coronavirus, except perhaps as an historicism. Such people are referred to in the media as *Corona-Infizierte* 'corona infected', *Corona-Kranke* 'corona sick', *COVID-19-Patienten* 'COVID-19 patients, etc. In the case of the INFODEMIE-concept, however, IDS researchers assume that the concept for designating the rapid global spread of fake news may develop further.

4. Metaphoric instantiations of coronavirus

4.1 Transcultural conceptual metaphors: War against COVID-19

COVID-19 has unexpectedly affected the lives of thousands of people worldwide. The need to undergo quarantine and follow stay-at-home orders has changed the perception of national and personal safety. The invisible enemy has triggered defence mechanisms on an unprecedented scale. Obviously, it has also influenced the way we talk about the harsh living conditions. The language used by politicians and the media has a military bias. The analysis presented below focuses on the selected news reports including reports by politicians (Prime Minister, Minister of Health, etc.). It intends to find out how the war waged against COVID-19 is put into words. It seems that the metaphorical extensions applied in discourse are metaphors recognised in the conceptual domains of WAR and COMBAT.

The language data to be presented and discussed have been gathered from a number of languages, including examples from English (derived from the British and American media), German, Italian, Polish, and Ukrainian.

By far the most prevalent metaphor utilised to describe the reality marked by the spreading pandemic appears to be the WAR and COMBAT domain and related metaphors. They stress the significance and gravity of the crisis situation. To illustrate the universality of this association, the following examples can be quoted from diverse media.

The most recurrent battlefield and combat imagery is represented in Polish by exemplars such as the following:

Pl. *walka z koronawirusem* – lit. fight against/battle against coronavirus.

Pl. *połączony atak grypy i koronawirusa* – a joint attack of flu and coronavirus.

Pl. *koronawirus dobija transport* – coronavirus finishes off/kills transportation.

However, the Polish Prime Minister prematurely "called off the pandemic" before presidential elections in July 2020 saying the virus is retreating, comparing it to defeated troops of the opponent's army.

Pl. *Wirus jest w odwrocie, już nie trzeba się go bać. Idźmy tłumnie na wybory* – The virus is retreating; we do not need to fear it anymore. Let us all go vote.

(<https://tvn24.pl/wybory-prezydenckie-2020/wybory-prezydenckie-2020-premier-mateusz-morawiecki-zacheca-do-udzialu-w-2-turze-wyborow-4626728>)

In Italian, metaphors that are used in the pandemic context before and after the spread as well as when becoming aware of the threat are of the war-type character (It. *la metafora bellica*): silent war, world war III, invisible enemy, fight, front, incarceration, surround, doctors on the front line, victims, resist, etc.

The battleground and military action are evoked in the examples given below. Let us consider the following instances (it has to be noted that they come from various sources and are repeated in them; full statements are accompanied by specific sources in brackets):

It. *il linguaggio marziale* – martial language.

It. *la retorica bellica* – war rhetoric.

It. *la guerra/la lotta/la battaglia (con il coronavirus)* – the war/fight/battle (with coronavirus). (cf. Fr. *Nous sommes en guerre* – We are at war, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N5lcM0qA1XY>).

Specific references are primarily made to World War I: It. *la Grande Guerra*, which literally means 'The Great War'.

The examples listed below are repeatedly employed in the following sources

<https://www.istitutobandini.it/newSite/guerra-contro-nemico-invisibile-serena>;

https://www.treccani.it/magazine/lingua_italiana/articoli/parole/cura_parole_2.html;

<https://www.recentiproggressi.it/archivio/3347/articoli/33187/>;

<https://www.stamptoscana.it/covid-19-medici-al-fronte-la-lista-caduti-sul-sito-fnomceo/>;

<https://www.agi.it/cronaca/news/2020-03-30/coronavirus-sud-7984805/>;

<https://www.auxologico.it/approfondimenti/psicologia-coronavirus>

It. *le metafore dell'invasione* – the metaphors of the invasion.

It. *la guerra al nemico invisibile* – war on the invisible enemy.

It. *il nemico straniero/esterno* – the foreign/external enemy.

It. *lottare col nemico invisibile* – battle (with) the invisible enemy.

It. *la battaglia al virus* – the battle against the virus.

It. *i medici = soldati eroi* – the doctors = hero soldiers.

It. *i medici caduti al fronte* – doctors fallen at the front.

It. *i caduti* – the fallen/the dead.

It. *il fronte (del virus)* – the (virus) front.

It. *la trincea (in ospedali)* – the trench in hospitals.

It. *in trincea contro il virus* – in the trenches against the virus.

It. *uno stato di allarme/allerta* – an alarm/alert state.

It. *È la Terza guerra mondiale; un Piano Marshall europeo* – It's the Third World War; A European Marshall Plan. (Giuseppe Pasini,

<https://www.ilgiorno.it/economia/coronavirus-industrie-1.5066423>).

It. *Il Corona virus è una guerra che durerà ancora diversi mesi* – The coronavirus is a war that will continue for several months. (Walter Ricciardi, <https://www.ilgiornale.it/news/cronache/coronavirus-ricciardi-guerra-e-durer-fino-allestate-1839736.html>).

The following instances have been noted, among others, after the following sources:

<https://www.treccani.it/magazine/atlante/speciali/coronavirus/index.html>;

<https://www.radioradio.it/2020/02/italia-cina-virus-fusaro/>;

<http://www.regioni.it/sanita/2020/07/14/coronavirus-speranza-non-conosce-confini-regionali-615823/>;

https://www.ilgazzettino.it/nordest/belluno/coronavirus_medici_di_famiglia_belluno-5132385.html:

It. *il virus ha colpito prima la Cina* – the virus struck China first.

It. *il virus ha ferito poi l'Europa* – virus then injured Europe.

It. *in alcune regioni sta mietendo molte vittime* – in some regions it is reaping many victims.

It. *il Covid non conosce confini* – Covid does not know boundaries.

It. *la carne da cannone* – cannon fodder (= elderly patients).

War and combat metaphorical examples are also noted in the Anglophone media. The deadly spread of the virus is accentuated in the New Yorker coverage (<https://www.newyorker.com/culture/annals-of-inquiry/the-coronavirus-and-our-future>):

Eng. *Now comes this disease that can kill anyone on the planet* –

Grocery store workers are compared to soldiers:

Eng. *My younger son works in a grocery store and is now one of the front-line workers who keep civilization running.*

A straightforward reference to war is illustrated in the following Ukrainian examples:

Ukr. *Війна з коронавірусом ще не завершена* – The war on the coronavirus is not over. (<https://www.president.gov.ua/news/zvernennya-prezidenta-ukrayini-shodo-poslablennya-karantinu-61141>)

Ukr. *Наша зброя з коронавірусом – терпіння, дисципліна та відповідальність. Кожен з нас має бути невід'ємною частиною єдиного війська – і тільки тоді ми переможемо хворобу* – Patience, discipline and responsibility are our weapon against the coronavirus. Each of us must be an integral part of a consolidated army – and only then will we defeat the disease. (<https://www.president.gov.ua/news/zvernennya-prezidenta-ukrayini-shodo-poslablennya-karantinu-61141>)

Ukr. *Пандемія – це війна. Лікарі та науковці – солдати на передовій* – The pandemic is a war. Doctors and scientists are soldiers on the front lines. (<https://tyzhden.ua/Science/242530>)

Ukr. *Коронавірус Covid-19 спалахнув на ринку морепродуктів в китайському Ухані* – The Covid-19 coronavirus broke out (lit. exploded or flashed out) at the seafood market in Wuhan, China. (<https://tyzhden.ua/News/240737>)

However, owing to the turbulent history and responsibility for the war atrocities of World War II, the German discourse avoids war imagery. Examples registered in German that directly mention the process of killing are quite rare:

Ger. *Ein hochansteckendes Virus, das binnen weniger Wochen die ganze Welt in Angst und Schrecken versetzt und immer mehr Todesopfer fordert* – A highly contagious virus that has scared the whole world over a few weeks and is killing more and more people. (<https://www.amazon.de/dp/B089NY2NJW/ref=dp-kindle-redirect?encoding=UTF8&btkr=1>). Such instances, however, are very few in the German media; and only one is noted here.

As pointed out by Paulus (2020) in his online contribution to *The Conversation* titled "How politicians talk about coronavirus in Germany", war metaphors are avoided in Germany, unlike other countries where the imagery of conflict is employed to discuss the coronavirus pandemic. As further noted by Paulus (ibid.):

"The virus is not an 'enemy', and the process of containing it is not a war. Perhaps there's a tendency among German politicians to avoid war metaphors for historical reasons. There may be a feeling that it does not go down well nationally and internationally if German political leaders speak about war, even metaphorically."

He also adds that the German chancellor avoids war imagery when referring to coronavirus. Instead, she has used words that are simple and straightforward, i.e. "this situation", "a historical task", and a "great challenge" ahead.

"In a speech to the German parliament on April 23, Merkel again used few metaphors. She called the current situation a "real test", "serious times", a "dramatic crisis", a "gigantic challenge". The only figurative expressions she used were "thin ice" and "long-distance run". These metaphors evoke challenge, but not combat" (ibid.)

Other German politicians seem to have employed the same strategy, i.e. the virus is described by means of expressions such as "an exponential development", "a crisis", "a task", "the situation", and "the event".

It is important to note that new cognitive associations of some proper names have been created as metonymic extensions: such as Codogno – a town in Italy, which was the first to become a red zone, was referred to as Italian Wuhan.

It. *Codogno = Wuhan d'Italia* – Italian Wuhan; similarly: *la Lombardia = Hubei d'Italia* – Italian Hubei.

It. *il virus cinese* – the Chinese virus (cfr., *l'asiatica, la spagnola, il morbo gallico* – the Asian disease, the Spanish, the Gallic disease); It. *il virus di Wuhan* – the virus of Wuhan.

It. *la Caporetto del sistema sanitario* – the Caporetto of the health system (reference to the battle of Caporetto, 1917, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Caporetto).

4.2 Nationally specific metaphors in media discourse on COVID-19

The metaphor COVID-19 IS A PLAGUE can be directly interpreted from the instances of language use presented below (consulted sources: <https://www.corriere.it/dataroom-milena-gabanelli/dalla-pesto-coronavirus-come-pandemie-hanno-cambiato-storia->

dell-uomo/d71a9986-6dfd-11ea-9b88-27b94f5268fe-va.shtml;
<https://www.cronacadiverona.com/coronavirus-e-peste-che-analogie/>;
<https://www.cesenatoday.it/cronaca/1/coronavirus-peste-studentessa-cesenate-analogie-promessi-sposi.html>; <https://www.sportlegnano.it/2020/07/la-lombardia-non-e-piu-il-lazzaretto-ditalia/269904/>; <https://www.lastampa.it/rubriche/lato-boralevi/2020/04/11/news/il-tabu-dell-untore-e-i-malati-segreti-1.38707538>):

It. *la peste* – the plague.

It. *il lazzaretto* – a kind of hospital.

It. sing. *untore*, plur. *untori* – "were called *untori* anointers those who in the plague of Milan in 1630 were suspected of spreading the contagion by anointing people and things (e.g., house doors, church benches) with evil ointments" (Treccani, <https://www.treccani.it/vocabolario/untore/>).

It. sing. *appetato*, plur. *appetati* – the plagued (the infected).

Coronavirus is presented as a serious threat to national and global economy. COVID-19 IS AN ECONOMIC CRISIS is exemplified by the news headlines in the various languages: Pl. *Druga fala koronawirusa. Ponad 40 procent Polaków oszczędza na gorsze czasy* – The second wave of coronavirus. Over 40% of Poles are saving money for harder times. (<https://www.money.pl/gospodarka/koronawirus-dobija-transport-firmy-tona-w-dlugach-6530495674177153a.html>)

Pl. *Wakacje 2020. Polacy oszczędzają pieniądze na czarną godzinę* – Holidays 2020. Poles are saving money for a rainy day (Saving money in the event of an economic crisis caused by another attack of the coronavirus). (<https://turystyka.wp.pl/wakacje-2020-polacy-oszczedzaja-pieniadze-na-czarna-godzine-6530202616367808a>)

Pl. *Powtórne zamrożenie gospodarki to katastrofa* – Freezing economy/markets again is a catastrophe. (<https://wideo.wp.pl/rzecznik-msp-przestrzega-powtorne-zamrozenie-gospodarki-to-katastrofa-6529860860381313v>)

Pl. *Koronakryzys nie odstrasza stewardess*. – Corona crisis does not scare off stewardesses. (<https://kobieta.wp.pl/koronakryzys-nie-odstrasza-stewardess-nie->

[wyobrazaja-sobie-ze-moglyby-zmienic-zawod-6529920241703648a](#)). (Note the use of the blend *koronakryzys*, i.e. *corona* + *crisis*: the crisis evoked by the spread of the pandemic; also *corona pandemic* as reported by OED, *s.a.*).

It. *la paralisi* – paralysis (the social system in general during the COVID-19 era).

Eng. *The coronavirus took her job; The coronavirus was shutting down states and infecting thousands of people.* (<https://www.nbcnews.com>)

Eng. *COVID-19 is going to be a huge burden on health systems.* (https://www.ted.com/talks/alanna_shaikh_coronavirus_is_our_future/transcript)

Ger. *COVID-19 RUINIERT MEIN GESCHÄFT!* – COVID-19 IS RUINING MY BUSINESS! (<https://www.aphropean.com/coronavirus-krise-was-ist-mein-recht/>)

Some phenomena metaphors can be considered as reflecting the metaphor CORONAVIRUS IS A NATURAL DISASTER. Unstoppable and unharnessed forces of nature are evoked in various expressions, as evidenced by the following cases:

Eng. *It's not that the coronavirus is a dress rehearsal. It's too deadly for that. But it is the first of many calamities that will likely unfold throughout this century.* (<https://www.newyorker.com/culture/annals-of-inquiry/the-coronavirus-and-our-future>)

It. *il terremoto* – the earthquake.

It. *l'epicentro* – the epicenter.

(Sources: <https://www.sulpanaro.net/2020/08/coronavirus-e-terremoto-uguali-ma-diversi-incontro-al-parco-ferrari-il-17-agosto/>;

https://www.ilmattino.it/primopiano/sanita/covid_come_si_muove_il_virus_da_milano_a_roma_ultime_notizie_oggi-5480726.html)

It. *le tenebre e la tempesta che hanno invaso il mondo* – the darkness and the storm that invaded the world (Pope Francis, 27.03.2020, Urbi et Orbi, Vatican, https://www.ilsole24ore.com/Art/Francesco-San-Pietro-Fitte-Tenebre-Si-Sono-Addensate-Non-Lasciarci-Soli-Tempesta-Advgowg?Refresh_Ce=1)

The virus is also compared to a raging fire or floodwater:

Pl. *pożar, który cały czas się pali i który przenosi się na inne tereny* – fire, which is constantly burning and spreading to other areas.

(<https://www.o2.pl/informacje/drugiej-fali-koronawirusa-nie-bedzie-ekspert-pokazal-inny-scenariusz-6540055042280384a>)

Pl. *druga fala koronawirusa* – the second wave of coronavirus.

Pl. *Koronawirus dobija transport. Firmy toną w długach* – Coronavirus finishes off transportation. Companies are drowning in debt.

(<https://www.money.pl/gospodarka/koronawirus-dobija-transport-firmy-tona-w-dlugach-6530495674177153a.html>)

Pl. *Koronawirus: Reaktywacja. Dlaczego już teraz mamy drugą falę pandemii?* –

Coronavirus: Reactivation. Why are we going through the second wave of the pandemic? (https://wyborcza.pl/7,75400,26162946,koronawirus-reaktywacja-dlaczego-juz-teraz-mamy-druga-fale.html?utm_source=facebook.com&utm_medium=SM&utm_campaign=FB_Gazeta_Wyborcza&fbclid=IwAR2x7lk5RltLH7Zu1juMYL8cdXDcbATN2h7vbHESMmh4SkrDWouB3h4WM7A)

(https://wyborcza.pl/7,75400,26162946,koronawirus-reaktywacja-dlaczego-juz-teraz-mamy-druga-fale.html?utm_source=facebook.com&utm_medium=SM&utm_campaign=FB_Gazeta_Wyborcza&fbclid=IwAR2x7lk5RltLH7Zu1juMYL8cdXDcbATN2h7vbHESMmh4SkrDWouB3h4WM7A)

COVID-19 is A CATASTROPHE appears to be a metaphor embedded in the examples listed below:

Eng. as noted by NBC (<https://www.nbcnews.com>): *The pandemic is a curse for most, a blessing for some.*

Italian sources (<https://www.saluteinternazionale.info/2020/09/covid-19-la-catastrofe/>;

<https://www.open.online/2020/03/27/coronavirus-il-nyt-racconta-la-tragedia-di-bergamo-il-cuore-straziato-della-pandemia/>;

https://www.corriere.it/esteri/20_maggio_17/coronavirus-collasso-sanitario-dell-africa-fino-3-milioni-potrebbero-morire-76620f2c-986c-11ea-ba09-20ae073bed63.shtml;

<https://www.lindro.it/coronavirus-dopo-lapocalisse-ci-sara-la-rinascita/>;

<https://www.lagazzettadilucca.it/cronaca/2020/08/covid-19-lapocalisse-ad-un-passo/>). Note the instances provided below:

It. *la catastrophe* – the catastrophe.

It. *la tragedia* – the tragedy.

It. *il collasso* – the collapse (related to hospitals and the health care system).

It. *l'apocalisse* – the apocalypse (this association can also be considered as Bible-related).

Eng. *For insurers, coronavirus is a curious catastrophe.* (<https://www.wsj.com/articles/for-insurers-coronavirus-is-a-curious-catastrophe-11587575822>)

Ger. *Das Coronavirus sorgt für eine globale Katastrophe: Hunderttausende sind infiziert; Tausende bereits gestorben* – The coronavirus causes a global catastrophe: hundreds of thousands are infected; thousands have already died. (<https://www.idea.de/glaube/detail/ist-die-corona-pandemie-eine-strafe-gottes-112446.html>)

The COVID-19 virus is also portrayed as a destructive force affecting young people, as exemplified by the following German sources:

Ger. *Das Coronavirus ruiniert den Abi-Spaß. In normalen Jahren feiern Regensburger Gymnasiasten die Hochschulreife mit einem rauschenden Ball. 2020 ist alles anders* – The coronavirus is ruining high school fun. In normal years, Regensburg high school students celebrate their university entrance qualification with a rushing ball. In 2020, everything is different.

(<https://www.mittelbayerische.de/region/regensburg-stadt-nachrichten/das-coronavirus-ruiniert-den-abi-spass-21179-art1908416.html>)

Ger. *Kommentar: Corona zerstört alle Vorurteile über die Millenials* – Comment: Corona is destroying all prejudices about millennials.

(<https://www.dw.com/de/kommentar-corona-zerst%C3%B6rt-alle-vorurteile-%C3%BCber-die-millenials/a-52846373>)

One more destruction-related association can be quoted:

Ger. *Die Coronakrise bedroht die Existenz von Unternehmen, dennoch war die Zahl der Pleiten im April rückgängig. Viele Insolvenzen dürften aber lediglich aufgeschoben sein* – The corona crisis threatens the existence of companies but in April, the number of bankruptcies declined. Many bankruptcies should only be postponed.

(<https://www.spiegel.de/wirtschaft/unternehmen/trotz-corona-krise-weniger-firmen-melden-im-april-insolvenz-an-a-ccf130ac-ba8c-4942-a17e-e500f7107a72>)

Hence, the conceptual metaphor CORONAVIRUS is DESTRUCTION OF OLD PATTERNS (ruins, destroys, punishment) is opposed to another conceptual metaphor CORONAVIRUS is CREATION OF NEW PATTERNS (advantage, reward). The latter is also exemplified by the following:

Eng. *The coronavirus is rewriting our imaginations. What felt impossible has become thinkable.* (<https://www.newyorker.com/culture/annals-of-inquiry/the-coronavirus-and-our-future>)

Eng. *The coronavirus crisis is reshaping the world.*

[...] *For those who work on planning our future cities and public spaces, the pandemic is both a daunting threat requiring immediate measures – and an opportunity to rethink how we live, move, and get together.* (<https://www.bbc.com/future/article/20200527-coronavirus-how-covid-19-could-redesign-our-world>)

Owing to its massive outreach and the speed of spreading, COVID-19 is likened to a wild animal roaming vast stretches of the planet while hunting for prey: CORONAVIRUS is A FEROCIOUS ANIMAL:

Ukr. *Коронавірус лютує.* – The coronavirus is raging.

(<https://life.pravda.com.ua/health/2020/05/21/241056/>)

Pl. *Epidemia to jest dzikie zwierzę* – Epidemic is a wild/fierce animal.

(<https://www.money.pl/gospodarka/szumowski-dla-money-pl-epidemia-to-jest-dzikie-zwierze-minister-zdrowia-zapowiada-kontrolę-i-regionalizację-6538065646856928a.html>)

The statistics showing the numbers of infected people as well as those who died are steadily rising, and they have reached peak after peak in various countries in the so-called second wave of pandemic. However unwelcome, the sporting metaphor

CORONAVIRUS is REACHING / SETTING A RECORD has also been universally employed in media coverages:

Pl. *Koronawirus w Polsce. W czwartek padł rekord dzienny, w piątek padnie miesięczny* – Coronavirus in Poland. On Thursday, a daily record has been reached; a monthly record will be reached on Friday.

(<https://www.money.pl/gospodarka/koronawirus-w-polsce-w-czwartek-padl-rekord-dzienny-w-piatek-padnie-miesieczny-6537632002075328a.html>)

Pl. *Rekord zakażeń koronawirusem. Morawiecki zabiera głos* – Record of coronavirus infections. Morawiecki speaks up.

(<https://www.money.pl/gospodarka/rekord-zakazen-koronawirusem-morawiecki-zabiera-glos-6537638338365057a.html>)

One can venture considering the metaphor CORONAVIRUS is A SUPERNATURAL POWER resulting from its ability to stop people from moving around and putting businesses all over the world on hold. To illustrate this concept, the following instances can be given:

Ukr. *Наразі коронавірус поставив усю планету на паузу* – So far, the coronavirus has put the entire planet on hold. (<https://www.ukrinform.ua/rubric-society/3009739-oleg-pokalczuk-socialnij-psiholog.html>)

Ukr. *Пандемія – це виклик* – The pandemic is a challenge.

(<https://www.unian.ua/health/country/koronavirus-v-ukrajini-problema-i-nebezpeka-kovid-19-novini-ukrajini-11063402.html>)

Eng. *If we underestimate the virus, it will find us.*

(<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/18/health/coronavirus-america-future.html>)

Ger. *Die Corona-Krise hält die Welt in Atem* – The corona crisis keeps the world in suspense. (https://www.hallo-augsburg.de/corona-augsburg-mut-in-der-corona-krise-10-zitate-gegen-die-sorgen_yPo.)

Surprisingly, travelling metaphors, which usually evoke positive connotations of holiday and rest, can also be found in the worldwide news reports. They are, however, negatively-loaded, as illustrated by the examples below:

Eng. *COVID-19 travels fast*. (Context: Some coronaviruses, like COVID-19, also transmit person to person. The person-to-person ones travel faster and travel farther, just like COVID-19).

(https://www.ted.com/talks/alanna_shaikh_coronavirus_is_our_future/transcript)

Ukr. *"Чорний Лебідь-2020": коронавірус крокує планетою* – "Black Swan-2020": the coronavirus is cruising the planet. (<https://www.5.ua/svit/chornyi-lebid-2020-koronavirus-krokuie-planetoiu-210473.html>)

Ukr. *Коронавірус – валіза, яку тягне людина, розповсюджуючи хворобу скрізь по світу* – The coronavirus is a suitcase that a person pulls, spreading the disease all over the world. (Context: *Тепер ми стали переносниками, які поширили хворобу по всьому світу, тягнучи її за собою, наче валізу, на круїзних кораблях і літаках.* – We have now become carriers, spreading the disease around the world, dragging (or pulling) it along like a suitcase on cruise ships and planes).

(<https://nash.live/news/society/jak-koronavirus-zminit-svit.html>)

Ukr. *Пандемія трохи розгладила згорнуту мапу світу* – The pandemic has slightly flattened (smoothed out) the curled up map of the world. (Context: *Подорожувати стало так легко. До COVID-19, особливо за останнє десятиліття, мапа Землі наче згорнулася всередину, зближуючи найвіддаленіші куточки. Кордони майже стерлися* – It became so easy to travel. Prior to COVID-19, especially in the last decade, the map of the Earth seemed to have curled inward, bringing the farthest corners closer. The borders were almost blurred). (<https://nash.live/news/society/jak-koronavirus-zminit-svit.html>)

CORONAVIRUS is THE ULTIMATE JUDGEMENT / PUNISHMENT (FROM GOD) as well as CRONAVIRUS is A DEATH SENTENCE appear to be the metaphorical readings of many news reports.

As noted by the article published in the Guardian, becoming infected with coronavirus is potentially lethal: *We need to prevent Covid-19 being a death sentence for so many.* (<https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2020/jun/26/rashida-tlaib-prisons-coronavirus-covid-19>)

An example from a German source refers to hell:

Ger. *Es ist die Rede von "Corona-Hölle" oder "Corona-Knast"* – There is talk of "Corona Hell" or "Corona Prison". (<https://www.zdf.de/nachrichten/panorama/coronavirus-sprache-angst-kommunikation-100.html>)

Punishment is quite often evoked in German sources:

Ger. *Kurzum: Das Coronavirus als metaphorische Strafe für Globalisierung des Kapitalismus führt tatsächlich zu einer Regression (womöglich hier und dort auch zu einer Rezession).* – In short: the coronavirus as a metaphorical punishment for globalization of capitalism actually leads to a regression (possibly somewhere also to a recession) (<https://www.zeit.de/kultur/2020-03/krankheiten-epidemie-coronavirus-psychologie-soziologie/seite-4>).

Ger. *Decken wir den Mantel der humanistischen Vernunft über ein sich nach und nach herausbildendes Narrativ, in dem das alles zusammenkommt: die Seuche als Strafe Gottes (an den Regimes der "Ungläubigen" und Unbotmäßigen und an den kosmopolitischen Wandernden und den "Unordentlichen"), die Seuche als Strafe für die Offenheit der Grenzen (und den Verrat an der Konstruktion völkischer und nationaler Identitäten als Abbild eines "gesunden" und "wehrhaften" Körpers) und die Seuche als Wettbewerbsvorteil im Wirtschaftskrieg, als Bestrafung und Belohnung für zivilisatorische Effizienz.* – Let us throw the cloak of humanistic reason on a gradually developing narrative, in which all this comes together: the plague as a punishment from God (on the regimes of the "infidels" and the insubordinate and on the cosmopolitan migrants and the "unorderly"), the plague as a punishment for open borders (and the betrayal of the construction of ethnic and national identities as an image of a "healthy" and "defensive" body) and the plague as a competitive advantage in the economic war, as a punishment and reward for civilizational efficiency.

(<https://www.zeit.de/kultur/2020-03/krankheiten-epidemie-coronavirus-psychologie-soziologie/seite-4>)

Ger. *Ist die Corona-Pandemie eine Strafe Gottes?* – Is the corona pandemic a punishment from God? (<https://www.idea.de/glaube/detail/ist-die-corona-pandemie-eine-strafe-gottes-112446.html>)

Eng. *Is the coronavirus a judgement from God?* (<https://www.churchtimes.co.uk/articles/2020/1-may/comment/opinion/is-the-coronavirus-a-judgement-from-god>)

To sum up, the prevalent metaphors registered in the languages under study with reference to the present pandemic situation are those involving the concepts WAR and COMBAT as a source. They imply that the medical staff and governments are engaged in an ongoing battle; the hospitals and patient care are compared to a battlefield activity; the virus is lethal and the medical staff are heroes.

5. COVID-19 as represented in comic Internet memes

The media space embraces all spheres of human life. The Internet gives people of different cultures an opportunity of quick contact. Exchanging humorous messages is an important part of their communication. Thanks to the Internet, humorous messages have broadened their thematic scope, instantly responding to different events. Understanding Internet humour demands a great amount of knowledge from its users – encyclopedic, linguistic, cultural, etc.

The COVID-19 pandemic has shaken the whole world, the Internet responding to these developments immediately. For example, on September 25, 2020, the Google search for the hashtag "#coronavirus" produced 72,300,000 hits. The Internet has been swept by a powerful tide of memes, a great number of which (though certainly not all) are humorous.

A meme is defined as "an amusing or interesting item (such as a captioned picture or video) or genre of items that is spread widely online especially through social media"

(Merriam-Webster online dictionary, *s.a.*), "an image, video, piece of text, etc. typically humorous by nature, that is copied and spread rapidly by Internet users, often with slight variations" (OED, *s.a.*). The meaning of a meme is constructed through various semiotic resources. They include comic elements, which inform and entertain the target addressee by demonstrating visual images characteristic of a certain sociocultural group. However, they are not necessarily underpinned by ideology: as Morozova rightfully remarks, "the Internet memes might be humorously charged without any serious political implications" (2017: 262).

Memes are characterized by the following features: they are not big in size, pursue a certain aim, are emotionally coloured, combine textual and visual elements, which makes them easily understandable by representatives of various cultures. The semiotic process of creating a meme quite often involves hyperbole, paradox or absurdity as "laughter-evoking" techniques integrated into particular interpretation and its specific way of manifestation (Zhabotyńska 2020: 93). Being a new form of contemporary media, Internet memes are highly specific: functionally, they are dialogic, thus the interactive Internet environment gives rise to certain thematic types of discourses in the informal comic style.

The theme of coronavirus is common for all linguocultures, the most popular topics being a craze for pasta, toilet paper, working remotely, lockdown and its consequences. Here lies the secret of a successful joke: to feel the pulse of time, the urgency of the problem for people.

Comic Internet memes reflect people's culture and the specificity of their emotional perception of real-life events. Understanding the national features of this or that 'laughing ethnoculture' plays an important role in this process. Each nationality has its own specific traits alongside the features they share with other nationalities. Balina considers that the comic content is also connected with subcultures of different nations; for each of them their laughing worlds are specific (Балина 2005: 3). The comic

component of the Internet memes is characterized by national specificity; it is accompanied by the manifestation of national identity and characteristic world outlook at a certain historical stage.

5.1 Display of national specificity in Internet memes

A national character has a sustainable linguistic, historical, religious, and value identity. Manifestations of national identity are of contextual nature, i.e. they reveal themselves only **a) in a particular situation**. Each nation is characterized by its customs and precedent phenomena.

The meme in Fig. 9 is focused on a precedent situation. One of Ukrainian politicians openly advised an old woman, who had no money to pay for utilities, to sell her dog and thus to solve the problem. She did not agree. This meme interprets this situation in the following way: the dog says (the left-hand part of the meme): "I told you not to exchange me for the gas", the right-hand part of the meme says: "Now you may go for a walk" during the coronavirus lockdown.



Figure 9. #broisnotonsale. Available at:

https://ye.ua/sypilstvo/48288_Zharti_pro_karantin_pidbirka_kartinok_dlya_garnogo_nastroiyi.html

Any culture brings in the emotional component into interpretation of important events, which is reflected in the Internet memes as well.

Another example is connected with the German national culture which is traditionally associated with such characteristics as **b) a typical feeling of fear**, the roots of which are connected with Luther, who firmly believed in the inevitability of Judgment Day, and that is why passed the German people the culture of fright, guiltiness and uncertainty (Анолли 2016: 268).



Figure 10. Rescue from coronavirus. Available at: https://www.instagram.com/p/B9qa_FlIuxo/?igshid=18u106awiz0wg

The meme in Fig. 10 illustrates the comic situation of wearing a face mask on eyes: the fear of coronavirus made a young German woman hide her fear of people during the quarantine under a mask. The text above the photo says, "When you hate people more than you hate the virus". This meme satirically portrays a frightened woman who is taking risks to catch the coronavirus, as her nose and mouth are not covered.

In British linguoculture, **c) prohibitive tonality** is almost absent. Prohibition, as a rule, manifests itself indirectly (Ларина 2013: 223). However, in the meme presented in Fig. 11, prohibition is expressed directly: "Don't be like Boris!"



Figure 11. The Prime Minister's error. Available at: <https://www.nilnews.com/internet-users-share-hilarious-memes-as-boris-johnson-tests-positive-for-coronavirus/>

The comic effect is connected with reframing the situation: Boris Johnson, the Prime Minister of Great Britain, caught coronavirus. This event was used as a moral admonition to children: "This is Boris. Boris didn't wash his hands. Don't be like Boris". Such remarks are not welcome in British society and can only be used to create a humorous tonality. The comic colouring of the situation is intensified by the three-time repetition of the proper name *Boris*, which is an instance of a deliberate deviation from the language norm (cf. Grice's maxim of quantity). The inference the addressee draws from this meme is as follows: Boris Johnson did not wash his hands and was infected with coronavirus.

A typical trait of Russians is **d) gloominess**. As Larina observes, "emotional Russians are often gloomy and unsmiling" (Ларина 2013: 127). As Zhelvis states with humour, "a Russian who feels bad, won't start smiling; he wants the whole world to know about his trouble; well, if not the whole world, then only the whole microdistrict" (Жельвис 2002: 37).

The meme in Fig. 12 illustrates a scene from the comedy *The Diamond Arm*, which is well-known to the Soviet and ex-Soviet audiences (Rus. "Бриллиантовая рука", 1969).



Figure 12. Reprehensible behaviour. Available at: <https://www.1obl.ru/free-time/razvlecheniya/svezhie-memy-pro-koronavirus-otmechaem-1-aprelya/>

In connection with the epidemic of coronavirus, the word *любовница* (mistress) is replaced by the word *работа* (work); the text of the meme reads, "And you know, I won't be surprised if it turns out tomorrow that your husband visits WORK in an underhand way!" Here the inference is based on contrast: when life is normal, a man secretly goes to see his mistress; in the times of coronavirus, he secretly goes to the office, while he is supposed to stay locked down.

No doubt, **e) language** also has an impact on displaying cultural differences in the coronavirus perception. In such situations, play on words is quite frequent.



Figure 13. Coronavirus is an excellent way to take a short rest / to die out. Available at: <https://zn.ua/ukr/UKRAINE/ukrayina-na-karantini-svizhi-fotozhabi-i-memi-iz-socmerezh-341334.html>

In the meme presented in Fig. 13, the comic effect is based on the shift of word-stress in the Russian word *передохнуть*. Depending on the shift of stress in this word, the meaning changes. Thus, *передохну́ть* means 'to take a short rest'; *передо́хнуть* – 'to die out'. The commentary below runs like this: "It was a short test to find out whether you are an optimist or pessimist". The stress in the "right" place creates a comic effect. Thus, in certain situations, an expression may specify different cognitive, emotional or social conditions which acquire special significance when they are combined with a particular cultural context.

5.1 Display of universal features in the Internet memes

Memes about coronavirus in various linguocultures are intertextual: they "reverberate" in their form and content with other memes, thus creating a comic effect. The content of comic memes connected with the topic of coronavirus rests on the premise that their features are ingrained in human cognition: COVID-19 has united different nations, cultures, and people. Thus, respective memes display a tendency for universality.

a) Common topics about the deficit of face masks, toilet paper, bactericidal gel, etc. Universality of this topic is supported by memes from German, Italian, Slovak, and Polish cultures.

The text of the German meme (Fig. 14) reads: "The police do not recommend leaving valuable things in the public eye in your automobile".



Figure 14. What is a valuable thing? Available at: https://twitter.com/h_allo/status/1239872971633831939

Ironically, "the valuable thing" in the time of COVID-19 turns out to be a roll of toilet paper. At the first stage of the COVID19 pandemic, toilet paper was one of the items at a premium in other countries, too, as the Polish meme in Fig. 15 demonstrates:



Figure 15. Toilet paper as a valuable product. Available at: <https://gdynia.naszemiasto.pl/memy-o-koronawirusie-kot-kaczynskiego-w-masce-czy/ga/c1-7954209/zd/57201379>

The phrase *Giełda Papierów Wartościowych* is the official name of the Warsaw Stock Exchange. The meme is based on the word play: Pl. *papiery wartościowe* 'securities' vs. *papier toaletowy* 'toilet paper'.

Other household goods, such as antiseptics, have become a deficit, too.



Figure 16. In search of amuchina gel. Available at: <https://www.facciabuco.com/post/1079889rip/che-voi-hashish-o-cocaina-amuchina-gel-no-voglio-il-patentino-di-facciabuco.html>

The dialogue between two Italians (Fig. 16) runs like this: "What do you need? Hashish? Or cocaine?" – "Amuchina gel!" This meme describes another popular theme during the epidemic of coronavirus: it is more difficult to obtain a bottle of antiseptic gel than drugs.

By and large, memes about coronavirus are often based on hyperbole, irony, alogism, absurdity and other entities of a paradoxical nature.

Modern reality is very dynamic and is characterized by the interpenetration of cultures. In the situation of coronavirus, nationally specific values are not in contrast but more often than not stand in mutually complementary relations, which testifies to the ongoing process of revaluation of stereotypes, aims, norms, and standards. The precedent texts in the Internet memes under consideration are a valid proof to that.

b) Values of collectivism and individualism

Universality is closely connected with the values of collectivism and individualism. Collectivism is understood as social harmony, coordination between the members of a group, tendency to cooperation, close attention to other people's needs. Individualism, respectively, is uniqueness, awareness of one's own independence, self-realization, and leadership (Анолли 2016: 311).



Figure 17. Social "harmony". Available at:

<https://fr.memedroid.com/memes/detail/2911543/L1-KFC?refGallery=tags&page=5&tag=coronavirus>

The textual part of the French meme presented in Fig. 17 says, "When championships are held after two months of lockdown." Collectivism is represented here derisively: the visual image shows that all the players of a football team, without any exception, have gained weight.



Figure 18. A good custom? Available at:

https://cdn-img-p.facciabuco.com/285/w6bnes3j8r-io-lo-proporrei-che-dite-satira_b.jpg

The text of the Italian meme (Fig. 18) runs as follows: "In order to get rid of epidemics, some ancient peoples had a custom to sacrifice their rulers to gods. I am simply saying this, just to have an idea...". This meme is an instance of black humour since it suggests killing the government incapable of stopping the epidemic, which, in its turn, is indicative of people's unity in the time of the coronavirus epidemic.

The title of the humorous Italian meme in Fig. 19 is "Meanwhile in the fridge".



Figure 19. Meanwhile in the fridge. Available at: <https://www.today.it/foto/media/coronavirus-i-meme-sui-social/>

The visual image shows the solidarity of bottles protected by a mask, which are grouped together in a corner of a fridge. They oppose one single bottle that is not wearing a mask; it is a bottle of popular Corona beer, which brings up associations with coronavirus. This meme is based on conceptual metonymy realized visually (the mask stands for preventative measures against coronavirus) and the homophonic naming of the brand of beer and the disease. It can be interpreted as a united effort of people who take preventative measures (the "second order" metonymy) in their battle against the pandemic.

Individualism is associated with uniqueness and increased attention to one's own image. As for display of individualism, every culture will understand the French meme in Fig. 20, which comprises the following words: "This mask won't protect you from coronavirus infection... but, undoubtedly will help you stay socially apart".



Figure 20. A lifesaver. Available at: <https://fr.memedroid.com/memes/detail/2918629>

This meme is based on the principle of violated expectancy: in the times of coronavirus, people tend to buy medical masks, not carnival ones; the latter will not protect one from the virus but will scare people off (or keep the person's face hidden).

Representatives of the post-Soviet cultures are familiar with the musical film about the three musketeers; the name of d'Artagnan's beloved *Constantia* is in consonance with the Russian word *дистанция* 'distance': this play on words is connected both with the intertextual relation of the meme to the film and imparts an additional comic sense to the meme. (See fig. 21).

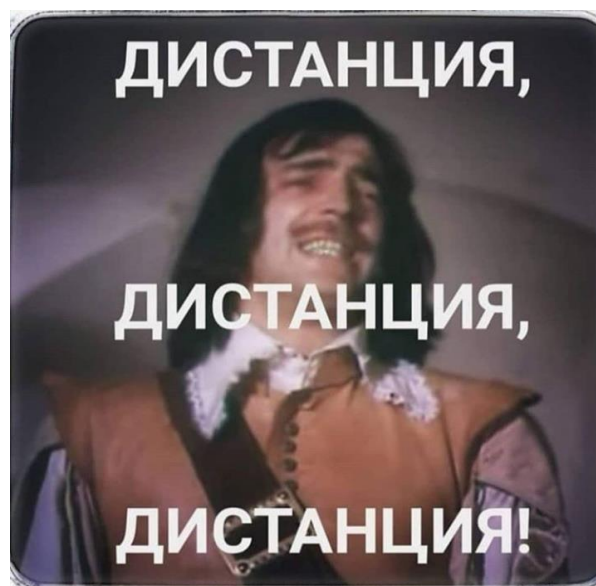


Figure 21. Distance is a priority. Available at: https://pikabu.ru/story/dalnovidnyiy_politik_7309398

c) Men's and women's values

Culture is a constellation of values, i.e. people living together should appreciate what they do and feel. Manliness manifests itself in the values of power, self-reliance, arrogance, independence, and rivalry. The vital feminine values are beauty, harmony, comfort, peace of mind, and health – their own as well as that of their family members, children in particular.

Comic memes about coronavirus present men in a completely different light.



Figure 22. Ring-barking. Available at: https://cdn-img-p.facciabuco.com/73/fz1h4xkg62-vaccata_b.jpg

Comic memes about coronavirus present men in a completely different light. The Italian meme in Fig. 22 says, "When you are afraid of the virus, but you are afraid of your wife more than the virus" (the meme caricatures a man wearing his engagement ring over the protective glove as he is afraid of his wife as much as her fears to get the virus).

Internet memes about coronavirus show women as trying to remain beautiful at any cost, in spite of the lockdown (Fig. 23).



Figure 23. Femininity in full. Available at:
https://cdn-img-p.facciabuco.com/135/b24vgj7wi2-mistavirus-vaccata_b.jpg

The situation is humorously depicted in the Italian meme presented in Fig. 23: "Open hairdressing salons! Before somebody gets hurt!" Due to the virus, many public places have closed their doors to customers. As everybody knows, part of a woman's life is to be beautiful, but how to maintain one's good looks if hairdressing salons are closed? This meme presents a jocular picture of how women try to care about their hair at home; such procedures will not always have the desired result and can even turn out to be rather dangerous.

The Slovak meme in Fig. 24 is a response to the relaxation of the lockdown restrictions, in particular, the opening of shops and hairdressing salons.



Figure 24. The lockdown is over. Available at:
<https://nazory.pravda.sk/kresba/clanok/552127-gaspavec-21-5-2020/>

It shows disheveled women, who have joined the crowd of people running to the shopping centre that has opened after the lockdown.

In the meme in Fig. 25, the comic mechanism is based on the incongruity of the frames, which are blended: a man proposing to a woman asks her if she wants to wash her hands instead of asking her to become his wife.



Figure 25. Accepting the proposal. Available at:

<https://fr.memedroid.com/memes/detail/2924307/Elle-a-dit-oui?refGallery=tags&page=1&tag=covid-19>

Here we deal with a play on words: in this familiar situation, the French phrase *laver les mains* 'to wash one's hands' sounds ambiguous: it can be interpreted literally or figuratively as "to refuse to have any further involvement with somebody".

d) Cross-cultural language means

Certain linguistic phenomena connected with the coronavirus / COVID-19 theme are characteristic of different cultures. The memes considered below combine innovative elements of another culture with familiar language elements.

In the Russian meme given in Fig. 26, we again deal with a play of words: *Twentin Tarantino* vs *Kwentin Carantino*. The latter "last name" (*Carantino*) refers to the mayor of Ukraine's capital, Kyiv, who is known to all Ukraine for his radical quarantine

measures (such as stopping the work of the metro, forbidding swimming in the river Dnieper and walking in parks).



Figure 26. Carantino. Available at: https://xsport.ua/others_s/news/klichko-grechka-i-tualetnaya-bumaga-samy-smeshnye-memy-pro-karantin-iz-seti_2250522/

The French meme in Fig. 27 is based on the violated expectancy. The fortune cookie predicts some "positive" happenings this week (*Positive things will happen to you this week*). However, the word *positive* that refers to the results of a test on coronavirus means that the result is in fact upsetting since the person is infected with the virus.



Figure 27. "Positive" happenings. Available at: <https://fr.memedroid.com/memes/detail/2914246/positive-attitude?refGallery=tags&page=4&tag=coronavirus>

The comic element is brought out by the contextual variation of the word *positive*, which is made obvious by the person's face expression (joy vs. distress).

The Ukrainian meme in Fig. 28 is based on blending parts of foreign place names (*Santa, Porto, Costa, sheikh, St., Puerto*) and affixes (*las, los, del, el, de la*) with Ukrainian nouns denoting living and utility rooms (*кухня, балкон, спальня, туалет, гараж*). The meme reminds of a standard advertisement from a tourist agency, only during the lockdown. This is a parody on proposals to travel within the confines of one's home.



Figure 28. A 'travel agency' offer. Available at:

<https://kalynivka.city/read/experiance/72814/yakkalinivchani-nevtrachayut-optimizmu-zhartuyut-tamriyut-pro-zhittya-bez-koronavirusu>

The analysis shows that nationally specific comic memes presuppose their recognizability by representatives of other cultures. In the memes considered above, extralinguistic knowledge of different origin comes to the fore. Most of the memes are grounded on play on words and precedent phenomena.

To sum up, our analysis of comic Internet memes about coronavirus has identified nationally specific and universal features of coronavirus perception by representatives of different cultures: Russian, Ukrainian, Slovak, Polish, German, English, French, and Italian languages.

The national specificity of the memes under consideration manifests itself in such national traits as the feeling of fear characteristic of the Germans, the prohibitive tonality not characteristic of the British, the sulkiness of the Russians as well as in precedent phenomena.

Universality is achieved by intertextual relations, which are represented by play on words, stress shift, and meaning variation as well as by common topics (e.g., the deficit of facemasks or toilet paper). Universality is also connected with the values of collectivism and individualism, men's and women's values, which manifest themselves in the use of cross-cultural linguistic means.

A higher expressiveness of verbal and non-verbal elements is a distinctive feature of comic memes about coronavirus. It is based on the presupposition that the addresser and the addressee possess a certain body of shared knowledge, the latter generating allusions, which create no serious communicative obstacles, but, on the contrary, brighten up this unique Internet genre.

6. Conclusions

The discussion presented above shows that our knowledge of COVID-19 comes from many sources, the most reliable of them being regular WHO publications. These texts provide a guiding strategy for the media coverage of the COVID-19 pandemic, which, however, does not protect readers from media tilt and disinformation. News writers' stance in various countries manifests itself in the way facts about the disease are selected and presented. It demonstrates more common features than differences; this suggests that in times of adversity, there is a tendency for unification of ideas and approaches in different countries. This tendency is also traced in the way fakes and misrepresentations, which flood online media, are exposed.

Media messages on COVID-19 belong to the so-called "hard news", or emotive type of journalism, which is characterized by the following features: timeliness, tellability,

conflict nature of events reported, and their relevance for people. The array of hard news messages constitute the discourse environment in which one can find numerous instances of linguistic phenomena that relate to the COVID-19 pandemic. In particular, they are literal (terms, neologisms and nonce words) and metaphoric designations of COVID-19 and related phenomena, which are presented both in a serious and humorous tonality.

It has been established that the duration and severity of the pandemic influence the stability of the newly formed concepts. One may presume that after the pandemic, specialized concepts characteristic of the present-day epidemiological discourse will go out of everyday use. We cannot rule out, however, that people who suffered a severe form of the disease or whose loved ones died from it will remember it and keep reviving it in their narratives. Thus, it is hard to say now which words will disappear and which ones will remain (e.g., *7-Tage-R* – "the number of reproductions based on a period of one week", *Coronaer* – "a person who has been infected with the SARS-CoV-2 virus", etc.).

There are grounds to believe that concepts that can gain a foothold in everyday life would reflect specific changes in the post-COVID life as compared to pre-COVID, which are mainly associated with the phenomenon of freedom – the loss or gain by a person of the opportunity to manifest their will in the context of awareness of the nature and society laws of development. These changes will be reflected in conceptual pairs, such as FREEDOM vs. LOCKDOWN, FREEDOM vs. HEALTH PROTECTION, INTERACTION vs. ISOLATION, etc. Thus, it could happen that at the end of the coronavirus pandemic the widespread concept MASK will never be the same.

Humour is a powerful factor contributing to mutual understanding among nations in the time of coronavirus. Aspiration for unity manifests itself in the strive of nations for dialogue, ability to understand each other with the help of humour, wit, and laughter. Due to their communicative potential and enhanced information capacity, humorous

Internet memes about COVID-19 exert influence on people of different nationalities, charging them with positive emotions, overcoming all kinds of language barriers, fostering understanding between people of different cultures. However, even neighboring nations, let alone those whose languages do not belong to the same language family, demonstrate specificity of humour, develop their own dominant styles of humour, which influence cultural and sociological aspects of humorous discourse.

Thus, mediatization of the COVID-19 pandemic in various national editions has exerted substantial influence on the collective mentality of people of different nations and brought into the language a plethora of novel vocabulary items and metaphoric expressions underpinned by conceptual metaphors. They demonstrate both common general tendencies and national specificity, which is indicative not only of the serious tonality, but of humorous as well.

Notes

1. All the examples in the text as well as the quotations from non-English-language publications are translated by the authors:

German – Nataliya Petlyuchenko

Italian and French – Artur Gałkowski

Polish – Agnieszka Uberman

Russian – Victoria Samokhina

Slovak – Peter Krajčovič

Ukrainian – Victoria Samokhina and Halyna Stashko

2. MONITORA – a web application for monitoring media outputs (using this application, one can monitor outputs (articles, news, etc.) in the Slovak media by key words and topics)

List of abbreviations

ATS relative – average time spent watching media (TV, radio or Internet)

Fr. – French

Germ. – German

IAEA – International atomic energy agency

IDS – Leibniz-Institut für Deutsche Sprache

It. – Italian

Lat. – Latin

MERS – Middle East Respiratory Coronavirus Syndrome

OED – Oxford English dictionary

OWID – Online-Wortschatz-Informationssystem Deutsch

Pl. – Polish

Port. – Portuguese

Russ. – Russian

SARS – Severe Acute Respiratory Coronavirus Syndrome

Sk. – Slovak

Ukr. – Ukrainian

WHO – World Health Organization

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Résumé

This article explores how the COVID-19 pandemic is represented in the media in seven languages (Russian, Ukrainian, Slovak, Polish, German, English, and Italian) with the aim of throwing light on its universal and culturally specific features. The media part of the article considers the COVID-19 pandemic as hard news, while its linguistic section focuses on the literal and metaphoric representation of this phenomenon and its instantiation in the Internet memes. Media messages on COVID-19 belong to the 'hard news' type, which is characterized by the following features: a particular timeline, which starts in early February 2020 is still going on; tellability, which is accounted for by the universal significance of the news about the COVID-19 pandemic; the controversial nature of events taking place during the pandemic; their relevance for people of different nationalities. The multi-language array of hard news constitutes the discourse environment in which numerous linguistic phenomena (terms, neologisms, nonce words and metaphors) that relate to the COVID-19 pandemic are instantiated both in a serious and humorous tonality. Mediatization of the COVID-19 pandemic in various national editions exerts substantial influence on the collective mentality of people of different nations. It has brought into the language novel vocabulary items and metaphoric expressions underpinned by conceptual metaphors. They demonstrate both common general tendencies and national specificity, which is indicative not only of the serious tonality, but of humorous as well.

Key words: coronavirus, COVID-19, pandemic, infodemic, online media, fake news, concept, conceptual metaphor, humour, Internet meme.

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LEGE ARTIS

Language yesterday, today, tomorrow

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EVALUATION OF BREXIT PHENOMENON IN SLOVAK AND ENGLISH MEDIA TEXTS

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Abstract: The article focuses on the analysis of the evaluation of the Brexit phenomenon in Slovak and British media. Evaluation of different outer world's fragments is a significant part of human cognitive activity. It has been proved that the evaluation of Brexit depends on socio-cultural stereotypes and is realised by the usage of various tropes and figures of speech, which are different in Slovak and English media texts.

Key words: Brexit, evaluation, evaluative utterance, context, tropes, figures of speech.

1. Introduction

The mass media has a significant role in contemporary democratic society as the major channel of communication. Media is considered as the "mirror" of the modern society, it is the media, which shapes our lives. The population relies on the news media as the chief source of information and the base, on which they formulate their opinions, judgments, values, and voting decisions.

The role of media is very important in a modern society. At present with the introduction of Internet-services, even a common man is being exposed to international

knowledge (Pravdová 2017b: 617-624). There is no doubt that media is becoming more and more essential in our life (Gáliková Tolnaiová 2019: 4-12; Happer & Philo 2013: 321-336; Škripcová 2017; Vivian 2012; Wimmer & Dominick 2013). Society is influenced by media in different ways. It is the media for the masses that helps them to receive information about a lot of things and also to form views and make conclusions regarding various issues. It is the media, which keeps the people updated and informed them about current affairs and the business world (Hudíková 2017: 133-140). Thus, mass media can be considered tools for the transfer of information, concepts, and ideas to the readers, listeners, or the viewers.

It is common knowledge that the most widespread platforms for mass media are newspapers, magazines, radio, television, and the Internet. The newspaper enlarges the general knowledge of the people (Manovich 2001). Newspapers are considered to be a source of information, which is highly genuine and successful in the providing of timely information to the audience (Pravdová 2017a: 53-63). Another attractive quality of the newspaper is that it presents wide-ranging information, which is not available on any other resource of media.

It must be noted that newspapers have been scrupulously studied from different angles: structure and composition (Wodak & Busch 2004: 105-123), typology (Казак 2014: 65-76), concepts and categories (Володина 2003; Добросклонская 2008), and language means (Конюшкевич 2016: 93-104).

Nevertheless, there are certain gaps in investigating the role of the evaluation category, which occupies one of the central places in the newspaper text. In this respect, the role of context and functioning of stylistic means in the creation, realization, and interpretation of the appraisal of different social phenomena in media texts should be mentioned. The topicality of this piece of study is determined by the fact that evaluation is as a kind of cognitive activity, as in epistemological terms, any cognitive act, which

expresses the attitude of the speaker to the object described, that is, contains an act of evaluation.

In the proposed conception, evaluation is viewed in the light of social and cultural studies of journalistic texts. Evaluation of the text is undoubtedly formed on the basis of socio-cultural stereotypes. Evaluating a certain object, the speaker relies on the one hand, on his attitude toward him, and on the other hand, on stereotypes about this object and its place in the world picture of values (Tameryan et al. 2019: 1716-1722).

The **subject** of the discussion is an assessment of Brexit in Slovak and English newspaper texts.

2. Methodology

The **purpose** of this article is to identify the main factors (sociocultural and language) that affect the assessment of Brexit phenomenon in Slovak and British media and determine one or another of its evaluative signs.

The **material**, which is subjected to analysis, was a selection of approximately 300 fragments of texts from the Slovak media portals (www.aktuality.sk, www.hlavne spravny.sk, www.pravda.sk, www.sme.sk) and the English media portals (www.reuters.com, www.theguardian.com). The criterion of the selection was the existence of evaluative words in the fragments.

The **methodology** applied in the study is based on the fundamental points of Evaluation theory, which presents essential notions for linguistic analysis. Focusing primarily on the semantic peculiarities of evaluation, this theory expands the boundaries of the analysis with text semantics (Арутюнова 2012; Вольф 2009; Byessonova 2012: 7-14). It means that all aspects of text (register, mood, participants with their communicative purposes, and cognitive systems) become very important for the study of creating and marking evaluation (Кухаренко 2018; Bigunova 2019: 4-5; Partington

2017: 196-201). In this respect, the theoretical viewpoint essential to the study is also the pragmatic approach to evaluation analysis highlighting the role of extralinguistic knowledge in utterance interpretation and the principles that limit its use as well as the context types for evaluation.

This research involved a variety of methods. A descriptive method, by which we mean a set of research techniques that allow one to move from particular observations to generalizations and conclusions is widely used; contextual and presuppositional analysis, allowing to detect the influence of the role structure of the communication situation, social factors on the communicative semantics, and functional features of utterances with evaluative words and phrases (Dijk 1977: 19; Kachru 2008; Kecskes 2013). Speech act analysis is used while studying the pragmatic characteristics of utterances containing evaluative concepts (Bigunova & Kolegaeva 2019: 7-22).

Our paper is structured as follows: firstly, we will present the theoretical description of the evaluation category in linguistics in general. Then, we will report briefly on the results of some previous works dealing with analysis of the evaluation in the light of social and cultural studies of journalistic texts. Finally, we will provide and comment on our findings concerning the specificity of estimation of the Brexit phenomenon in Slovak and English newspapers, before making some concluding remarks and suggestions for future research.

3. Evaluation and values

Evaluation is a vital aspect of a person's everyday life. Evaluation by its nature is anthropocentric, which means that the contents of evaluation reveal individual nature and depend on the values and axiological standards of a person (Селіванова 2010: 525).

It is known that the quintessence of the category of evaluation is clarified by the theory of value orientation of an individual's activity and consciousness, and the scope of its

characteristics embraces all that is given by the physical and mental nature of a person, their being and feeling. We evaluate others and are assessed in accordance with our actions and words. All objects and things of reality perceived by a human being have a definite value in his/her mind, that is, they may be evaluated (Воркачев 2006: 106).

Evaluation is defined as a speaker's objective or subjective attitude to certain objects, things, phenomena that are explicitly or explicitly expressed by language means (Приходько 2016: 17). As Bigunova rightly points out evaluation can be classified into positive, negative, and neutral kinds (2019: 7). So, it cannot be neutral. If an individual claims a neutral position, they express hidden negative appraisal.

It should be stressed that the specific quality of evaluation is its selectivity. The person's mind constantly extracts and stores those features of reality that are important to the individual from the evaluative point of view. There is no doubt that one and the same thing can be of great importance to one person and of no interest to another (Breeze & Olza 2017; Martin & White 2005). If a certain object has not affected a person's spiritual sphere, no appraisal will be formed either in thought or in speech. The evaluative moment is nothing but a person's mental process held on the subject of statement (perception, understanding, synthesis, conclusion, etc.), which is an evaluation in its broadest sense.

All environmental phenomena perceived by man have a certain value in our minds, that is, they can be evaluated. According to Arutyunova, the nature of the evaluation always corresponds to the nature of man, because we evaluate only "what is needed (physically and spiritually) to man and to mankind" (Арутюнова 2012: 181).

People evaluate their past and present, the appearance and behaviour of the individual, the shape and size of various subjects, things, duration and frequency of events, the degree of complexity of tasks, etc. Evaluative interpretation of circumstances and subjects is one of the most important types of mental-speech activity in the everyday

life of an individual. As a result, objective reality is viewed by an individual from the point of view of its evaluative character – good and evil, truth and falsehood, justice and injustice, benefit and harm, beauty and ugliness (Bednarek 2009: 146-175).

Evaluation is based on the logical notion of "value". Genesis of the concept of "value", if we resort to reconstructing it on the basis of the etymology of the words it is named, fixes in it at least three fundamental elements: the characterization of the external properties of objects and things as phenomena of evaluative attitude to them; psychological qualities of the person as a subject of this attitude; relationships between people, their communication, due to which values gain a generalized meaning.

Value is a positive or negative property of the objects of the surrounding world for the speaking community. This significance of these properties is determined not by the objects' features as such, but by their role in the life of an individual language speaker and in the life of the speaking community in general.

There are universal values (common to all mankind, peculiar to individual communities) and individual ones. Being a concentrated expression of the experience of the vital activity of a particular social community values form a certain system, which an individual as a member of this society adheres to in the process of self-evaluation.

It is well known that the notion of value determines the essence of a person, and the system of values is an attribute of human consciousness that guides their activity. Value orientations, which can be both collective and individual, are not something established once and for all. Changes in cultural attitudes often lead to transformation in the system of values (Гибатова 2011: 132). The definition of the evaluative component of a language unit not only reveals the place of a designated phenomenon in the value system, but also makes a diagnostic contribution, designed to identify the evaluative

status of a person and society as a whole at one of the moments of their existence or in their development.

Personal values are an individual reflection of group or universal values. They are somewhat diverse in different people, due to the interpretation of their content and the shift of emphasis. The selection, appropriation, and assimilation of social values by an individual are mediated by their social identity and the values of the small contact groups referenced to them.

The subject of evaluation acts in these cases as a mental or physical receptor, evaluating event, situation, and object in different ranges: ethical evaluation (embarrassing, humiliating, sinful), emotional (boring), intellectual (foolish), utilitarian (meaningless, late), and psychological (difficult, easy, not easy, wise) (Byessonova 2012: 9). It emphasizes the most important feature of the semantics of evaluative words, their diffuse meaning, primarily due to the ability to represent evaluation in terms of different grounds.

4. Evaluation as the source of evaluative utterances in newspapers

The category of evaluation is a rather popular object of linguistic study. As a linguistic category, it attracts the attention of many scientists (Бігунова 2017; Вольф 2009; Панасенко 2019; Приходько 2016; Bednarek 2009; White 2015).

A lot of contribution has been made to the study of the semantic and cognitive nature of evaluation (Арутюнова 2012; Приходько 2016; Kovecses 2004; Martin & White 2005). Some researchers studied the functional and pragmatic aspects of positive and negative types of evaluation (Halliday & Matthiessen 2014; White 2016) as well as the importance of their realization in different types of discourse (Ananko 2017; Breeze & Olza, 2017; Myroniuk 2017; Samokhina & Pasynok 2017; Thompson & Alba-Juez 2014).

However, it is impossible to study it perfectly, confining only to narrow-linguistic researches, especially regarding the subject of our study. As scientists stated other, primarily sociocultural facts, need consideration. In particular, McConnell-Ginet (1982) in her discussion of the word *good* notes that this adjective is too broad in meaning and can be used in various contexts. Thus, extralinguistic knowledge should be used to understand it correctly.

The assessment draws special attention in the light of sociocultural studies of journalistic texts, which, according to the reasonable comment of Makarov, are of considerable interest to language researchers nowadays (Макаров 2003: 101). It is the texts of the media that are the source of sociocultural information today and, according to many researchers, act as a model of the national-cultural specificity of speech communication, as a "portrait of the speech epoch", a fragment of national culture, which gives a fairly complete picture of political, economic, and sociocultural processes (Басовская 2005: 229; Богуславская 2004: 34). In addition, journalism is primarily interested in what is most relevant today and the most important at the moment.

The essence of its activity is the evaluation of the actual state of events and the introduction of this evaluation into the mass consciousness. So, any journalistic text contains appraisal as its main feature. As, Eco notes: "... (with the exception of the weather forecast) objective information does not exist and cannot exist. Even with the pedantic separation of the commentary from the piece of information, their selection and placement at the page include an implicit judgment" (Эко 1998: 49).

The evaluation is always socially determined, because its interpretation depends on the norms adopted in a particular society. Social interests and fashion, prestige, and discredit form and deform assessments. In addition, as Plotnikov rightly claims:

"under the conditions of civilization, a whole system of methods and means is being created designed to increase the effectiveness of estimation – besides the qualitatively specified (political, legal, and others) norms, ideas and ideals, rules and standards, principles and laws play the same role at the present time" (1998: 633).

Evaluative and emotional connotations may be the result of correlation with cultural attitudes (rules of conduct), stereotypes, and background knowledge (Желтухина 2020: 68-73; Токарев 2003: 58; Hudíková 2014: 161-169). Thus, evaluation is a sociocultural category, a characteristic feature of a journalistic text. The specificity of its manifestation is conditioned by various factors.

In present-day media studies, it is generally accepted that the authors of articles resort to different linguistic means of expressing evaluation (Hunston 2011), because their main functions in the media are not only the designation of new concepts, but also giving an additional characterization to any subject or phenomenon, as well as conveying the author's attitude to the event described. Thus, these means are axiologically marked, i.e. they can express a certain positive or negative assessment of what is happening.

5. Historical and social context of Brexit

Brexit means the withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the European Union and the political process connected with it (Brexit 2017). It represented and characterized the peak of many fundamental narratives within the United Kingdom that ended in a referendum and the exit from the European Union.

The process of UK withdrawal from the European Union, called Brexit (from fusion of the English words Britain and exit), is one of the most highlighted and discussed events over the past few years. We are witnessing the formation of a new stage of international relations between the UK and other countries of Europe (Дьякова 2019: 28-29). No wonder the analytics and experts in various fields of economic, socio-political, and cultural life make their predictions on how Brexit will affect the lives of

inhabitants of the UK, Europe, and the rest of the world and how this process changes the role of the United Kingdom on the world arena.

The Leave campaigns were aimed at the identification of Britishness as individuality and in regaining independence from the European Union. They appealed to the public through pathos and outline the European Union negatively and unconstructively. In stark contrast to the Leave campaign, the Remain campaign, led by Prime Minister David Cameron, sought to unify a divided conservative party as well as to convince the British people that remaining in the European Union was the right move for Britain (Shing 2016).

The study of the socio-historic narrative is an interesting topic as the United Kingdom has had an ambivalent relationship with the European Union. The Leave campaign was able to confirm victory in the referendum due to their employment and appellation to sorrow in the voters. They were able to do this by gaining the public opinion of the European Union and related issues of dissatisfaction and solely frame the European Union as the performer of their problems. This was based on an ambivalent historical relationship with the European Union and a feeling of national identity that was controlled by the Leave sides to persuade the voters to break free of the binds of the European Union (Brexit 2017).

The Leave campaign focused on reactivating the underlying cultural narrative of Euroscepticism, which has been reinforced in the United Kingdom through decades of political rhetoric and public discourse. They activated emotions within the voters by appealing to national pride as well as the danger of losing their independence and used rhetoric, which consisted of "native vs foreign" as scare tactics when addressing the community (Veltri et al. 2019: 18-31).

They posed a complicated problem to the public asking them whether they wanted Britain to have its own set of laws and control over the country and if they did not act

in response by voting Leave, then they were considered to be enemies of Britain. Leave outlined the European Union as a whipping boy for the difficulties of the country because of immigration and lack of sovereignty and presented exit from the European Union as the solution to the crisis (Shing 2016).

The above mentioned confirms the urgent necessity to study the phenomenon of Brexit in broad perspective, because such researches fully reveal not only the social but also the linguistic significance of this notion (Morozova 2017: 250-256).

6. Specific features of the evaluation of Brexit in Slovak media

Undoubtedly, the problem of Britain's exit from the European Union was widely highlighted in Slovak newspapers because this process affected not only state relations, but also the economic situation of the country. But in most cases it is of positive character.

This section presents a general overview of the evaluation of Brexit as described in Slovak newspapers.

First of all, it must be noted that what is important for the life of society has a high nominative density in the language worldview. Moreover, the process of understanding reality by the cognizing subject is accompanied by an emotional and evaluative perception of what is happening, while what is important is assessed. This testifies to the fact that the higher the axiological potential of a word is, the more important is the role of a given phenomenon in society.

The process of Great Britain's exit from the European Union can rightfully be considered as an event of world historical character. Its impact on the economic and social development of the countries of European Union cannot be overestimated (MacShane 2016).

Here is an example of a positive evaluative judgement, which proves Slovak people's belief that nothing will change for them after Brexit:

(1) Sk. *Slovensko bude mať pri týchto rokovaniach svoje priority. "Komfort stotisíc Slovákov, ktorí žijú v Británii. Aby sme získali záruky, že v zásade naďalej budú môcť pracovať a študovať v krajine a využívať výhody, ktoré dnes majú ako občania EÚ. Druhou dôležitou vecou je obchod... Chceme pri dohode o voľnom obchode udržať beztarifnú a bezcolnú spoluprácu. Práva občanov a obchod určite budú prioritou pre všetkých. Neviem si predstaviť opak.* ("Brexit: Hodiny d'alej tikajú"). January 31, 2020.

– Eng. 'Slovakia will have its priorities in these negotiations. The comfort of hundreds of thousands of Slovaks living in Britain. To ensure that they can, in principle, continue to work and study in the country and benefit from the benefits they enjoy today as EU citizens. The second important thing is trade... We want to maintain a tariff-free and duty-free cooperation in a free trade agreement. Citizens' rights and trade will certainly be a priority for all. I cannot imagine the opposite'. ("Brexit: The clock continues to tick"). (<https://spravy.pravda.sk/europska-unia/clanok/540841-brexit-hodiny-dalej-tikaju/>)

Analysis of the appraisal of Brexit in Slovak newspapers shows that lexemes with evaluative meaning are widely used to demonstrate the attitude of the people to this phenomenon:

(2) Sk. *Brexit môže mať aj benefičné následky, napríklad v rámci pohybu pracovnej sily pre Poľsko.* ("Ako sa brexit dotkne členských štátov Európskej únie). February 1, 2020. – Eng. 'Brexit can also have beneficial consequences, for example in the context of the movement of labour for Poland'. ("How Brexit will affect the Member States of the European Union"). (<https://www.aktuality.sk/clanok/760555/r-whitman-po-brexite-dojde-k-zmene-rovnovahy-medzi-malymi-a-velkymi-statmi/>)

Here the usage of the adjective *beneficial*, which semantic structure contains positive evaluation semes 'advantageous', 'favourable', helps to express the positive assessment of Brexit and its importance for the social life of the countries of the European Union.

The assessment is created in the evaluative utterance and is implemented by different language units. It is the word that acts as the sign, in which the values of society are fixed (Ananko 2017: 128-137). To illustrate this statement here is the saying of London's Mayor Sadiq Khan, in which he declares an approval of the idea of Brexit:

(3) Sk. *Občanov krajín EÚ žijúcich v Londýne by rád uistil, že zostávajú váženými priateľmi a členmi jednej rodiny.* ("Londýnsky starosta Khan je zdrvený z odchodu Británie z Únie"). January 31, 2020. – Eng. 'He wants to reassure EU citizens living in London they remain valued friends and members of one family'. ("London's Mayor Khan is crushed by Britain's departure from the Union"). (https://www.aktuality.sk/clanok/760486/londynsky-starosta-khan-je-zdrveny-z-odchodu-britanie-z-unie/?AT=wgt.hp_hp-spravodajstvo-najcitanejsie.c.x...B)

The support of Britain's departure is conveyed to the audience by means of the phrase *valued friends*, the constituents of which have positive meaning.

The next fragment serves to display positive assessment of the analysed phenomenon, which, according to the Slovak press, will pave the way for new constructive processes in the life of European countries:

(4) Sk. *Stretnutie Priateľov kohézie v Portugalsku bolo podľa premiéra symbolické. Konalo sa v prvý deň, keď už európska 27 nemala za stolom zástupcu Veľkej Británie. Samit, ktorý hovorí o tom, ako si jednotlivé krajiny majú navzájom pomáhať, je tak podľa Pellegriniho aj akousi "odpoveďou" na brexit.* February 1, 2020. – Eng. '(Pellegrini: Cohesion policy must continue to have a privileged position in the EU)').

According to the Prime Minister, the meeting of the Friends of Cohesion in Portugal was symbolic. It took place on the first day when the European 27 no longer had a

representative of Great Britain at the table. According to Pellegrini, the summit, which talks about how individual countries should help each other, therefore a kind of "answer" to Brexit'. ("Pellegrini: Politika súdržnosti musí mať v EÚ naďalej výsostné postavenie"). (<https://spravy.pravda.sk/svet/article/541027-pellegrini-politika-sudrznosti-musi-mat-v-eu-nadalej-vysostne-postavenie/>)

The overall estimating tone in this statement is created due to the noun *friend*, the verb *help*, which are characterized by positive meanings.

While analyzing Slovak media it is to be noticed that there are articles, which contain evaluative language resources expressing negative evaluations of Brexit. It is common knowledge that evaluative language means are often used to express negative characteristic of the events described. It can be explained by the fact that people are more sensitive to negative than to positive news (Юсупова 2018: 62-67):

(5) Sk. *Po odchode Británie z EÚ nie je čo oslavovať a slzy nám nepomôžu. Brexit nás pozýva hľadať cesty k tomu, aby sa takéto zložité situácie už neopakovali. "Osobne chcem pre návrat dôvery v politiku služby a zadosťučinenie spravodlivosti urobiť všetko," uviedla Lexmann. ("Slovensko má štrnástich europoslancov, do funkcie nastúpi Lexmann")*. February 1, 2020. – Eng. 'After Britain's departure from the EU, there is nothing to celebrate and tears will not help us. Brexit invites us to look for ways to ensure that such complex situations do not happen again. "Personally, I want to do everything to regain confidence in policy of service and satisfaction on justice," Lexmann said'. ("Slovakia has fourteen MEPs, Lexmann takes office"). <https://domov.sme.sk/c/22315797/slovensko-ma-strnastich-europoslancov-do-funkcie-nastupi-lexmann.html>)

In this example, we observe a negative assessment of Britain's leaving the European Union, which is produced due to the expression *complex situations*, the first element of which has the negative semes 'complicated', 'intricate'. The usage of the negative

pronoun *nothing* and the particle **not** in the phrase *there is nothing to celebrate and tears will not help us* emphasizes the negative sense of the entire fragment.

Our analysis of Slovak newspapers allows us to conclude that a lot of evaluative language means are to be found while depicting public opinion on current problems connected with Brexit (White 2016: 77-96):

(6) Sk. *Podiel Veľkej Británie na nemeckom exporte aj importe sa v priebehu brexitovej krízy výrazne znížil. "Podobný vývoj nastal aj v nemeckom importe, keďže podiel Veľkej Británie sa zmenšil zo 4,25 percenta na 3,75 percenta," dodal Braml. Ide iba o obchod s tovarmi, bez zahrnutia služieb. "Avšak zdá sa, že politická neistota sa znižuje a scenár brexitu bez dohody sa stáva menej pravdepodobný. Obchod by z toho mal v budúcnosti profitovať," poznamenal Braml. ("Obchod medzi Britániou a Nemeckom zaznamenal pokles").* January 31, 2020. – Eng. 'Great Britain's share of both German exports and imports are decreased significantly during the Brexit crisis. "A similar trend occurred in German imports as the UK's share fell from 4.25 percent to 3.75 percent," Braml added. It is only a trade in goods, not including services. "However, political uncertainty seems to be diminishing and a Brexit scenario without agreement becomes less likely. Trade should benefit from this in the future," Braml said'. ("Trade between Britain and Germany recorded a decline"). (<https://ekonomika.sme.sk/c/22315538/obchod-medzi-britianiou-aa-nemeckom-zaznamenal-pokles.html>)

Language means with negative colouring make obvious those difficulties and problems, which countries of the European Union will face in different fields of economy (here in trade).

In the course of dealing with the research data, we identify segments of texts where appraisal is neutral or ambivalent, as it seems at first glance. Such pieces of writing can stir up mixed approaches to the assessment of the situations or events described and can be properly understood only within the framework of context.

Bearing all this in mind, we are to examine and define the interrelation and interconnection of the context and evaluative utterances.

The majority of linguists are unanimous in the fact that there is a close link and correlation between the evaluative statement and the context (Fedoriv 2016: 1-36; Kecskes 2013). They also pay attention to the difference between positive and negative contexts (Косериу 2010).

Modern linguists (Коллегаева 2017: 36-43; Kachru 2008) emphasize the dynamic connection between the meaning of a word and its context. Context provides an opportunity to expose its concealed potential. Words encode previous experience and past contexts of the use of a given word or expression. In the communication, the old collides with the actual. The actual communicative meaning is created as an effect of a collision in the coded lexical units of the "old", prior contexts, and the actual situational context, in which this statement is used. The individual contexts of the speaker and hearer, fixed in the same words based on private knowledge or in the same linguistic terms, often vary.

Our consideration of the context is grounded in its pragmatic understanding, because "the notion of pragmatic context is a theoretical and cognitive abstraction of a variety of physical, biological, and other situations" (Dijk 1977: 19). The pragmatic context presents information on the conditions, under which not only the statement is perceived, but also gives rise to prospects regarding the possible purposes of the participants, and hence, relatively possible speech acts that can be carried out under this state of affairs. In other words, the pragmatic context, which serves to convey the meaning of the utterance in speech, is created by a set of secondary contexts: linguistic, stylistic, paralinguistic, situational, cultural, and psychological.

It is within the framework of the pragmatic context that the transition in the exploit and awareness of the utterance from the level of meaning to the level of sense, in particular

pragmatic, takes place. Understanding of this sense by the addressee is qualified as an awareness of the utterance (Moroshkina 2019: 245). This approach to understanding the context is relevant, as for the study of the implementation of the evaluative potential, knowledge of all conditions under which it occurs is necessary.

To illustrate the above mentioned thoughts let us consider the following example:

(7) Sk. *Pri príležitosti brexitu sa uskutoční aj výjazdové zasadnutie Johnsonovej vlády v meste Sunderland na severovýchodne Anglicka. Voliči z tohto mesta v roku 2016 v referende veľkou väčšinou hlasov podporili odchod Británie z EÚ. V kampani pred decembrovými parlamentnými voľbami, v ktorých konzervatívci získali veľkú väčšinu hlasov, sa Johnson zaviazal zaoberať sa problémami, ktoré v regiónoch, kde žijú prívrženci brexitu, spôsobila globalizácia. Sľuboval investície do verejných služieb a infraštruktúry a "povznesenie" celej krajiny. "Nie je to koniec, je to zrod novej éry, v ktorej už neakceptujeme, že vaše životné šance, životné šance vašej rodiny, by mali závisieť od toho, kde ste vyrastali," píše sa vo vyhlásení. ("Johnson: Brexit je začiatom novej éry v živote všetkých Britov"). January 31, 2020. – Eng. 'On the occasion of Brexit, there will also be an external meeting of the Johnson government in the city of Sunderland in the north-east of England. In 2016, voters from this city voted in favour of Britain's departure from the EU by a large majority. In a campaign ahead of the December parliamentary elections, in which the Conservatives won a large majority, Johnson pledged to address the problems caused by globalization in the regions, where live supporters of Brexit. He promised to invest in public services and infrastructure and "elevate" the whole country. "It's not the end, it's the birth of a new era in which we no longer accept that your life chances, your family's life chances, should depend on where you grew up," the statement said'. ("Johnson: Brexit is the beginning of a new era in the lives of all British people"). (<https://www.hlavnespravy.sk/johnson-brexit-zaciatom-novej-ery-zivote-vsetkych-britov/2036771>)*

This fragment shows how the context that can be considered neutral, changes the mark of the evaluation of the utterance. Boris Johnson's speech does not express visible assessment of the process of the United Kingdom's departure from the European Union. The positive estimation is formed in this case by a number of the statement components. The lexeme *favour* undoubtedly has evaluative sense and its positive evaluative character is perceived more vividly due to the phrase *life chances*, which contributes to the appearance of positive evaluative impulses in this statement. The antithesis *it is not the end, it is the birth of a new era* increases the concentration of negative evaluation of the situation.

In the following contexts, we observe the effect of the contextual influence on the transformation of the evaluative perspective of the utterance:

(8) Sk. *Mayovej sa však nepodarilo dohodu o odchode vyrokovanej s predstaviteľmi EÚ presadiť v britskom parlamente ani na tretíkrát, a tak po jej rezignácii prebral zodpovednosť bývalý starosta Londýna, minister zahraničných vecí a popredná osobnosť v kampani za brexit Boris Johnson. Prvým februárovým dňom sa začína 11-mesačné prechodné obdobie, počas ktorého budú pre Britániu aj naďalej platiť európske pravidlá, no nebude už musieť prispievať do rozpočtu EÚ. Kľúčovým bodom je vyrokovanie obchodnej dohody medzi oboma stranami. Ak sa tak nestane, Veľká Británia opustí EÚ bez dohody.* ("Veľká Británia oficiálne vystúpila z Európskej únie"). February 1, 2020. – Eng. 'However, in the British Parliament, Mrs. May failed to enforce agreement about exit from the EU negotiated with officials from EU not even for the third time, so after her resignation, Boris Johnson, the former mayor of London, the Secretary of State and a leading figure in the Brexit campaign, took responsibility. The first day of February marks start the 11-month transition period, during which European rules will continue to apply to Britain, but Britain will no longer have to contribute to the EU budget. The key point is the negotiation of a trade agreement between the two parties. If this does not happen, the United Kingdom will leave the EU without an agreement'. ("United Kingdom officially left the European

Union"). (<https://www.hlavnespravy.sk/velka-britania-oficialne-vystupila-europskej-unie/2038379>)

In this utterance, we notice an objective characteristic of the procedure of the exit, expressed with the help of the verb *fail*, which creates a negative tone. The peculiarity is precisely in the fact that an epithet *leading*, which usually expresses a positive characteristic of a phenomenon or object, is used here to convey a negative evaluation. This information is reinforced by the last sentence, which has negative particle and is a covert threat in its form.

Based on the analyzed corpus we extracted instances where language units expressing positive and negative estimations of Brexit were observed. These fragments include appraisers with only positive semes in their semantic structure, and appraisers with only negative evaluative semes. Interacting within the context, such utterances contribute to the ambivalent characteristic of the events and phenomena depicted. To demonstrate the work of this kind of appraisal the following example is worth considering:

(9) Sk. *Brexit je zlyhaním Európskej únie," napísal v stredu na twitteri Guy Verhofstadt, europoslanec za liberálnu frakciu Obnovme Európu, ktorý pri rokovaniach o britskom odchode zastupuje Európsky parlament. Preto si Británia vybudovala povest' krajiny, ktorá bráni väčšej federalizácii Únie. Ešte pred referendum o brexite sa ďalšie výnimky snažil vyrokovať premiér David Cameron, v podobnom duchu sa v minulosti vyjadrovala aj Margaret Thatcherová. Odchod Británie môže viesť aj k tomu, že Európa si bude musieť vybudovať lepšiu sieť zahraničných diplomatických zastúpení, lebo sa nebude môcť spoliehať na tie britské." Výzvy, ktorým teraz Európa čelí, a príležitosti, ktoré môže využiť, sa brexitom nemenia," napísala na twitteri v posledný deň britského členstva predsedníčka Európskej komisie Ursula von der Leyenová. "S Britániou chceme mať najlepšie možné vzťahy, ale nikdy nebudú také dobré ako členstvo". ("Briti brzdili väčšiu integráciu. Európska únia bez nich bude inou"). January 31, 2020. – Eng. 'Brexit is a failure of the European Union,' wrote on*

Twitter Guy Verhofstadt, MEP for the Liberal Faction Let's Relaunch Europe, who represents the European Parliament in the negotiations on Britain's departure on Wednesday. That is why Britain has built a reputation as a country that prevents greater federalization of the Union. Even before the referendum on Brexit, Prime Minister David Cameron tried to make further exceptions, and Margaret Thatcher made similar statements in the past. Britain's departure may also lead to Europe having to build up a better network of foreign diplomatic representations, as it will not be able to rely on the British ones. "Brexit does not change the challenges Europe is now facing and the opportunities of which it can take advantage," wrote Commission President Ursula von der Leyen on Twitter on the last day of British membership. "We want to have the best possible relationship with Britain, but they will never be as good as membership". ("The British obstructed greater integration. The European Union will be different without them"). (<https://svet.sme.sk/c/22315524/brexit-eu-britania-odchod-zmeny-europska-unia-von-der-leyen.html>)

Describing the state of affairs regarding Brexit, the author resorts to words with both negative evaluation (*failure, prevent*) and positive (*advantage, the comparative and superlative degree of adjective good*), which, interacting within the boundaries of the context, determine its ambivalent perception. It must be noted that they perform the function of an epithet in this fragment. The contradictory qualification of Brexit here is also emphasized by the last sentence of the utterance, which is a simile and contributes to the author's dual attitude to the phenomenon described.

Thus, three types of estimation of Brexit (positive, negative, and ambivalent) can be observed in Slovak media. One of the decisive factors for understanding the evaluation is background knowledge, which makes possible the right perception of the events illustrated.

Journalistic style is characterized by maximal level of speech openness. Its typical feature is stylistic omnivore, "fusion of elevated and low, old and new, permitted and

forbidden, official and informal, public and every day, oral and written communication" (Кормилицына 2015: 24). The manifestation of these properties is the product of a constant search for more and more new means of expression.

Stylistic figures are formed as a pragmatically motivated deviation from the norm. Partly we have already touched upon stylistic devices used in Slovak media. Now we are going to analyse them in detail.

The study of the newspaper articles revealed that the epithet is widely used as a means of descriptiveness:

(10) Sk. *Myslíme aj na Spojené kráľovstvo a jeho obyvateľov, ich tvorivosť, vynaliezavosť, kultúru a tradície, ktoré boli podstatnou súčasťou tapisérie Európskej únie.* ("Von der Leyenová, Michel a Sassoli o budúcnosti EÚ: Aj po brexite vyjde slnko"). January 31, 2020. – Eng. 'We are also thinking of the United Kingdom and its people, their creativity, ingenuity, culture and traditions, which were an essential part of the European Union's tapestry'. ("Von der Leyen, Michel and Sassoli on the future of the EU: The sun will rise after Brexit"). (<https://www.hlavnespravdy.sk/der-leyenova-michel-sassoli-buducnosti-eu-aj-brexite-vyjde-slnko/2037678>)

In this statement the epithet *essential* adds to the expressiveness of the text and emphasizes the author's point of view, which contains a positive assessment of Brexit.

Often this trope is used to create the required atmosphere and draw attention to the quality attribute of the phenomenon portrayed (Волобуев 2013: 46-49) as in the following example:

(11) Sk. *Odchod Spojeného kráľovstva z Európskej únie predstavuje pre tento blok "radikálnu zmenu", uviedol v piatok hovorca nemeckej kancelárky Angely Merkelovej.* ("Brexit je pre Európu radikálnou zmenou, odkázala Merkelová"). January 31, 2020. – Eng. 'The departure of the United Kingdom from the European Union is a "radical change" for the bloc, a spokeswoman for German Chancellor Angela Merkel said on

Friday'. ("Brexit is a radical change for Europe, Merkel bequeathed"). (<https://svet.sme.sk/c/22315234/merkelova-brexit-je-pre-europu-radikalnou-zmenou.html>)

This statement is reinforced by the use of the epithet *radical*, which without any doubt emphasizes the author's position in the assessment of Brexit.

Another trope, which occurs in Slovak newspapers, is the simile. The most important mark of the simile is an element of unexpectedness, novelty, originality:

(12) Sk. *Vystúpenie z EÚ je výhodné. Urobme všetko pre to, aby sa bruselský totalitný projekt rozsypal ako domček z kariet.* ("Bez diktátu z Bruselu a Berlína. Okamura vyzýva na búranie EÚ, ako to len ide"). January 31, 2020. – Eng. 'Leaving the EU is advantageous. Let's do everything we can to get the Brussels totalitarian project scattered like a house of cards'. ("Without the dictates from Brussels and Berlin. Okamura calls for the demolition of the EU as much as possible"). (<https://www.hlavnespravy.sk/bez-diktatu-bruselu-berlina-okamura-vyzyva-buranie-eu-ide/2037168>)

This dynamic simile (Ковалевская 2009: 80-85) illustrates changes that happen to the object of comparison, i.e. with the Brexit process.

The study of linguistic phenomena proves that simile reveals the content of an event or an object due to the fact that a journalist tries to create a vivid and memorable image of what is represented:

(13) Sk. "Pokúšať sa dosiahnuť viaceré obchodné zmluvy súčasne je ako hrať trojrozmerné šachy," vyhlásila Jill Rutterová, výskumná pracovníčka think tanku *Changing Europe v Londýne*. ("Británia chce rýchlo obchodnú dohodu s EÚ"). February 1, 2020. – Eng. ' Trying to get further trade agreement at the same time is like playing three-dimensional chess,' said Jill Rutter, researcher at the Changing Europe think tank in London'. ("Britain wants a trade agreement with the EU quickly").

<https://spravy.pravda.sk/ekonomika/clanok/540990-britania-chce-rychlo-obchodnu-dohodu-s-eu>)

Here we observe a bright illustration of the most significant features of the evaluation of Brexit expressed with the help of its comparison with a game of chess.

The metaphor occupies an important place in the journalistic arsenal of active means of influencing the reader. In the analyzed articles, metaphors are actively and productively used as a means of verbal expressiveness, increasing the informative value and imagery of the message using associations caused by a figurative use of the word (Дрога & Фуникова 2016: 283):

(14) Sk. *Pre Európsku úniu (EÚ) je dôležité, aby nepálila mosty. V súvislosti s odchodom Spojeného kráľovstva z EÚ to pre TASR uviedlo opozičné hnutie Sme rodina. ("Podľa Sas odchod Veľkej Británie z EÚ nie je dobrou správou pre Slovensko")*. January 31, 2020. – Eng. 'It is important for the European Union (EU) not to burn bridges. In the context of the United Kingdom's departure from the EU, this was stated by the opposition movement We Are Family for TASR'. ("According to Sas, leaving Britain in the EU is not good news for Slovakia"). <https://www.hlavnespravy.sk/podla-sas-odchod-velkej-britanie-eu-nie-dobrou-spravou-slovensko/2037743>)

In this utterance the conceptual metaphor (BRIDGE = CONNECTION) (bridge = connection) is based on the associative correlation between the United Kingdom and the European Union, which is embodied in the images of a bridge and of family (Morozova 2017: 250-283; Prihodko & Prykhodchenko 2018: 164-203).

So, tropes in newspaper texts are one of the main tools of knowledge about social and political phenomena. In newspaper texts, they help to convey people's attitude and evaluation of the events.

The functioning of the figures of speech is aimed at creating the expressiveness of the statement. However, their structuredness and ordered interconnection of components also contribute to the manifestation of the logical relationships of speech units. A statement within the framework of a figure of speech is perceived as an integral logical formation in the text (Василькова 2012: 55). Thus, stylistic figures used in Slovak media serve both the expressive and logical-informative tasks of the author of the text, naturally subordinate to the communicative intentions of the publicist.

The study of Slovak media texts demonstrates that the most frequently used are the following figures of speech: parallel constructions, inversion, enumeration, rhetorical questions.

Syntactic parallelism is understood as a figure of repetition, consisting in the construction of a speech unit, in which "the second part mirrors the first" (Цин 2017: 245):

(15) Sk. *Bez voľného pohybu osôb nemôže existovať voľný pohyb kapitálu, tovaru a služieb. Bez rovnakých podmienok pre životné prostredie, prácu, dane a štátnu pomoc nemôže byť prístup na jednotný trh najvyššej kvality. Ak nie ste členom, nemôžete si zachovať výhody členstva* ("Británia odchádza z Európskej únie, ale zostáva súčasťou Európy, zdôraznili jej najvyšší lídri"). January 31, 2020. – 'Eng. Without the free movement of persons, there can be no free movement of capital, goods and services. Without a level playing field for the environment, labour, taxes and state aid, there can be no access to the single market of the highest quality. If you are not a member, you cannot retain the benefits of membership'. ("Britain leaves the European Union but remains part of Europe, its top leaders emphasized"). (<https://svet.sme.sk/c/22315107/von-der-leyenova-michel-a-sassoli-mali-spolocne-vyhlasenie-k-brexitu.html>)

Parallelism expresses the appraisal of the consequences of Brexit for the countries of the European Union. The presence of enumeration in the second sentence strengthens the positive evaluation of the outcomes of this process.

Another figure of speech, which is used to depict the position of Brexit, is inversion:

(16) Sk. *V kampani pred decembrovými parlamentnými voľbami, v ktorých konzervatívci získali veľkú väčšinu hlasov, sa Johnson zaviazal zaoberať sa problémami, ktoré v regiónoch, kde žijú prívrženci brexitu, spôsobila globalizácia. Sľuboval investície do verejných služieb a infraštruktúry a "povznesenie" celej krajiny.* ("Brexit je začiatkom novej éry v živote všetkých Britov, hovorí Johnson"). January 31, 2020. – Eng. 'In a campaign ahead of the December parliamentary elections, in which the Conservatives won a large majority, Johnson pledged to address the problems caused by globalization in the Brexit region. He promised to invest in utilities and infrastructure and to "uplift" the whole country'. ("Johnson: Brexit is the beginning of a new era in British life"). (<https://svet.sme.sk/c/22314827/brexit-je-zaciatom-novej-ery-v-zivote-vsetkych-britov-hovori-johnson.html>)

The phrase *in a campaign ahead of the December parliamentary elections*, which is placed at the beginning of the utterance, attaches to the statement an emotional colouring, enhances the dynamism of the narrative, and increases the positive evaluation of Brexit.

There is an interesting example of the combination of different stylistic means used for the description of the situation concerning Brexit:

(17) Sk. *Nemôžeme sa dostať do pasce súčasného stavu a rezignácie, "napísal v marci v komentári pre Guardian., Keď čelia veľkým globálnym krízam, občania sa často pýtajú: Kde je Európa? Čo robí Európa? Pre nich sme sa stali len spoločným trhom bez duše.* ("Briti brzdili väčšiu integráciu. Európska únia bez nich bude inou") January 31, 2020. – Eng. 'We can't get trapped by the status quo and resignation,' he wrote in

March in a comment for the Guardian. "When faced with major global crises, citizens often ask: Where is Europe? What does Europe do? For them, we have only become a common market without a soul'. ("The British hindered greater integration. The European Union will be different without them"). (<https://svet.sme.sk/c/22315524/brexit-eu-britania-odchod-zmeny-europska-unia-von-der-leyen.html>)

Rhetorical questions serve here to intensify the role of metaphor (that is grounded in the hidden simile), which is the last sentence of this statement. Moreover, they add to the positive emotional evaluation of the Brexit process.

So, evaluative and stylistic resources used in Slovak media are proven methods to achieve the required goal, which is to form necessary addressees' opinion about Brexit.

7. Specific features of the evaluation of Brexit in the British media

This part presents a general overview of the evaluation of Brexit as described in British newspapers.

It should be noted that the British media traditionally elucidates events in the most objective manner. However, with regard to events unfolding in their own country, having a national scale, it is difficult to talk about objectivity, as such. On the one hand, the media makes every effort to provide reliable, objective information, and on the other hand, it transmits certain values. Thus, the information presented in the media is rarely neutral; it always carries a definite assessment (Клушина 2008). Nevertheless, and even in this case, the British media value their reputation and try to convey objective information to the reader.

The study of the assessment of Brexit is carried out on the traditionally distinguished quality press in Britain: "The Guardian.com" and "Reuters.com".

The reason for choosing "The Guardian.com" is its left-centre political and value orientation. Its readers are left-thinking UK citizens who have a negative attitude towards Brexit. It is therefore interesting to interpret the political situation on the part of this media after the UK's withdrawal from the European Union.

The motive for choosing "Reuters news agency" is its conservative right-wing political and value orientation. Although the Agency endorses the values of objectivity, it is known that its management and editors have a right-wing perception and evaluation of events. We assume that Reuters has never openly criticized the UK's withdrawal from the European Union. It retains the objectivity status of a news agency. That is why the analysis and interpretation of value attitudes will be interesting.

It is curious that, according to the results of the referendum, British opinion on the issue of leaving the European Union was divided almost equally. This fact permits us to presume that like in Slovak newspapers three types of assessment of Brexit (positive, negative, and ambivalent) will be observed in British newspapers.

The following fragment demonstrates that the British approved of departure from the European Union:

(18) Eng. *"But the British government was determined to treat the moment as a chance to drive home an optimistic vision of the country's future. Cabinet ministers met in Sunderland on Friday in a symbolic gesture of their plan to "level up" regions outside London – with many tweeting pictures of themselves on public transport en route. According to an official readout, Johnson opened the meeting by telling them the UK was "turning a page on the division of the last three and a half years and going full steam ahead to bring the nation together". ("Boris Johnson promises Brexit will lead to national revival"). January 31, 2020. (<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2020/jan/31/boris-johnson-promises-brexit-will-lead-to-national-revival>)*

The positive tone in this context is formed due to the usage of phrase *an optimistic vision*, which includes the positive evaluative adjective *optimistic*. The last sentence owing to the metaphors used adds much to the positivity of the utterance.

The next example also deserves to be discussed:

(19) Eng. "A group of Brexit Party members of the European Parliament left the building in Brussels in high spirits, cheering and waving Union Jack flags as a kilted Scottish bagpiper played. "Today we celebrate the beginning of our independence," Ann Widdecombe told onlookers before she and the group headed to the railway station to take the Eurostar to London". ("EU seeks to put brave face on Brexit day, warns UK of costs of divergence"). January 31, 2020. (<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-britain-eu-leaders/eu-seeks-to-put-brave-face-on-brexit-day-warns-uk-of-costs-of-divergence-idUSKBN1ZU10L>)

The approval of Brexit is expressed here by means of lexemes with positive evaluative meanings (*high, cheer, independence*) and the simile in high spirits, cheering and waving Union Jack flags as a kilted Scottish bagpiper played intensifies affirmation of the elevated character of this statement.

In this connection, we would like to present and analyze the following example:

(20) Eng. "Demonstrators will be gathering on the South Bank in London to protest leaving the EU. During the protest, called *Shine a Light Through the Darkness*, participants will shine torch lights in a recognition of the detrimental effects they say Brexit will have on the NHS and workers' rights. Similar demonstrations will take place in Brighton and Bournemouth". ("Brexit day events: What is happening in the UK on 31 January? (Protest at the London Eye)"). January 31, 2020. (<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2020/jan/31/brexit-day-events-what-is-happening-in-the-uk-on-31-january>)

This fragment is an example of negative estimation of Brexit. The pessimistic qualification of consequences for Britain after the exit from the European Union is created here by the words with negative meaning (*protest*) and word combination *detrimental effects*, which act here as an epithet.

Researchers in the field of axiology have repeatedly noted "the asymmetry between the sectors of positive and negative evaluation" (Марченко 2018: 138), explaining this, first of all, by the fact that, firstly, everything negative is experienced more acutely, and therefore has a greater level of verbalization, and, secondly, most persons are inherently conformist, manifested in the passive acceptance of a negative assessment. However, in modern society, any event, especially a political one, is always presented with a predetermined, definite mark of appreciation.

The following statement proves it:

(21) Eng. *"Tonight, the UK will leave the European Union. That will be a moment of profound sadness for many of us across the UK. And here in Scotland, given that it is happening against the will of the vast majority of us, that sadness will be tinged with anger," she said*". ("Joy and sadness: How the world is reacting on Brexit Day"). January 31, 2020. (<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-britain-eu-reaction/joy-and-sadness-how-the-world-is-reacting-on-brexite-day-idUSKBN1ZU0YZ>)

So, Scottish Minister Nicola Sturgeon's speech confirms that Brexit and everything connected with it today are associated with such concepts as PAINFUL CONDITION, DISASTER, INEVITABILITY, CATASTROPHE, and CRISIS.

The study of the evaluative potential requires analysis of such important aspects as the influence of the context on the formation of the evaluation in the utterance.

The present study draws on the notion of context because, as in the analysis of Slovak newspapers, it helps to determine the mark of appraisal. The context provides

information on the conditions, under which not only the statement is understood, but describes expectations concerning the probable objectives of the interlocutors, and therefore, those utterances that can be used in this or that situation (Bara 2010; Toolan 2013).

Consider the following expression:

(22) Eng. *"Dacian Cioloș, a former prime minister of Romania who leads Emmanuel Macron's Renew group in the European parliament, said that Brexit had brought the relationship between the UK and EU to "a low moment".*

"Nevertheless, I am confident that both the EU and the UK will find the best agreement to collaborate in the future," he said. "As in any relationship, this agreement must be balanced and doors have to be opened on both sides. The extent to which the EU can be open and make concessions will depend strongly on the extent to which the British government will be willing to cooperate. But, obviously, a deal can never be as good as EU membership". Brexit may be done in one respect, but in many others it has a long way to go". ("Brexit day one: Johnson goes for broke with hardline trade deal"). February 1, 2020. (<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2020/feb/01/brexit-day-one-johnson-pledges-no-concessions-to-eu>)

In this fragment the politician tries to avoid expressing his negative attitude to Brexit. He even uses words and word combinations with positive meaning (***the best agreement, to cooperate***). The negativity of the entire context is programmed by the use of the phrase ***a low moment***, which serves rather to express the intensity of the evaluation than to qualify its character. The simile ***a deal can never be as good as EU membership*** also contributes to the appearance of negative-evaluative impulses in the semantic structure of the words that make up this utterance.

Here is another example that illustrates the impact of context on the mark of evaluation:

(23) Eng. *"I opposed Brexit with every fibre of my political being. I still deeply regret it, politically and emotionally... But Brexit is happening, and our attitude now should*

be to strive to make the best of it; to approach it with determined optimism, not looking over our shoulders in unrequited longing for what was". ("Joy and sadness: How the world is reacting on Brexit Day") January 31, 2020. (<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-britain-eu-reaction/joy-and-sadness-how-the-world-is-reacting-on-brexit-day-idUSKBN1ZU0YZ>)

In this utterance the negatively coloured words *opposed*, *regret* are used to enhance the pragmatic effect of the positive evaluation. This becomes possible due to the fact that the positive context indicates the unreasonableness of the addressee's disturbance, which is expressed in the last sentence of Tony Blair's speech.

The referendum, which was held in the UK in 2016 on the issue of leaving the European Union, split the country into two camps: each side took a tough, irreconcilable position.

And this fragment where ambivalent evaluation is presented confirms this indisputable fact:

(24) Eng. *"For proponents, Brexit is a dream "independence day" for a United Kingdom escaping what they cast as a doomed German-dominated project that is failing its 500 million population. Opponents believe Brexit is a folly that will weaken the West, torpedo what is left of the United Kingdom's global clout, undermine its economy and ultimately lead to a more insular and less cosmopolitan set of islands in the northern Atlantic". ("Brexit day: Britain quits EU, steps into transition twilight zone"). January 31, 2020. (<https://www.reuters.com/article/uk-britain-eu-union/brexit-day-britain-quits-eu-steps-into-transition-twilight-zone-idUSKBN1ZU003>)*

It can be assumed that the negative assessment of Brexit presented in the media is a consequence of the policy of large-format publications, which from the very beginning intentionally began to form a negative attitude of readers towards this phenomenon, despite the fact that half of the UK supported the country's exit from the European Union and estimated it positively. The processes of integration and globalization have

become an integral part of the economic system of any country, so the exit of one state from the existing economic and political unions inevitably affects the world economy and politics as a whole. In the modern political and economic world, any attempt at separation is met by hostility.

So, as in Slovak media three types of evaluation of Brexit (positive, negative, and ambivalent) can be observed in British newspapers. It is obvious that evaluation is created, realized and can be interpreted only within the frame of context.

According to many researchers (Малярчук-Прошина 2015: 89-94; Hood 2010), one of the main features of the language of the media is the presence of social appraisal. This is due to the pragmatic function of media texts, designed primarily to influence the addressees. The language of journalism reflects the urgent problems of the life of modern society with the help of a wide range of assessment tools. The active use of evaluative means in the language of the media is determined by various factors, including the removal of censorship and the search for new expressive means for newspaper texts.

The appraisal characteristic of media texts determines the existence of special language means for the implementation of the assessment. Such means, providing the pragmatic effect of a journalistic text, are manifested at the lexical and syntactic levels.

The most frequently used tropes in the British media are to be mentioned. In analysed English newspapers the epithet is often used:

(25) Eng. *"The prime minister toasted the moment with English Sparkling wine in Downing Street, which was illuminated by a red and blue light show, as were government departments along Whitehall, and parliament square was decked with union flags for the historic day; but Big Ben did not bong, contrary to the hopes of ardent Brexiters"*. ("Boris Johnson promises Brexit will lead to national revival").

January 31, 2020. (<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2020/jan/31/boris-johnson-promises-brexit-will-lead-to-national-revival>)

The adjective *ardent*, which performs the function of the epithet, reveals the ironical characterization of opponents of the withdrawal from the European Union. Moreover, negative attitude to opponents is emphasized by the derivative *Brexiter* from the neologism *Brexit* that has a negative connotation (Катермина & Соловьева 2019: 106).

Often epithets are used to portray positive emotional descriptions of a certain object or event as in the following fragment:

(26) Eng. "*Happy Brexit Day! ... At last the day comes when we break free. A massive victory for the people against the establishment....11 pm tonight marks the point of no return. Once we Leave, we will never rejoin the European Union. Time to celebrate*". ("Joy and sadness: How the world is reacting on Brexit Day"). January 31, 2020. (<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-britain-eu-reaction/joy-and-sadness-how-the-world-is-reacting-on-brexit-day-idUSKBN1ZU0YZ>)

Optimism and joy about leaving the European Union are emphasized by epithets with the positive meanings *happy* and *massive*. In addition, an exclamatory nominative sentence *Happy Brexit Day!* is also involved in the creation of a positive character of the statement.

The simile, which acts as a means of likening one object to another according to a certain attribute in order to establish resemblances or differences between them, is also quite frequently met in British newspapers:

(27) Eng. "*Boris Johnson now faced a challenge of colossal dimensions: to recover the unity of a country divided between those who see Brexit as a liberation, and those who consider it a tragedy and a historical error*". ("Britain is retrenched on its island: Europe's papers react to Brexit day"). February 1, 2020.

<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2020/feb/01/britain-retrenched-island-europe-papers-react-to-brexite-day>)

Here we observe the functioning of similes, which demonstrate the contradictory approaches to Brexit.

This trope is used to express feelings of anxiety and apprehension about the future of Europe:

(28) Eng. *"Now the future of the Eurostar is uncertain. The service was seen as a symbol of a Europe without borders, but it has failed to meet expectations – especially in terms of passenger numbers". ("Last train to Europe: All aboard the Eurostar as Britain bids goodbye"). February 1, 2020. (<https://www.reuters.com/article/uk-britain-eu-tunnel/last-train-to-europe-all-aboard-the-eurostar-as-britain-bids-goodbye-idUSKBN1ZU36U>)*

The most important technique in journalism is a metaphor, the essence of which is to transfer the name and properties of one object to another according to the principle of their similarity.

Based on the analysis of the articles, we can conclude that the particular expressiveness, accuracy, and emotionality are given by sustained metaphors, in which the metaphorical image is realized in several phrases or sentences:

(29) Eng. *"Nearly four years after the Brexit vote, Britain has left the European Union, closing a rancorous chapter in the country's history and beginning another viewed by some with optimism and others with dismay". ("Boris Johnson promises Brexit will lead to national revival"). January 31, 2020. (<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2020/jan/31/boris-johnson-promises-brexite-will-lead-to-national-revival>)*

In this statement metaphor is created due to the implicit comparison of exit with hostile enemy. The negative meaning is strengthened by the antithesis *by some with optimism and others with dismay*, which conveys the people's stance to Brexit.

It goes without saying that metaphors also belong to productive means of expressing the situation of the split of British society into "friends" and "strangers" in analytical articles. The actualization of the conceptual metaphor (FAMILY=DIVORCE) is significant. The authors of Brexit publications regularly refer to such images as family disorder or divorce:

(30) Eng. *"So on "Brexit Day", some will celebrate and some will weep – but many Britons will do neither. Many are simply happy that more than three years of tortuous political wrangling over the divorce are over"*. ("Brexit day: Britain quits EU, steps into transition twilight zone"). January 31, 2020. (<https://www.reuters.com/article/uk-britain-eu-union/brexit-day-britain-quits-eu-steps-into-transition-twilight-zone-idUSKBN1ZU003>)

The parallel drawn between a family facing divorce and the situation, in which Great Britain exit from the European Union, is intended to emphasize such implicit meanings as the existence of close relations between the European Union and the United Kingdom and the pain of their separation, as well as the inevitability of terrible consequences.

Thus, analysis of newspaper articles on Brexit reveals a number of stylistic tools that are used in British political discourse during the period of aggravation of social relations.

The analysis of British newspapers shows that, as in Slovak media, the most frequently met are: parallel constructions, inversion, enumeration, rhetoric questions, and antithesis.

Parallel constructions may be viewed as a purely syntactical type of repetition for here we deal with the reiteration of the structure of several successive sentences (clauses), and not always of their lexical "flesh" (Мархасев & Зайцева 2010: 25):

(31) Eng. *"In Parliament Square, site of hoarse slanging matches for the past four years, the crowds on both sides were thinner on Friday night, at least before the Farage rally got going. The leavers were beaming, proud in their sweatshirts bearing the slogan: Job Done. They believe spring is coming. The remainers were wrapped up against the cold, braced against a January night, which, to them, felt like the bleakest midwinter".* ("That was Brexit: The mad energy of A Midsummer Night's Dream, but lasting three and a half years"). January 31, 2020. (<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2020/jan/31/brexit-midsummer-nights-dream-politicians>)

Certainly, parallel constructions illustrate the different position of the British to Brexit. The usage of antithesis (*the leavers, the remainers*) makes it more vivid.

Linguists also draw attention to such a stylistic figure of speech as inversion, typical of the media, which is known as emphatic construction. Inversion is aimed at attaching logical stress and additional emotional colouring to the surface meaning of the utterance:

(32) Eng. *"In our diplomacy, in our fight against climate change, in our campaigns for human rights or female education or free trade we will rediscover muscles that we have not used for decades. The power of independent thought and action," he said.*" ("Boris Johnson promises Brexit will lead to national revival"). January 31, 2020. (<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2020/jan/31/boris-johnson-promises-brexit-will-lead-to-national-revival>)

Inversion presupposes a reply with more certainty than the normative sentence. It is the assuredness of the speaker of the positivity concerning the exit from the European Union that constitutes additional information, which is brought into the statement by

the inverted word order. Enumeration and nominative sentence provide the intensification of the speaker's belief in the appropriateness of his actions.

No less common is the use of a rhetorical question. This figure of speech stands out among narrative sentences both intonationally and structurally, introducing an element of surprise into the speech and thereby enhancing the expressiveness of the utterance:

(33) Eng. *"Reflecting on the lessons of Brexit, European Commission President von der Leyen told broadcaster ARD: "We must stand up for Europe, otherwise at some point we won't have it any more". "Europe must deliver on the biggest questions - that's what we need the European level for," she added. "How will we address climate change? That is the 'European Green Deal' issue. How will we deal with digitalisation? I want us to have a concept for migration that is sustainable, effective but also human". ("Now EU must deliver, Commission chief says on Brexit day"). January 31, 2020. (<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-britain-eu-vonderleyen/now-eu-must-deliver-commission-chief-says-on-brexit-day-idUSKBN1ZU2V3>)*

Rhetorical questions express here anxiety and apprehension regarding the future of Europe. The change of intonation breaks the monotony of the intonation pattern and revives the attention of the listeners.

8. Conclusions

The results of this study show that evaluation as a sociocultural attribute of a journalistic text turns out to be a multifaceted category. The concept of "evaluation" has become an integral part of the conceptual apparatus of modern linguistics, which clearly demonstrates the fact that it is impossible to examine a language without resorting to its primary purpose, its "creator", carrier, user, specific linguistic personality, a person.

Analysis of publications on the Brexit referendum reveals a number of language tools that are used in Slovak and English newspaper texts within the period of exacerbated

social relations and differences. In general, it can be concluded that a political discourse abounds with language means that explicitly realize opposition FOR – AGAINST Brexit.

The results obtained confirm the idea that the correlation between the evaluative utterance and the context helps understand the evaluative utterances encoded in the presuppositions of the communication that are the speaker's communicative intentions associated with their epistemic state.

The examination of stylistic means employed in Slovak and English media texts is determined by the conditions of communication. If the desire of the author is to rouse the audience and to keep it in suspense, he will use special tropes and figures of speech. The most frequently met are: epithets, similes, metaphors, parallel constructions, inversion, enumeration, rhetoric questions, and antithesis. Furthermore, stylistic means are closely interwoven and mutually complementary thus building up an intricate pattern.

It must be noted that the function of these stylistic means in the estimation of Brexit is different. In Slovak media they serve to form positive attitudes to this phenomenon. In British media these stylistic means demonstrate the ambivalent attitude of the British towards Brexit, which is primarily conditioned by the political orientation of the analysed newspapers.

The study shows that three types of appraisal of Brexit (positive, negative, and ambivalent) can be observed in both Slovak and British media. One of the significant reasons for understanding the evaluation of this phenomenon is background knowledge, which makes possible the right and profound awareness and perception of the events displayed.

As a concluding remark, further research connected with the evaluation of other political and social phenomena would have great potential.

Notes

The translation of Slovak examples into English is done by Zora Hudíková.

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Résumé

The presented paper highlights the results of a study of the evaluation of Brexit in Slovak and English newspaper texts. Evaluation is distinguished as a cognitive process, which presupposes the use of two kinds of knowledge: the awareness of the evaluated object and the information of the evaluator's own private requirements and needs. Our analysis has proved that a political discourse proliferates with the language means, which clearly realize opposition FOR – AGAINST Brexit. The research shows that in both Slovak media and British media three types of evaluation (positive, negative, and ambivalent) can be observed. The results obtained corroborate the idea that the connection between the evaluative utterance and the context helps understand the evaluative utterances encoded in the presuppositions of the communication that are the speaker's communicative intentions associated with their epistemic state. It has been established that an evaluative utterance is created, realized and can be interpreted only within the context. It has been proved that stylistic means employed in the media are determined by the conditions of communication. If the desire of the speaker is to rouse the audience and to keep it in suspense, he will use various tropes and figures of speech. Furthermore, stylistic means are closely interwoven and mutually complementary thus building up an intricate pattern. It is stressed that the sign of evaluation in the media may be conditioned by various sociocultural factors, among which are the specifics of

the sociocultural space, type of publication, genre specificity of the text, individual features of communicants' worldview. Accounting for these factors, contributes not only to a deep study of the evaluation category, but also to effective communication and the creation of balanced journalistic texts, which, in its turn, will determine information and psychological comfort in society.

Key words: Brexit, evaluation, evaluative utterance, context, tropes, figures of speech.

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LINGUISTIC CONSTRUCTION OF FEMALE IDENTITY IN POLISH POLITICAL DISCOURSE

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Abstract: This paper focuses on the construction of the category of femininity in political speeches of former Polish Prime Minister Ewa Kopacz. The analysis reveals that Ewa Kopacz's public discourse is affected by her desire to manifest the category of femininity as an important element of political practice. The antagonistic binary division into the male and female worlds, which is indicative of discourse gender ambiguity in Kopacz's speech, surfaces at the level of discourse analysis.

Key words: language of politics, discourse analysis, linguistic identity construction, gender, female political identity, Polish political discourse.

1. Introduction

"Gender is a political issue". This statement, often repeated in gender studies (e.g., Bielska 2014; Pacześniak 2006), can yield a number of interpretations. The one most frequently assumed pertains to various interdependencies between certain aspects of female carnality and her personal life, on the one hand, and legal, legislative, and institutional aspects, on the other, both of which, in turn, are affected by political decisions, made mainly by male politicians. This is why the issue of gender has become

a subject of analyses and public debates with the objective of eradicating inequity in many aspects of social life (e.g., Mackay & Waylen 2009; Petlyuchenko & Chernyakova 2019; Skowronek 2016; Stashko et al. 2020).

In this paper, however, the opening statement is understood in a narrower sense. We assume gender to be a political phenomenon par excellence, real and active (Franceschet & Piscopo 2008). The objective of this paper is to present a fragment of a large-scope study of ways of construction of gender identity in public speeches by women who hold office and are, therefore, actively involved in Polish political life. The issue addressed in this paper is a relevant one because the style of self-creation by public figures and the way they build their medial image become in time a model to follow and set standards of conduct (Kostro 2014). The women present in the public sphere and "having a voice" in Foucault's sense (i.e. presence and power expressed at the level of social discourse) are also able to manage this voice, to emancipate, to break some social stereotypes, patterns, and conventions (Foucault 2002: 26-27). We are interested in rules of distribution of discourse in a given group: who can speak, when, and whose opinion is more likely to be seen as true (i.e. presence and power expressed at the level of social discourse) are also able to manage this voice, to emancipate, to break some social stereotypes, patterns, and conventions.

We define construction of identity as a complex process during which a person creates their own images through linguistic and non-linguistic practices, mostly because of other people. In this process patterns and schemas present in culture are used. In our paper we discuss only linguistic ones. There are a number of important factors determining the ways of construction of gender identity by female politicians. Firstly, there is the level of social acceptance of the presence of women in politics and general approval of a certain style or way of executing power by women (or lack of such approval). Secondly, there exist crucial socio-cultural mechanisms, which, albeit on a more implicit level, stereotypically present women as biologically and socially unprepared to perform important roles in public life (Graff 2008; Women, gender...

2010). Such mechanisms can surface, for example, as jokes, ridicules, and belittling, or in introducing facts from personal life into political narrative, even when they are not connected with women's political activity. We agree that "[p]ublic women are much more subject to erosion of the wall between their public and private personae than are men, with anything unconventional about their private lives leaching into judgements of their public performance" (Lakoff 2003: 174).

In this paper, we propose a text analysis approach to public speeches of Ewa Kopacz, mainly at the time when she was Prime Minister of Poland (i.e., September 15, 2014 – November 12, 2015), with the objective to reconstruct the elements of the female identity realized at the text level¹.

Adopting the methodology of discourse analysis, we aim to demonstrate how femininity, understood as cultural gender, is manifested in Polish politics as a discourse category and how it can evolve, even in a relatively short period of 14 months, the time that Kopacz was Prime Minister. Gender is treated here as an element of identity, primarily construed by language (see Butler 1990), dependent on context, situation, and circumstances. It can thus change over time, revealing many, sometimes conflicting, features. Although gender can also be manifested in non-verbal behaviours and practices, such as controlling one's own body, we believe that the primary means of gender expression is language. At the same time, language is a means of expression in politics. Nowadays, it competes with image and non-verbal codes oriented towards impressions and emotions. However, some aspects of political communication are reserved for linguistic transmission: precision, specific information, use of abstract concepts. "It is clear that political activity does not exist without the use of language" (Alexiyevets 2017: 7).

A proper context for an analysis of identity construction by a female politician is provided by the research on the dynamics of women's participation in politics. Quantitative sociological studies discuss the political activity of Polish women at

different levels of authorities (Lis-Staranowicz 2018; Paczeński 2006). Such studies include also parliamentary debates concerning bills of special relevance for women, gender-related issues in political discourse, and female image in the media, for example, during election campaigns and debates (Jaworowicz 2016).

Women have been involved in Polish politics since 1989, both in the legislative and executive authorities, even the highest ones. For the first time women became ministers in the government of Jerzy Buzek (1997–2001), which constituted 28 per cent of the government, and then in two subsequent governments: in the government of Jarosław Kaczyński (2006–2007) and that of Donald Tusk (2007–2014). Among the sixteen Prime Ministers since 1989, three were women: Hanna Suchocka (1992–1993), Ewa Kopacz (2014–2015), and Beata Szydło (2015–2017). In the Parliament whose term of office lasted from November 12, 2015 to October 16, 2019, women accounted for 27 per cent of MPs in the Sejm (the lower house) and 13 per cent of senators. These numbers result from the gender parity regulations of 2011, which require that at least 35 per cent of candidates for the Parliament be of one gender².

When addressing the issue of relationships between sex and gender, on the one hand, and speaking style or communication, on the other, we focus on the research, which highlights separateness of "women's language" in political context. Assuming the approach of Lakoff about linguistic separateness of women (Lakoff 1975), it is worthwhile to identify connections between this language and such political parameters as power, dominance, decisiveness, and effectiveness. Research on female language in political discourse usually indicates that such language is directed at relationships and conflict-avoidance, with emphasis on cooperation rather than combat (O'Barr & Atkins 1998; Tannen 1990). Many researchers of feminine political communication note that if women in politics are too feminine (like Sarah Palin in the USA), they are liked but viewed as incompetent (McGinley 2009; Perks & Johnson 2014; Suleiman & O'Connell 2007). Such studies also perpetuate stereotypes of dominance of the male style of communication in public discourse, especially in conflict-saturated politics

(Anderson et al. 2011; Saxonhouse 2015). Female politicians at the highest levels of politics demonstrate masculine communication patterns (Brooks 2011; Dolan 2014; Fracchiolla 2011; Grebelsky-Lichtman & Katz 2019). Of course, politics is only one of the spheres where male patterns of dominance and competition are still visible. The same situation is in business, the police, and the military. There are many sociological and psychological studies discussing this issue, e.g., Pratto & Walker (2004). However, there is plenty of evidence of successful "female communication" suggesting that gender does not determine language use in politics and that the issue is more complex (e.g., Discourse... 2015; Holmes 2005).

Although "politics has no gender" (Stashko et al. 2020: 373), our hypothesis is that Ewa Kopacz's utterances contain linguistic elements indicating the importance of the category of femininity. Examples confirming the hypothesis will be presented in the analytical section (cf., 3. Results).

2. Objectives, methods, and material

Our analysis is based on the assumption that there exists ambiguity in one's own gender identity. We understand it not in medical or biological terms but as a textual and discursive phenomenon: as personal, language-manifested awareness of belonging to a given gender group. Such identity need not be internally coherent because it is constantly subject of external pressures from discursive forces (e.g., public opinion or comments expressed by commentators and male-politicians). Thus, it can be manifested in different forms and strategies depending on the situation, interlocutors, time, and context (Talbot 2019).

We assume that **gender identity** of a female politician has been strongly shaped by many factors that operate in the discourse of women who are active in the whole public sphere, not only in politics. Below we list a number of such factors, which, we believe, can be causal though not determinant throughout our study, that is, they might have exerted a significant influence on Kopacz's utterances. This impact means the presence

of various (contextual) factors, which may potentially influence a given phenomenon, but it is not possible to measure their power as phenomena can also influence one another indirectly.

We follow the **constructivist** approach, in which gender identity is created in discourse practices (Gender articulated... 1995; Ilie 2018; Rutkowski & Skowronek 2011; Skowronek 2010; 2016). We would also like to point out Zimmerman's concept of identity (1998) with the delimitation of three levels of identity: discursive, situated, and transportable. The feminine gender identity constructed in Ewa Kopacz's utterances is a transportable one, because the feminine role manifests itself in many places, where she talks about the role of a mother and refers to a family-oriented woman. Thus, the feminine gender identity is a basic category and is clearly visible in language.

1. Firstly, the male-dominated Polish politics makes female politicians react in a specific way to what is considered "male" in the prevailing androcentric cultural order. It also makes them express their own activity, agency, rationality, and decisiveness. It inevitably entails creating one's own pattern of behaviour, including verbal behaviour, due to the lack of a "positive image" of a female politician: in Western culture, the woman is not perceived as a locus of power/knowledge, but rather as an instrument or element of exercising such power/knowledge (Majka 2011).

2. The second important element, which can affect Kopacz's **gender construction** pertains to some social expectations existing in Poland (Frąckowiak-Sochańska 2011). They surface in discourse about female body, appearance, physicality, and are generally connected with what is considered female visually. The socially structured knowledge about this subject "inevitably determines (regulates) ways of perceiving the [woman's] body [...]. Such knowledge is never 'innocent' or objective; it is always an exponent of social make up. It is saturated with power" (Melosik, *s.a.*). It means that woman's image in the public sphere either conforms to or violates social expectations. "Obligatory heterosexuality" is also relevant in this context. Poles have only just started

"learning" about the non-heteronormative option for those who are active in the public sphere³.

3. The third factor is connected with the family roles of mother, wife, and grandmother stereotypically ascribed to women, as well as specific kind of behaviour attached to them. Female politicians are not "absolved" from these roles either. On the contrary, the social pressure put on them seems even greater. The presence of "templates" of femininity and masculinity forces women in politics to at least partially realize them. At the same time, however, being passive, humble, modest, and submissive dramatically mismatches the image of women who possess actual power. Consequently, they have no choice but to negotiate or even negate the traditional behaviours, which in turn can lead to lack of social acceptance.

4. Finally, we need to mention the feminist aspect, understood not as much as a specific, organized movement in Poland, but rather as a "package of ideas", which Polish women, according to sociological studies, approach with mixed feelings and in a selective way (Butler 1990; Skowronek 2007). They are especially apprehensive of what they call a "radical option" of feminism.

"Polish women are ready to embrace some of the feminist postulates without being fully with feminism. [...] They aim at equal rights, but "not too radically", they want to be emancipated, but "not too much", they want to be successful, but "without sacrifices of the family" (Frąckowiak-Sochańska 2011: 154).

On the other hand, women in politics take advantage of feminist achievements, but at the same time are careful not to lose their conservative electorate.

From a theoretical perspective, the project of a "Polish female politician" seems unrealistic, or at least, incoherent. A woman in politics, wielding a real institutional and economic power, exists also in a complex discursive network, in which "[political – KS, MR] culture gives her access to certain posts, beyond which she should not or

rather may not go" (Majka 2011: 334). On the other hand, she must be able to participate in the male sphere of power, both verbally and non-verbally. Many researches indicate that the politics is a masculine space in which there is a preference for politicians who display masculine characteristics (McGinley 2009). Our study shows the way in which E. Kopacz tries to balance both spheres – what we call gender ambiguity. Kopacz constantly updates it to gain both conservative and liberal electorate. In this way, she constantly and dynamically negotiates her place in the public space within different, often mutually exclusive and conflicting norms, models, and judgements. The question arises if there exists an autonomous concept of a woman in politics in a "non-phallogocentric position" or maybe there is no "third option" exceeding the two dialectic oppositions discussed above (Coates 2015).

It is noteworthy that a woman who creates her own gender identity in politics through her language also gains both a capacity and a privilege to "speak her own voice", which gives her a chance to turn it into "a self-personalization, [...] a performative act triggering and establishing critical awareness [her own and that of the public opinion – KS, MR]. [...] The idea of finding one's own voice [...] means that one can experience dominance in a conversation, discourse, writing and action" (Hooks, quoted in Ostaszewska 2015: 48-49). Of course, this chance may not be fully exploited by a female politician.

Our research is consequently grounded in **Critical Discourse Analysis**, which assumes that in language there are manifestations of not only power relations and ideologies, but also of conscious and unconscious categories constitutive of identities of "social life agents" (Fairclough 2003; van Dijk 1993; Willig 2014). The category of femininity described in this paper can be easily included in the context of the ideology of sexism. We agree with the Krzyżanowska's claim that "CDA-based theoretical and methodological synergies applied in practice might, in fact, be pivotal for the development of both academic reflections and social understandings of gender roles in contemporary society" (2013: 84). When Ewa Kopacz activates her gender identity,

she also activates stereotypical thinking about the social roles, duties, and status ascribed to a specific sex/gender.

The basis of the CDA methodology is that the access to the discourse level is granted by texts (Fairclough 2003). In the selected set of texts the focus was on all references to sex/gender, men/women, femininity/masculinity, family, and kinship relations. We include the concept of "gender polarization": this term is based on the ideology that men's and women's behaviour is dichotomous (Bem 1993; Ilie 2018). We were also interested in references to certain personality traits and behaviours stereotypical gender roles. Those references could be found on the word formation level, the lexical and semantic level, and the syntax level. Sometimes, they are not literal, but metaphorical.

Our analysis is based on qualitative studies. The available resources (eight different speeches by Ewa Kopacz) are analyzed for linguistic and discursive phenomena related to women, femininity, etc. The **textual data** comprise fragments of eight public speeches by Ewa Kopacz, coming from the years 2014–2015. The original texts are divided into utterances; that is, the basic units of semantic content (Stiles 1992). Our aim was to choose the fragments of Kopacz's eight speeches, which contained references to *femininity*, and which could be analyzed grammatically and semantically.

In terms of the genre, they constitute a diverse material, including both prepared and spontaneous texts. Specifically, there are fragments of three political speeches, given to the general public (i.e. exposé of the Prime Minister, a speech delivered in the Parliament when a new government is sworn in, the speech given at the Women's Congress and statements coming from a press conference), but also fragments of four interviews for Polish media: two press interviews (for "Gazeta Wyborcza" and "Viva") and two TV interviews (for TVN and TVP1), as well as a message from Twitter. As we can see, the data are diverse and made public through different media: press, television, and social media. Such diversity makes it possible to reveal ambiguity and

inconsistency in creating the speaker's own identity even within one and the same statement.

The **analysis** presented below focuses on the following questions:

- Can self-identifying elements directed at gender self-description be found in Prime Minister Ewa Kopacz's public discourse?
- Which of these are explicit and declarative, and which are non-intentional even though manifested at the level of text/discourse?
- What linguistic mechanisms serve to construct gender identity?
- Does she maintain in her discourse the division into the "male" and "female" spheres? If so, how does she describe and evaluate it?
- Does Ewa Kopacz emphasize the social roles stereotypically ascribed to women?
- Does her discourse contain any self-excluding elements, i.e. utterances, which suggest gender-related identity "deficiencies"?

3. Results

3.1 Parliamentary exposé of Prime Minister Ewa Kopacz, October 2014.

The first statement we analyze is the parliamentary exposé of Prime Minister Ewa Kopacz⁴. This case is special for two reasons. Firstly, it is an official presentation of the government's strategy by the Prime Minister. Consequently, it is a strictly political text, which also contains elements of gender self-presentation, as is going to be shown. Secondly, an exposé is a type of statement that requires meticulous preparation from the person designated to be Prime Minister. Consequently, we can safely assume that if there appear elements of gender self-construction in this text, they must have been reflected upon and intentional. They constitute the message that the Prime Minister-to-be consciously intends to express. We also assume that even if the first draft of the exposé had been written for the Prime Minister by someone else, she must have approved of the content and amended it (as she mentioned in interviews) before finally

delivering it. In political communication, the person who actually delivers the statement is perceived as the agent⁵.

(1) Pol. *"a dziś Donald Tusk będzie jej prezydentem. Jako Polka jestem dumna z tego sukcesu. [...] Dziękując Donaldowi Tuszkowi za ostatnie 7 lat chcę podkreślić, że sukces Polski, jaki odnieśliśmy po '89 roku ma w sensie politycznym wielu ojców".* – [and today Donald Tusk will be its President. As a Polish woman, I'm proud of this success [...]. *Expressing my gratitude to Donald Tusk for the last seven years, I would like to emphasize that the success that Poland has achieved after the year 1989 has, in a political sense, many fathers.];*

(2) Pol. *"Jestem lekarzem. To szczególna misja i powołanie. W niej zawiera się zaangażowanie, szacunek i chęć pomocy każdemu człowiekowi".* – [*I'm a physician. It is an exceptional mission and vocation. It involves involvement, respect and the desire to help every human being.*];

(3) Pol. *"chcę też zaznaczyć, że jest coś, [...] co wymaga tylko męskiej decyzji i odrzucenia złych emocji".* – [*I also want to stress that there is something, [...] which requires only manly resolution and rejection of bad feelings.].*

In the fragments quoted above, Kopacz uses a few feminine forms (*as a Polish woman*), but is not consistent, as she describes herself as *jestem lekarzem* ('I'm a physician') instead of *jestem lekarką* ('I'm a female physician')⁶. On the other hand, she readily makes use of idiomatic resources of the Polish language, which activate the stereotype of the "male world" and activities within (cf., *the success has many fathers*, requires manly resolution).

It is noteworthy that she often describes her style of governing in terms of the personality traits typically ascribed to men: decisiveness, authority, agency, energy

(cf., Examples 4-6 below). At the level of syntax, speaking in the 1st person singular with emphasis put on the pronoun *ja* ('I') is a strong exponent of such features.

(4) Pol. "*Mam też dziś dla ciebie, Donaldzie, i dla wszystkich wiadomość: To ja stoję na czele polskiego rządu, tego nowego rządu, i za ten rząd biorę pełną odpowiedzialność, oczywiście jeśli Wysoka Izba o tym zdecyduje*". – [*Today I have a message for you, Donald, and for everybody. I am the head of the Polish government, the new government, and I take full responsibility for this government, of course, with the consent from the Parliament.*];

(5) Pol. "*Lubię mówić wprost. Wszyscy wiemy, że nad polskim życiem publicznym od lat ciąży osobista niechęć Jarosława Kaczyńskiego do Donalda Tuska*". – [*I like speaking directly. We all know that Polish political life has been disturbed for years by Jarosław Kaczyński's personal dislike for Donald Tusk.*];

(6) Pol. "*Chcę konkretnej roboty, nie chcę kłótni, oskarżeń o to, kto jest gorszy albo podlega ekskomunice*". – [*I expect a job to be done. I don't want bickering, accusations, discussions who's worse or who should be excommunicated.*].

In her exposé, Prime Minister Kopacz seems to present the male perspective, both at the lexical or phraseological levels and at the rhetorical level. Femininity appears only symbolically, possibly as a means to underscore the change of government, after the strong, "manly" Prime Minister Donald Tusk.

3.2 Interview for *Gazeta Wyborcza*, October 6, 2014 (part 1)

The second example comes from the interview given by Ewa Kopacz on October 6, 2014, only a week after becoming the head of the government⁷.

(7) Pol. Dz.: "*Panią Thatcher? Angelą Merkel? Kim będzie Ewa Kopacz?*"

EK: "Ewą Kopacz. Taką jak dotąd. Byłam samorządowcem, przewodniczącą sejmowej komisji zdrowia, ministrem, marszałkiem i zawsze pozostawałam sobą. Dla ludzi byłam przede wszystkim lekarzem". – [J.: "Margaret Thatcher? Angela Merkel? Who will Ewa Kopacz be?"]

EK: "She'll be Ewa Kopacz. Same as ever. I used to work for local authorities, I have been Chairwoman of the Parliamentary Health Committee, minister, Marshal of the Sejm, and I have always remained myself. And for ordinary people I have been first and foremost a physician".];

(8) Pol. "Przecież mam być premierem dla Polaków, a nie dla moich kolegów z PO czy ministrów. Jeśli więc mam dobrze służyć ludziom, to muszę odczytywać ich oczekiwania". – [I'm supposed to be Prime Minister for all Poles, not just my party colleagues or ministers. If I am to serve people well, I need to be able to understand their needs.];

(9) Pol. "W Platformie miałam takich nauczycieli, jak Tusk czy Komorowski. Wcześniej, gdy byłam w Unii Wolności, to byli ludzie wielkich idei, tacy jak Tadeusz Mazowiecki, Bronisław Geremek". – [In Civic Platform, I had such mentors as Tusk or Komorowski. Earlier, when I was a member of the Freedom Union, my mentors were people of great ideals, such as Tadeusz Mazowiecki and Bronisław Geremek.];

(10) Pol. "Wcześniej pracowałam jako biegły lekarz sądowy, jeździłam do wypadków samochodowych, kolejowych i widziałam ludzi w wielu dramatycznych sytuacjach". – [Earlier I used to work as a medical examiner. I used to check car and train accident scenes and see people in many dramatic situations.];

(11) Pol. "Byłam od trzech lat marszałkiem Sejmu. Lubiłam to miejsce i – jak sądzę – miałam pewne sukcesy. Np. dziś nie trzeba zmieniać regulaminu, żeby dotrzymywać umów dżentelmeńskich zawieranych na posiedzeniach Prezydium Sejmu i Konwentu Seniorów". – [I was Marshal of the Sejm for three years. I liked the position and I

believe I was successful. For example, today there is no need to amend the regulations to keep gentlemen's agreements closed during sessions of the Presidium of the Sejm and Seniors' Covenant.].

Let us discuss three gender-related verbal dimensions of these utterances. As in Examples 7 and 11 above, Kopacz is inconsistent in her use of masculine and feminine forms of nouns (e.g., using masculine forms even though fully acceptable feminine forms are available). We believe that this is a question of habit and automatisms rather than a purposeful choice of words, which, in fact, reflects the real not rhetorical self-description even better. Interestingly, the Prime Minister makes reference only to the male "political genealogy" because she is talking only about male party colleagues (*koledzy* in Polish) not mentioning female colleagues, recalls male political figures (Tusk, Komorowski, Geremek) even though the journalists suggests an analogy between her and other outstanding and well-known female European politicians. Finally, same as in her exposé, Kopacz is trying here to describe herself as: decisive, ambitious, courageous, successful, hardworking, and combative, which are the traits strongly associated with manliness (cf., Examples 12-15 below). Thus, she shows her ability to fight and fight back.

(12) Pol. *"Jestem pracoholikiem, naprawdę lubię pracować. Każdy dzień przynosi problemy, które trzeba rozwiązywać, przy mojej decyzyjności i upodobaniu do pracy może się okazać, że to będzie dla mnie dodatkowa siła napędowa".* – [I'm a workaholic, I really enjoy working. Every day brings new problems that have to be solved; with my decisiveness and willingness to work it can prove to be an additional driving force.];

(13) Pol. Dz.: *"Nie wystraszy się pani kilofów przed kancelarią premiera?"*

EK: *"Nie wystraszę się – i górnicy też to wiedzą".* – [J.: *"Won't you be afraid of pickaxes in front of your office?"*

EK: *"No, I won't, and the miners know it too".*];

(14) Pol. *"Zawsze się biłam o ludzi. Mówiłam: 'panowie, wy planujecie, a tu jest sprawa do załatwienia, bo ludzie z miejscowości X mają z czymś problem i może byśmy się tym zajęli'. Uważam, że dbałość o ludzi to obowiązek każdego polityka".* – [*I've always fought for people. I said: 'Gentlemen, you keep making plans while there is a job to be done because people from location X are having a problem. Why don't we focus on that?' I believe that taking care of people is a duty of every politician.*];

(15) Pol. *"Nie jestem strachliwa. Grzegorz Schetyna wpisywał się w moją koncepcję rządu, dlatego dostał to stanowisko. To był dobry wybór".* – [*I'm not easy to frighten. Grzegorz Schetyna fits my idea of the government, which is why he got the post. That was a good decision.*];

In the same interview, the journalists asked Prime Minister Kopacz the following question:

(16) Pol. Dz.: *"Władza jest afrodyzjakiem, przynajmniej dla mężczyzn. A jak to jest w przypadku kobiety?"*

EK: *"Władza? Na mnie nie działa. Kobiety tutaj zasadniczo różnią się od mężczyzn. Jest zadanie do wykonania, no to do roboty".* – [J.: *"Power is an aphrodisiac, at least for men. How is it for women?"*

EK: *"Power? It does not affect me. In this respect women differ from men. There's a job to be done, so let's get to it".*].

The journalists' question makes reference to the commonly known statement ascribed to Henry Kissinger, an American politician. Sexologists refer to this condition as *timophilia*. According to Lew-Starowicz, a renowned Polish sexologist, it means "achieving sexual satisfaction due to a sense of power and belonging to social elite, or due to immense material wealth. The source of pleasure derives then from the sense of prestige and reaction of the society. Timophilia is rare in women"⁸.

Kopacz's response reveals two aspects of her gender self-construction. Firstly, she supports the sharp gender dichotomy ("power affects men – power does not affect women") and defines the two genders in the essentialist manner by ascribing them the features that these two groups of people allegedly possess as a whole and which define them ("men crave power – women do not crave power"). Secondly, the Prime Minister describes women as being hardworking but also as being ready to act without voicing objections (*There is a job to be done, so let's get to it*). In this example, these features are clearly associated with femininity, in contrast to other statements coming from the same interview and from the exposé, in which being hardworking and task-oriented were ascribed to men. We can observe then that femininity as a discourse category, though rhetorically useful, is construed by Kopacz *ad hoc* in the process of her discourse construction instead of being a fixed and stable structure, ready to be reused in discourse. It is also significant that it is not Kopacz who referred to the dichotomic, polarized, masculine-feminine world, but the journalist: Kopacz only reacts to the suggested construction. It is important that she does not refuse the suggestion, thus accepting it.

3.3 Speech at the 7th Women's Congress, September 13, 2015

The three fragments below come from the short speech Ewa Kopacz delivered during the 7th Women's Congress⁹. They show discursive means of gender self-construction different from those which we have discussed so far.

(17) Pol. "*Ale też chcę się pochwalić tym, że w żadnym rządzie nie było tylu kobiet co w tej chwili, w moim rządzie. [...] W moim rządzie ich jest 5 ministrów konstytucyjnych. Ale mam po raz pierwszy w historii panią minister spraw wewnętrznych; jak widzicie, niekiedy niejeden mężczyzna mógłby się powstydzić – [a ona] świetnie sobie daje radę.*". – [*However, I would like to boast that in none of the previous governments there were as many women as in the current government, my government. [...] In my government there are five female ministers, including the Minister of Interior Affairs,*

for the first time in history. As you can see, many a man could feel ashamed – [but she is handling it quite well.].

Let us focus on the linguistic, pragmatic (pertaining to selecting specific speech acts), and discourse strategies. Firstly, there is a comparison (with the figures provided) of men's and women's presence in politics, which is accompanied by a direct act of praise: there are many women in the current government and they perform their duties better than men. It indirectly points to positive evaluation of femininity, women, and the features associated with them, which are to contribute to better government. Secondly, the speaker highlights her *power*, understood literally, even trivially, as possessing someone or something, i.e. possessive power (*in my government, my Minister*). Thirdly, Kopacz activates the category of *shame*. Shame is understood by psychologists as an unpleasant and oftentimes destructive emotion, triggered by a discovery of "dark sides" of our personality (Jacoby 2017). This emotion, its origin, and the strategies of dealing with it inextricably depend on the currently observed social norms. The statement above alludes to an imaginary situation: men (possibly including former Ministers of Internal Affairs) could feel ashamed by seeing a female minister who does a better job in this post than they did or could have done. Consequently, we are dealing with the *act of shaming* similar to the one, in which a parent (mother) shames a child when they believe the child misbehaved or acted in an inappropriate manner, that he or she was worse than others (cf., *many a man could feel ashamed* [if he saw how successful she is even though she's a woman]). Apart from constantly juxtaposing the male and female in politics as well as their constant competition, other elements are present in Kopacz's speech: explicit evaluation of these two worlds ("women are better in politics than men") and assuming the role of a person who wants to put shame on other adult people/men in high ministerial posts in a manner reminding of an adult caregiver putting shame on children.

Yet another aspect of self-positioning within the concept of femininity is revealed by the following fragment of the same statement:

(18) Pol. *"Istotą mojego myślenia o prawach kobiet jest przekonanie, że to one mają ustalać reguły i to one mają podejmować decyzje co do swojego życia. I te wybory, te ich wybory nie mogą być wymuszone ani sytuacją ekonomiczną ani fałszywie rozumianymi normami kulturowymi". – [The core of my idea of women is my conviction that they have to set rules and they are to make decisions about their own lives. And these choices, their own choices, cannot be enforced either by the economic situation or the misconceived cultural norms.].*

The use of personal pronouns in this fragment is vital for the reconstruction of the discourse. It is significant that in the speech dealing with the topic of women's rights, the personal pronouns used are *one* (*they+fem.*) and *ich* (*their*), instead of the expected *my* ('we') and *nasze* ('our'). This linguistic choice can be interpreted as lack of identification with other women in Poland. It can also be interpreted as a statement coming from a person who has no need to fight for her rights due to the power she already possesses (she has one of the highest posts in the country). Superficially, on the level of declaration, Kopacz "takes the side" of women, but actually she distances herself from them.

The next fragment uncovers new inconsistencies in Kopacz's strategies to construct her gender self-identity:

(19) Pol. *"Wiecie, że kobietom w polityce też nie jest łatwo. A to właśnie kobiety w Polsce zarówno w życiu publicznym, jak i w rodzinie muszą brać na siebie największy ciężar. I zawsze dają radę [...]. Wspierajcie kobiety, bo to jest ważne: żebyśmy my kobiety, wtedy, kiedy musimy się bardzo mocno mierzyć z tą męską częścią... Mówię tu przede wszystkim o politykach tej sceny politycznej... Nie jest to równy pojedynek... Dlatego też to wsparcie od was, te oklaski, które dostałam, ładują mnie na tyle dobrą energią, że ja za chwilę wracam na salę sejmową". – [You know that it is not easy for women in politics either. However, it is women who have to bear the heaviest burden,*

both in their public life and families. And they always manage. [...] Please support women, because it is important: so that we, women ... when we have to face the male world the hard way... I'm talking here mainly about the politicians of this political scene ... It is not a fair fight... That's why the support I got from you, the applause, it charges me with positive energy, so now I can go back to the Parliament.].

The polarization into the male and female political (or even social) worlds seems to be a constant feature of Kopacz's speech. Constant is also the notion of competition and fight between the sexes in the area of politics (*when we have to face the male world the hard way...I'm talking here mainly about the politicians of this political scene ... It is not a fair fight...*). This fragment features an element of vague but profound imbalance of power or inequity of opportunities for the two genders, as well as weakness of women as individuals who have to face a male opponent (only supportive actions of women as a group can, according to Kopacz, counterbalance masculinity in politics).

These three fragments coming from Kopacz's one short speech reveal a constant motif of juxtaposing the male and female worlds (especially in the realm of politics). However, the suggested balance of power is unstable and undefined. A female politician is on one occasion construed as weak and seeking support from other women, whereas in other cases she is depicted as dominating and outdoing men in her competence. Additionally, it is unclear which position Kopacz herself occupies in this recurrent opposition: superficially, she seems to take the woman's side, but at the same time she sends the linguistic signals of distancing herself from them.

3.4 An interview on TVN24, September 9, 2014

Similar ambivalences and inconsistencies at text and discourse levels are noticeable in Kopacz's choice of metaphors. It is well visible in her speech given a few days before the new government was sworn in. The speech was later widely commented on in the media and by the opposition, mostly negatively, though some commentators found

similarities to Angela Merkel's speech, who compared the German government to a good housewife taking care of her home¹⁰.

(20) Pol. *"Wie pan, ja jestem kobietą. Ja sobie wyobrażam, co ja bym zrobiła, gdyby na ulicy nagle pokazał się człowiek, który nagle wymachuje jakimś ostrym narzędziem, albo trzymał w ręku pistolet? Pierwsza moja myśl: tam za moimi plecami jest mój dom, tam są moje dzieci, więc wpadam do domu, zamykam drzwi i opiekuję się własnymi dziećmi. Co w takiej sytuacji zrobiłby mężczyzna? Pewnie pomyślałby: no, nie mam nawet porządnego kija w ręku, ale jak to, ja nie stanę i nie będę się z nim tłukł? Tylko dlatego, że on tu się odważył przyjść i grozić mojej rodzinie. Więc odpowiem jedno: Polska powinna zachowywać się jak polska rozsądna kobieta – nasze bezpieczeństwo, nasz kraj, nasze dzieci są najważniejsze". – [You know, I'm a woman. I can imagine what I would do if I suddenly saw a man in the street, brandishing a sharp weapon or a gun. My first thought would be: there is my home behind me, my kids, so I run home, lock the door and take care of my kids. What would a man do in such a situation? He might think: 'I haven't got anything solid at hand but I'm not gonna back down now', just 'coz he dares to come here and threaten my family. Well, I can say this: Poland should behave like a sensible Polish woman. Our safety, our country, our children are of utter importance.].*

This utterance creates an opposition with the prototypical male/female reactions at its poles – it is a very clear linguistic realization of the gender polarization we mentioned earlier, characteristic of Ewa Kopacz's discourse (Bem 1993). The metaphor of a threatening assailant brandishing a knife is misplaced at the very beginning, because it puts the speaker herself (as well as Poland, conceptualized as a woman) in the defense if she wants to conform to the declared values and models. Additionally, it is built on the emotionally negative image of a male assailant, threat, and fear, with a motif of a child added to it, which is a strong trigger of emotions (Pinich 2017; Rutkowski 2019).

What is especially relevant from the point of view of our analysis is the explicit juxtaposition of stereotypical male and female behaviours. According to these, a woman runs home to protect her children while a man, even without any tools (i.e. adequate weapons), follows his imperative to fight (supposedly, for honour, status, pride, which are the values associated with the male pattern of categorizing reality). Following Kopacz's interpretation, male and female behaviours are instinctive, almost atavistic (cf., *my first thought would be*): "survival" is the female strategy; "struggle", is the male strategy. What is more, this instinctive and emotional female reaction is illogically described as "sensible" (*a sensible Polish woman*). Interestingly, such an attribution of features does not conform to the stereotypical perception of women as more emotional than men (Stashko 2017). It is also noteworthy that the justification for the female pattern of behaviour is depicted as very serious (the assailant is brandishing a sharp weapon or a gun), while the male reaction is incommensurate with the situation (*Just 'coz he dares to come here and threaten my family*). The whole picture is permeated by the construct of "Polishness": this is a Polish man/Polish woman who reacts, consequently, the assailant is the Other/Alien, from the outside of our culture.

3.5 An interview for *Gazeta Wyborcza*, October 5, 2014 (part 2)

The utterances discussed above were interpreted as opting for the policy of avoiding conflicts in order to ensure security¹¹. One wonders how Kopacz herself reacts to the charges of being too conservative and feminine.

(21) Pol. Dz.: *"Mówiła pani na Politechnice Warszawskiej, że gdy kobieta widzi napastnika z nożem, to biegnie do domu chronić dzieci, a mężczyzna rzuca się do walki? To zabrzmiało, jakby: nasza chata skraja."*

EK: *"Dokładnie odwrotnie. Można szarżować i składać puste obietnice. Jeśli pomagamy, to nie tylko duchowo, ale realnie i w ramach całej Unii, a nie w pojedynkę. Wypowiedzią na Politechnice chciałam pokazać, że polski rząd będzie taką matką, która zadba o interesy polskich dzieci, polskich rodzin, a z drugiej strony będzie realnie"*

oceniać to, co możemy w sprawie Ukrainy zrobić". – [J.: "At Warsaw University of Technology you said that when a woman sees an assailant with a knife, she runs home to protect her children, while a man goes right at him. It sounded sort of 'we better stay away from it' ".

EK: "Just the opposite. One can mock and make empty promises. If we help, then not only spiritually but practically, and within the Union as a whole, not on our own. What I said at Warsaw University of Technology was to mean that the government will be such a mother who takes care of Polish children, Polish families, but also, at the same time, will realistically consider what can be done about Ukraine".].

The answer Ewa Kopacz gave illustrates two clichéd strategies: male – fight and female – cooperation. It also contributes to the earlier metaphor of woman with its prototypical representation, which is mother. On the one hand, it can have a discursive value by activating such connotations as warmth, security, intimacy, family. On the other hand, it is uncomfortably close to the model of Polish mother, limited in her interests only to her family, which is risky in this context. It can also be interpreted as an attempt to gain the support of the (massive) electorate and politicians who are not in favour of Polish involvement in international help: a Polish mother first helps her own children and then looks around if she can help others.

3.6 Press conference in Opole, August 28, 2015

Reference to gender appears to be one of the standard communication strategies used by Ewa Kopacz. Her answer to the question what she would do to finally arrange a meeting on national security with President Andrzej Duda is symptomatic in this respect. This is how she answers the question asked by a female journalist¹²:

(22) Pol. "Pani też jest kobietą. Co może zrobić kobieta poza słowem 'proszę'?" – [You are a woman yourself. What can a woman do apart from saying 'please'?]

(23) Pol. *"Ja naprawdę nie gryzę. Dziwi mnie, że jest taka niechęć do tego spotkania. Ja niczego nie żądam, ja po prostu proszę. Tak mnie nauczono w domu. Będę prosić do skutku, mam w sobie pokorę". – [I don't bite, really. I'm surprised by the lack of will for this meeting. I'm not demanding anything. I'm only asking. This is what I was taught at home. And I'll keep on asking, I'm humble enough.].*

The category of femininity surfaces in Kopacz's responses at several levels. Her first words activate the sense of "female solidarity" (*you are a woman yourself*). This strategy is risky because it can be easily ridiculed as "sisterhood of ovaries", in which femininity, framed in purely essentialist and biological terms, is sufficient to constitute understanding, community, and connection among women. On the one hand, it creates a bond between women; on the other, it excludes men ("they don't get it..."). The pivotal part of the response, which is the rhetorical question *What can a woman do apart from saying 'please'?* is grounded within this sense of community (*we, women, know...*). We can see the Prime Minister who is not taking advantage of her post, who is not using political tools of request, pressure, or negotiation, but who instead is putting herself into a position of a subordinate, a petitioner, a woman "waiting for a man", whose only available option is asking and waiting on the subordinate position for any reaction from the man¹³. It is significant that there was no reference to gender in the journalist's question. This category was activated by Kopacz herself. In her self-positioning, including her image as a politician, gender is the category of choice in many (difficult) communicative situations.

In the second part of her response, Kopacz openly distances herself from the strategy of fight (*I don't bite, really; I'm not demanding anything. I'm only asking*), and puts herself in the subordinate position with respect to the President. She identifies asking as the only way to achieve her objectives and connects it with humbleness. Additionally, she indicates her family home and upbringing (a strong rhetorical figure) as a source of this behaviour, and thus paints a complete image of an immature, subjugated "girl", instead of a self-confident and decisive woman, the leader of the

government (cf., Example 24 below). This total rejection of attributes of political fight and adopting the position of someone subordinate, passive, waiting, and humbly accepting decisions made by the other side of the argument, reinforced at that time her reception as a person unable to act as the leader of the government. Many researchers point out that female language makes more use of speech acts such as request and also emotional reference, personal examples, hesitant speech, passive speech, softened statement, apology, receiving approval, asking questions, and empathy (Grebelsky-Lichtman & Bdólach 2017; Grebelsky-Lichtman & Katz 2019).

3.7 "A model daddy's girl"

Ewa Kopacz readily told the media about her family background, about being a daughter, mother, and grandmother. Her reference to the family roles and the idea of the home (as in Example 23, when she says: *I'm not demanding anything. I'm only asking. This is what I was taught at home.*) seems to be her preferable strategy, even in situations, which are not naturally associated with the home and family. Her home and her relationships with other family members become the frame for self-description in the sphere of her current political activities ("I was taught at home to ask politely", "father taught me many things and equipped me with life wisdom" – these could be the reconstructed meanings of what she says), which can be illustrated with three more examples. The first example comes from women's magazine "Viva" (December 22, 2014)¹⁴, the second is a recent comment on Twitter (January 31, 2019)¹⁵, and the third is a fragment of an interview given right before Christmas (December 25, 2014)¹⁶.

(24) Pol. "*Byłam modelową córeczką tatusia. Często z ojcem rozmawialiśmy i były to bardzo poważne rozmowy.*" – [*I used to be a model daddy's girl. My father and I would talk a lot and these were very serious conversations.*];

(25) Pol. "*Dzień rozpoczęłam od freudowskiej pomyłki. Wczoraj kupiłam książkę o dinozaurach dla mojego wnuka.*" – [*I started my day with a Freudian slip. I bought a book about dinos for my grandson.*]

(26) Pol. *"A mnie się marzy, żeby założyć jeansy i bluzę dresową. Dlatego myślę sobie zawsze, że jak pojedę do Gdańska do córki, do wnuczka, to tam wszystko będzie inaczej [...] Kiedy jestem z wnukiem, nie myślę o polityce. Opiekuję się z nim z przyjemnością. To świetne lekarstwo na stres, nie tylko w polityce."* – [Sometimes I dream of putting on jeans and a hoodie. That's why I keep thinking that when I'm going to Gdansk, to my daughter's place, to see my grandson, it's all different. [...] When I'm with my grandson, I don't think about politics. I take care of him with great pleasure. It's a terrific remedy for stress, and not only in politics.].

As we can see in Example 25, family relationships (a book bought by a granny for a grandson) can also be used to justify gaps in a person's general knowledge. The granny figure itself, with its implication of protectiveness, care, emotions, tradition, and focus on family, supports the category of femininity and adds a new dimension to it via the activation of another way of exemplification. At the same time, it situates the category of femininity firmly within the granted cultural order, because the grandmother figure – caring and devoted to her children and grandchildren – is a very strong social script in Polish culture (Tadros 2014: 10).

Kopacz uses family-oriented attributes (being a mother, a granny, being at home, being in Gdansk) to define the private sphere and separate it strictly from her political activities (cf., Example 26). At the same time, she emphasizes her solid grounding in the family and the sense of security it provides. Such a strong and clear division between the private and public spheres, and locating herself in the former, recreates and replicates the traditional, even stereotypical image of womanhood belonging to the sphere of *oikos* and self-actualizing within it.

4. Discussion

The analysis of the Polish Prime Minister's public speeches presented above, which are permeated by the category of gender, allows for drawing some observations. We list them here and at the same time address the research questions posed at the beginning.

In public speeches by Ewa Kopacz, there are numerous and diverse linguistic and discursive elements, directed, among others, at defining herself in terms of sex and gender. The male/female gender category serves the political scene as well. The linguistic and textual elements come from different levels of speech. They include: lexical choices (e.g., presence or absence of femininity markers, specific forms of personal pronouns, family-oriented vocabulary), selection of specific speech acts (e.g., the act of praising, the act of shaming) and metaphors (e.g., the use of the metaphor 'Poland is a woman/mother'). They do not allow for establishing any system or regularity. The linguistic construction of femininity emerging from the use of language is not systematic or regular either. If we look at the utterances which have not been included in our research material, we can say that there is no consistent construction of a stable image of a woman. There is ambiguity: on the one hand, she would like to be more like a man (utterances 4, 5, 6, 12, 13, and 14) and, on the other, she wants to be more feminine (utterances 20, 22, and 23). This kind of unstable ambiguity in the language of female politicians, dependent on the discourse of identity, is also described by other researchers:

"I would like to emphasize here that identities constructed in this way are dynamic, vulnerable, fragmented and ambivalent. We assume that there are certain systematic relations (of transfer and contradiction) between the models of identity offered by the political elite or the media (the system) and everyday discourse (life-world)" (Wodak 2003: 678).

Kopacz's highlighting of femininity can be explicit, direct, and declaratory. In such cases, femininity is strongly masculinized (with qualities such as leadership, strength, decidedness, etc., being manifested). However, the category of gender can be more covert or implied, which has been established in this study. Then it is related to stereotypical images, perpetuated by culture, in which femininity is home-bound, protective, weak, subordinate, asking, etc. Even though Prime Minister Kopacz defines herself as a woman and employs *femininity* as a category useful in rhetorical struggle, she locates herself "outside" this category.

In her speeches, Ewa Kopacz defines *femininity* and *masculinity* as two antagonistic spheres, each opposing the other and competing with the other, in contrast to the existing holistic and symbiotic approaches to this distinction (Davydyuk & Panasenko 2016: 24). She uses this opposition to build her own position, constructing an image composed of the traits contrasted with the traditional masculine way of "playing" politics. These qualities, which include *protectiveness*, *conservatism*, *avoiding conflict*, *focusing on family*, etc., are feminine and, as she believes, better or more successful in political activity.

On the level of declarations, Ewa Kopacz portrays herself as a modern woman, powerful, self-disciplined, and pragmatic. However, this rhetoric is oftentimes replaced by self-excluding remarks: Kopacz suggests that women should be subordinate to men (especially in politics), that they should display some kind of weakness, softness, and submission.

5. Conclusions

Before Ewa Kopacz became Prime Minister, she was little-known to the general public. Thus, her image in the media and what she said could be essential for the promotion of her government and herself as Prime Minister. It appears that this opportunity was weakly exploited or completely missed. Ewa Kopacz's speeches offer an insight into a variety of language strategies she employs as a politically active woman (e.g., highlighting, backgrounding, or negotiating her femininity) and reveal a number of functions of femininity created in the current Polish political discourse. The analysis conducted in this study leads us to the following conclusions:

1. Prime Minister Ewa Kopacz recreates the traditional patriarchal male-female dichotomy, where competition and domination are reserved for men. Our study shows the way in which Kopacz tries to balance both spheres – what we call gender ambiguity. Kopacz constantly updates it to gain both the conservative and the liberal electorate.

2. Kopacz frequently makes reference to vaguely defined femininity in order to achieve two objectives:

- persuasive objective: providing additional support to her political arguments as well as their illustration (Kopacz as a female politician is a woman who protects her children/family);
- self-identifying objective: positioning herself and her actions in the political landscape mainly in opposition to male politicians.

These two discourses are inconsistent.

3. The linguistic mechanisms of constructing gender in Kopacz's discourse are based on activating the traditional male-female dichotomy (or gender polarization). We can see both feminine and masculine traits.

The feminine ones are:

- narrativity (using descriptions and referring to her own experience, typical of women),
- topicality (the topics referred to include: the role of a woman expressed directly and references to women's duties),
- using feminine (subordinate) acts of speech, like an apology or a request, and employing them as a strategy in political discourse,
- playing feminine public "roles", like those of a mother or a grandmother.

The masculine traits are also represented at the level of the topics discussed:

- referring to male role models (party colleagues, Polish statesmen),
- explicit description of her own masculine traits, such as courage or task-orientation,
- using masculine gender indicators in grammar (masculine forms instead of feminine ones),
- grammatical distancing from women (using "they" instead of "we") in a speech addressed to women.

4. In what she says, Ewa Kopacz copies and preserves, often without thinking, the division into the male and female spheres, ascribing to femininity such qualities as passivity, humbleness, humility, diligence, sensibility, and no desire for power. Her

statements also feature elements that strongly exclude and antagonize both genders (femininity cannot demand; masculinity cannot be caring and sensible; masculinity cannot comprehend what can be comprehended by femininity; masculinity thinks about the world in a different way than femininity; thus masculinity and femininity cannot cooperate). The former Prime Minister also willingly employed family discourse to legitimize her views and actions.

5. The metaphors of femininity and woman used by Kopacz and connected with political topics seem misplaced, inadequate, and incoherent. Her statements offered her political opponents many open slots to be filled with their own arguments and misinterpretations. They also triggered ridicule and criticism. The new Prime Minister assumed the post following the two terms of office held by Donald Tusk, who was a very popular politician; thus, she had to confront prejudice right from the start ("Tusks's puppet", "a figurehead", "a dependent person"). Consequently, her gender identity is ambiguous, so it can seem inconsistent or even self-contradictory. This is why the stereotyping of femininity (both her own and generic) by Kopacz yielded a negative and unwanted result.

6. The ambivalences surfacing at the textual and discursive plane which were described in this study derive from Ewa Kopacz's inability to exceed the mainstream culture-specific Polish model of a woman, the need to make constant references to the sphere of domestic and family life when talking about politics, having no feminist awareness and her own reflections on this issue, and finally lack of her own strong voice. Such a discursive model is useless and faulty when applied to the antagonistic scene of Polish politics, dominated by men. Nor is it, paradoxically, satisfying for the Polish polarized public opinion.

Notes

1. Ewa Kopacz was sworn in as Prime Minister on September 15, 2014, after Donald Tusk resigned. On October 1, 2014 she did her exposé and Parliament gave its vote of

confidence to her government. On November 12, 2015, at the first session of the Sejm of the 8th term of office, she submitted the resignation of the Council of Ministers. Currently, she is a Vice-President of European Parliament of the 9th term of office.

2. The percentage of women in parliaments across the world is ca. 16.5. In Western Europe, in the lower houses of parliament the percentage is ca. 27 on average and ranges from 45 (in Scandinavian countries) to 9 (e.g., in Greece, Portugal, Italy). In all these countries it is lower than the population index. The situation is analogical in executive authorities: the average participation of women in the national governments of the EU member states is ca. 25 per cent. In addition, one can notice a correlation between the low presence of women in parliaments and in governments (Barburska 2002).

3. We can provide here examples of such figures as Robert Biedroń, the leader of the Wiosna ('Spring') leftist party, who is explicit about his homosexuality, and Anna Grodzka, the first openly transsexual person in the Polish Parliament.

4. Available at: <https://www.premier.gov.pl/realizacja-planow/expose-premier-ewy-kopacz-stenogram.html>

5. When quoting fragments of statements by Ewa Kopacz, we first give them in their original Polish form and later provide the English translation. All translations of Ewa Kopacz's statements were made by the authors of this article.

6. In the Polish language, masculine forms are grammatically differentiated from feminine forms. "Jestem lekarzem" is the male form, which is matched by an alternative female form: "Jestem lekarką". The Polish word *lekarz* is both generic and masculine, whilst the word *lekarka* is feminine.

7. Available at: https://wyborcza.pl/1,75398,16755521,Premier_Ewa_Kopacz_w_rozmowie_z_Wyborcza_Wladza.html

The second part of the same interview will be analyzed in subsection 3.5.

8. See Z. Lew-Starowicz, Orgazm władzy, "Wprost" No 13, 2009; Available at: <https://www.wprost.pl/tygodnik/156672/orgazm-wladzy.html>

9. Video available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8Uw_uSrZOG8

10. Available at: <https://telewizjarepublika.pl/quotnytquot-o-quotbardziej-kobiecemquot-podejsciu-ewy-kopacz-do-rzadzenia,11757.html>

11. What she said was mildly commented on as unfortunate or, less mildly, as infantile, ridiculous, unbecoming the "tough" sphere of politics, especially when uttered by the Prime Minister (e.g., "Angela Merkel wouldn't act like that, would she?"). This is why Kopacz later tried to "toughen" the tone of her speech, to withdraw from the feminine frame, and to enter the gender-neutral sphere of work, tasks, and realism.

12. Available at: <https://natemat.pl/152715,kopacz-o-trudnych-relacjach-z-prezydentem-duda-co-moze-zrobic-kobieta-poza-slowem-prosze>

13. According to Tannen (1990), asking, like other subordinating speech acts, is typical of the model of female communication. Many other researchers also consider requesting to be a typically female linguistic behaviour, especially in situations when making a request is not necessary (Grebelsky-Lichtman & Bdólach 2017; Grebelsky-Lichtman & Katz 2019).

14. Available at: <https://polki.pl/zycie-gwiazd/newsy,ewa-kopacz-wywiad-viva,10041517,artykul.html>

15. Available at: <https://www.polsatnews.pl/wiadomosc/2019-01-31/kupilam-ksiazke-o-dinozaurach-dla-mojego-wnuka-ewa-kopacz-tlumaczy-sie-z-wpadki/>

16. Available at: <https://wpolityce.pl/polityka/227298-papu-papu-babcia-ewa-z-rodzina-w-hektolitrach-swiatecznego-lukru-tvp-dzielnie-walczy-o-miano-pierwszego-lizusa-rp>.

List of abbreviations

Dz. – dziennikarz/dziennikarka (Pol. 'journalist')

EK – Ewa Kopacz

J. – journalist

KS – Katarzyna Skowronek

MR – Mariusz Rutkowski

Pol. – Polish

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Résumé

Language is a basic tool of construction of female identity by women who participate in political activity or, more generally, in public life. This paper demonstrates how the category of femininity is manifested in the speech of Ewa Kopacz, Polish Prime

Minister in 2014-2015. This paper offers a textual and discursive analyses conducted within the framework of Critical Discourse Analysis. The authors assume that a person's awareness of belonging to a given gender group is revealed at the level of text and discourse. Such discursive gender identity need not be consistent or undergo reflection or rationalization. Moreover, it changes over time and is subject to various pressures from external discursive forces (e.g., public opinion, the media, or male politicians). Addressing the category of gender is a frequent communicative behaviour displayed by Ewa Kopacz, which she employs both for her gender self-identification and for the metaphorical definition of the Polish political scene. The study shows a number of language strategies used by the former Prime Minister, such as foregrounding, backgrounding, or negotiating various aspects of femininity. The authors also analyze Ewa Kopacz's use of the category of a woman/femininity as a metaphor of Poland and of the way of conducting state politics. The paper describes numerous examples of how she stereotypically divides politics into two antagonistic spheres, "feminine" and "masculine", both axiologically charged. Political activity becomes construed as a gender "boxing ring", in which the position of a woman is ambivalent: sometimes strong, dominating, and powerful, whilst sometimes weak, passive, and submissive. The ambivalences presented in the paper derive, among others, from Kopacz's inability to exceed the existing Polish cultural model of a woman.

Key words: language of politics, discourse analysis, linguistic identity construction, gender, female political identity, Polish political discourse.

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THE SWEDISH *BLI*-PASSIVE IN A DIACHRONIC PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract: The paper follows the history of the Swedish verb *bli* "remain" from a lexical loan from Middle Low German in the 14th century to its establishment as a passive auxiliary replacing the original *varþa* "become" in the 17th century. It argues that the impulse for the grammaticalization of *bli* was the rise of polysemy of the verb and its subsequent coalescence with *varþa*. The study is based on original diachronic data and advances a model of grammaticalization of the lexical verb into a passive auxiliary.

Key words: passive voice, auxiliary, grammaticalization, Swedish, analytical passive, diachrony.

1. Introduction

Modern Swedish is a language with two passives: morphological (the so-called *s*-passive) and periphrastic (the so-called *bli*-passive). Both passive constructions are relatively young diachronically and their development can, at least partly, be followed in extant sources. In both cases, the same construction performs the pre-passive (source) and the passive (target) functions (see Givón 2006: 342), i.e. it retains the original meanings and uses.

The *s*-passive is formed with an extra-inflectional suffix, originally a reflexive pronoun (see Holm 1952; Óttosson 1992) and the periphrastic *bli*-passive is formed with an auxiliary *bli*, a shortened version of the original *bliva* "to remain", and a past participle.

The aim of the present paper is to follow the development of the verb *bliva* "to remain/to become" from its earliest attestations in Swedish to its grammaticalization as passive auxiliary. In particular, the relationship between *bliva* and the original passive auxiliary *varþa* "to become", will be in focus (see Section 2).

The auxiliary *bli* is a Middle Low German loanword in Swedish with the first attestation ca. 1300 in a Swedish translation of the Torah (*Pentateukparafrasen*), according to the Swedish Academy Dictionary of the Swedish language (Svenska akademiens ordbok, hereinafter SAOB). Its original meaning was similar to Modern German *bleiben*, i.e. "to remain" (see also Boas & Höder 2018). At the time when the verb was borrowed, there already was a periphrastic passive, or a passive-like construction, which was made up of a past participle and the auxiliary *varþa* "to become". The latter became gradually ousted by the loan *bliva*, as it gained new meanings. Both the original lexical meaning and all the later meanings are still grammatical in Modern Swedish and exist alongside the passive auxiliary use of the verb (see Section 3 for an overview).

Both passives are examples of well-documented developments, i.e. auxiliary plus nonfinite verb form and a reflexive, which grammaticalises into a passive marker. Both processes are robustly attested for many Indo-European languages (Zúñiga & Kittilä 2019: 225). We shall not be concerned with the latter and will focus on the former only, i.e. the rise of the analytical passive. There is a number of lexical verbs in the languages of the world that seem to have developed similarly into passive auxiliaries, among them equivalents of "become", "be" (English, Hungarian), "go" (Ecuadorian Quechua), "come" (Finnish), "suffer" (Vietnamese), "receive, get" (German, English), "fall" (Tamil), and "touch" (Thai Burmese), see Heine and Kuteva (2002) and Zúñiga and Kittilä (2019). The verbs corresponding in meaning to "remain" are rare in this group – apart from North Germanic *bliva* there is Polish *zostać* (both *bliva* and *zostać* are polysemous and also mean "become") and Italian *rimanere*, potentially a nascent passive auxiliary (Schwarze 2003; Telve 2016), which, together with the textual

documentation allowing the reconstruction, makes the Swedish *bli*-passive an interesting object of study. Surprisingly, while *s*-passive has been the subject of a number of detailed diachronic studies (notably two monographs: Holm (1952) for Swedish and Óttosson (1992) for the closely related Icelandic), a larger study of the history of *bli* is as yet lacking.

As we have stated above, both Swedish passive constructions are relatively young diachronically, as indeed most passive constructions seem to be (see Givón 2006: 342). In Haspelmath (1990) only 31 out of 80 languages studied were found to have a passive construction, despite an intuitive feeling that it is usual for a language to have passive constructions. The WALS sample shows that out of 373 languages less than half, i.e. 162, have a passive construction. It should be noted that the sample includes even debatable cases, e.g., passive in Palauan, which is taken as an example of a topic construction rather than a passive one in Haspelmath (*ibid.*) (based on de Wolff (1988)). These results show that there are fewer languages with passive morphology than without. In other words, there is a potential grammaticalization area and passives may be emergent in many languages.

Taking into account relatively low frequency of the passive constructions in the languages of the world, it is even more interesting to see that in most languages the passive is formed by adding a passive affix to a verb and the use of a copula plus an adjectival in passive clauses is rare outside Indo-European (Dryer 1982: 55). In the Gramcat's sample used in Haspelmath (1990) only 6 languages (out of 80) were shown to have a periphrastic passive construction (Danish, a close relative of Swedish, was included in the sample).

In the present paper the term 'construction' is used with respect to the syntagmatic context within which the grammaticalizing item can be found. The term in this meaning is taken from Himmelmann (2004), who argues in favour of considering not just

isolated lexical items but rather whole constructions in grammaticalization studies (ibid., 31).

Two Modern Swedish passives are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Two passives in Modern Swedish

tense	<i>s</i> -passive	<i>bli</i> -passive	English translation
present tense	Bollen kastas (av pojken).	Bollen blir kastad (av pojken).	The ball is (being) thrown (by the boy).
preterite	Bollen kastades .	Bollen blev kastad .	The ball was thrown.
perfect	Bollen har/hade kastats .	Bollen har/hade kastats .	The ball has been thrown.
future/modal	Bollen ska kastas .	Bollen ska bli kastad .	The ball will be thrown.

Both the morphological and the periphrastic passive are available in all tenses, which makes Swedish unique among the Mainland Scandinavian languages (Danish, Norwegian, Swedish). All Mainland Scandinavian languages have developed both passive constructions, however, the distribution of the *s*-passive is more restricted in Danish and Norwegian than it is in Swedish and it is only occasionally used in other tenses than the present (see Engdahl (1999) for an exhaustive overview of the factors conditioning the choice of *bli*-passive vs *s*-passive in Swedish and Laanemets (2012) on the differences between Danish, Norwegian, and Swedish with respect to the distribution, meaning and use of both passives).

The past participle in the *bli*-passive retains its adjectival character and agrees with the subject in number and, in the singular, also in gender, as illustrated in Examples 1-3. In this respect, the past participle in Swedish behaves just like an adjective, as shown in Examples 4-6.

- (1) *Boll-en* *blev kastad*/**kastat*.
ball.C.SG-DEF became thrown.C.SG/thrown.N.SG;
'The ball was thrown.'

- (2) *Tak-et* *blev* *målat/*målad*.
 roof.N.SG-DEF became painted.N.SG/painted.C.SG
 'The roof was painted.'
- (3) *Boll-ar-na* *blev* *kastade/*kastad/*kastat*.
 ball.C-PL-DEF became thrown.PL/thrown.C.SG/thrown.N.SG
 'The balls were thrown.'
- (4) *Boll-en* *var* *grön/*grönt*.
 ball.C.SG-DEF was green.C.SG/green.N.SG
 'The ball was green.'
- (5) *Tak-et* *var* *grönt/*grön*.
 roof.N.SG-DEF was green.N.SG/green.C.SG
 'The roof was green.'
- (6) *De* *var* *grön-a/*grön/*grönt*.
 they were green-PL/green.C.SG/green.N.SG
 'They were green.'

The auxiliary *bli* is a Middle Low German loan in Swedish, from *bliven*, related to Gothic *bileiban* and Dutch *blijven*. It retains its original uses in Modern Swedish, but has also developed new ones. The list of the main contemporary meanings of *bli* is given below. The use in the meaning I, "remain", is today considered dated and is mainly restricted to lexicalised phrases such as *bli hemma* "stay at home", with a higher representation in the southern Swedish dialects (SAOB).

I. remain

"remain" in a certain location

(7) *Bure fick **bliva** hos modern, tills han var tolv år gammal.* Melin 1910, after SAOB)

'Bure got to remain with the mother until he was twelve years old.'

"remain" in a certain manner (Modern Swedish prefers *förbli* in this meaning)

(8) *Hvad sår jag fått jag ensam vet / Och det må **bli** min hemlighet.* (Strandberg 1877, after SAOB)

'What wound I received I alone know / And it may remain my secret.'

(9) *(Den fångne örnen) **blev** sittande stilla på samma plats.* (Lagerlöf 1907, after SAOB)

'(The captured eagle) remained sitting calmly in the same place.'

II. become

"arise" of a situation, state

(10) *Det **blir** nog snart regn.* (after SAOB)

'It arises probably soon rain.' (= It will probably rain soon.)

III. passive auxiliary

(11) *Lokalen **blir** uppvärmd.* (after SAOB)

'The room is heated.'

About the second and third group of uses SAOB says that they have originated in "remain", in constructions, in which "become" could be the alternative meaning, e.g., *blifva (stanna) på platsen död* (= "remain in a certain place dead"), which came to be understood as "become dead". Such uses of *bliva* have likely been borrowed from Middle Low German (where phrases *dot bliven* "dead remain" have been attested).

SAOB further states that the use of *bliva* as a passive auxiliary seems to have become common in the 17th century and that the competition with *s*-passive has largely been a matter of style, with *s*-passive characteristic of written discourse and *bli*-passive more often found in spoken language.

Engdahl (1999) is a study of passive constructions in Modern Swedish, with focus on the competition between the morphological *s*-passive and the periphrastic *bli*-passive. She concludes that although both constructions express the passive voice and have full paradigms, there are nevertheless factors that may favour one over the other. These are not stylistic, but rather have to do with the animacy of the subject of the passive clause (see also Skrzypek 2016). The periphrastic *bli*-passive is favoured when the subject is animate and exerts some control over the situation (however un-passive that may sound). It seems that in many instances the *bli*-passive may be translated as "X let himself be PARTICIPLE). Consider also the following examples:

(12) *Harry blev gärna opererad.*
Harry became willingly operated
'Harry willingly underwent surgery.'

(13) *Harry operera-de-s gärna.*
Harry operated-PAST-PASS willingly
'The surgeons willingly operated on Harry.'

It has also been demonstrated that this use of *bli*-passive in Swedish is quite different from the use of *bli*-passive in the closely related Danish and Norwegian, where it is the default passive construction in the past tense and where it does not prefer animate subjects (Laanemets 2012). This difference in use must have arisen in the individual histories of these languages and is also a subject worthy of a separate study.

The original auxiliary *varda* is found in Modern Swedish mainly in lexicalized constructions; the use has a regional, archaic, or jocular flavour (SAOB *varda*). Interestingly, it is found in colloquial speech in central and northern Sweden, where the preterite form *vart* sometimes supplants *blev* "became", the preterite of *bli* (ibid.).

In Old and Middle Swedish *varda* could be used as the future auxiliary; this use is no longer productive in Swedish. However, it does appear as the passive auxiliary – SAOB cites relatively modern examples, e.g.:

- (14) *Han vart kallad tillbaka, fast han var död.* (Ivar Lo-Johansson 1936, after SAOB)
'He was recalled though he was dead.'

2. Objective, material, and method

The **aim** of the paper is to present the formation of the *bli*-passive in Swedish. The process involves a gradual coalescence of two verbs, *varþa* and *bliva*, in a number of constructions, of which the analytical passive is one. The combination of the verb *varþa* and past participle was most likely a passive construction in 1300, though it has also been suggested that it could have been an aspectual one, possibly with future reference (Propst 2001; Toyota 2009). Furthermore, in its passive uses the *varþa* + *participle* construction is in competition with the already well-formed morphological *s*-passive. We will not focus on the unclear nature of the original *varþa*, which in itself is a topic well-worthy of further investigation in the Swedish material available, nor on the competition between *varþa* + *participle* and the morphological *s*-passive, but rather concentrate on the gradual replacement of *varþa* by *bliva*. The paper looks to discuss the following issues:

1. *remain*-verbs seldom grammaticalize into passive auxiliaries, so what are the prerequisites for the process to be initiated?
2. In what constructions is the grammaticalization process most likely to start and how does it proceed?

We will argue that the impulse for grammaticalization is the coalescence with the become-verb, i.e. *varþa*, resulting in a polysemous meaning of the original *bliva*. We will further show that the original contexts for grammaticalization involve a combination of locative adverbials and participles and the first passive uses of *bliva* are connected with adversative verbs and negated participles (Section 5). The study is based on a corpus of Old and Middle Swedish (1330–1680) texts, including the prosaic genres typical for this period, i.e. legal, religious, and profane prose (Section 4).

The **material** used in the present study includes 11 Swedish texts, spanning 350 years, from 1330 to 1680. The texts were grouped into three periods: Period I (1330–1450), Period II (1450–1530), and Period III (1530–1680). The history of the Swedish language is usually subdivided into two major periods: Old Swedish 1225–1526 (*fornsvenska*) and Modern Swedish 1526–1900 (*nysvenska*), with additional dividing lines set at 1375 and 1732, however, in diachronic studies it has become customary to subdivide the Old Swedish period into three: 1225–1350, 1350–1450, 1450–1526 (see e.g., Delsing 2014; Skrzypek 2018). In our study we begin with the first attestations of *bli* ca. 1330 and end with texts where the use of the verb is similar to the modern grammar, dated at 1680. We have decided to use the 1450 as a division, since the time 1350–1450 has been shown to be the time of considerable change in the grammar of the Swedish language (e.g., Delsing 2014; Skrzypek 2012). *Historia Trojana* (= Troj) is traditionally considered an Old Swedish text, despite having been written down three years after 1526 and we include it in our Period II.

Three texts, *Karl Magnus saga* (= KM), *Peder Månssons Läkebok 9* (= PM), and *Stratonice* by Urban Hiärne (= Hiarn) have been excerpted in their entirety, from other texts passages of corresponding length, ca. 10,500 words, were chosen. The material is ca. 126,000 words long and represents prosaic genres: religious and profane prose, and historical chronicles. The full list of sources with bibliographic information can be found in the References. By each authentic Swedish example the abbreviation of the source text name is given in parathesis, together with the proposed date of the text's

origin. Translations of the examples into English are my own, as are all the tables presented in the paper.

The texts are available in a digitalised form, allowing an easy excerption. The **tool** used in the present study was KWIC (downloadable from http://dep.chs.nihon-u.ac.jp/english_lang/tukamoto/kwic_e.html). Firstly, a simple search for all instances of *bli* and *varpa* was conducted (Table 2). The results were then sorted manually according to the construction, in which each verb was found (Table 3).

The **method** is couched in the grammaticalization theory. The view of language change of the type studied here is mainly as a shift from a lexical to a grammatical use, or from less to more grammatical use (for a useful and comprehensive overview see The Oxford handbook... 2011). The case of the verb *bli* is an instance of the former type of change, with a lexical item becoming a grammatical one, i.e. a lexical verb turning into a passive auxiliary.

Passive morphology originates in lexical items that are grammaticalized into passive markers alongside more or less universal paths of grammaticalization. Haspelmath (1990) identifies four sources of passive markers: inactive auxiliaries, NP-reflexives, causatives, and generalized-subject constructions (ibid., 38). The Swedish passives represent the first two groups: the *bli*-passive has evolved out of the lexical verb *bliva* "remain" combined with a past participle, while the *s*-passive was originally a reflexive. To study passive morphology diachronically one needs to show how other uses of passive markers differ from the passive ones. The Swedish *s*-passive derives from a reflexive pronoun and has most likely developed through an anticausative (medio-passive) use (see e.g., Óttosson 1992 on closely related Icelandic). The periphrastic *bli*-passive may have gone through a resultative construction stage (Haspelmath 1990: 54). However, the problem with a periphrastic passive is that at the early stages of development it could have been a tense-aspectual rather than a passive construction (see Toyota 2009). At the time of the grammaticalization of the verbs *varpa* and *bliva* into passive auxiliaries, other auxiliaries underwent grammaticalization processes,

notably *vara* "be" and *hava* "have", which have resulted in perfective constructions (have + PARTICIPLE) or resultative ones (be + PARTICIPLE). In the present paper we leave these matters aside.

The **novelty** of the present study comes from the textual data that has as yet been unstudied despite the case of *bli* being quoted in literature (e.g., Weiss 1982; Wiemer 2004) and in the methodological issue of analyzing a grammaticalization process that involves substitution of one element for the other, which at the same grammaticalizations from a lexical verb to an auxiliary one. There is a clear interdependence between the two processes but what we hope to demonstrate in the present paper is which of the processes could have been the instigator of change.

Grammaticalization of passive auxiliaries has been the subject of a number of studies, in particular Gildea (2015), Schwarze (2003), Telve (2016), Toyota (2009), Weiss (1982), and Wiemer (2004 and 2011). The chain of grammaticalization proposed involves expansion of collocatability with predicative nominals to participles, which gradually lose their adjectival semantics (Wiemer 2011: 542). The final stage of the grammaticalization is the loss of erstwhile restrictions to participles of telic verbs and possibility to use the auxiliary with virtually any past participle.

In the present paper we will seek confirmation of the proposed model, however, bearing in mind that the grammaticalizing item, i.e. the verb *bli*, does not develop in the void. As we have mentioned above, by the time *bli* enters the Swedish lexicon and its grammaticalization is initiated, there already is a periphrastic passive or passive-like construction with the auxiliary *varþa*. To model this change we will need to consider both verbs and similarities between them.

3. General results

Table 2 presents general results of the study sorted into three periods; all instances of the verbs *bli* and *varþa* were excerpted.

Table 2. The Swedish sources: General results

Period	Texts	Total number of words	<i>bli</i> number of instances	<i>varþa</i> number of instances	sum	%
Period I (1330–1450)	Bur, KM, Jart, HML, SVM	64875	58	141	199	0.31
Period II (1450–1550)	SK, PM, Troj	28918	87	29	116	0.40
Period III (1550–1680)	Petri, Brahe, Hiarn, Speg	43415	232	87	319	0.73
Sum		137208	377	257	634	0.46

Since the verb *bli* substitutes and finally ousts the verb *varþa* as passive auxiliary, both verbs were excerpted. Taken together, the mean frequency of both is 0.46%, i.e. 4.6 per 1,000 words. Some texts, in particular from Period I, show values below the mean, while others, notably Petri and Brahe (from the beginning of Period III), show values almost thrice as high. We can further see that *bli* is attested in all texts, although with very low frequencies in the oldest two, Bur and KM. The frequencies show low values at the beginning, then a rise and a slight decline, the decline is followed by stabilization. We can further see how the low values for *bli* are compensated by high values for *varþa* and the other way round. *Varþa* is attested in each of the texts in the sample, apart from Hiarn.

All instances of *bli* were further grouped into four major groups:

- *bli* + locative adverbial (Example 15);
- *bli* + adverbial of manner or adjective (Examples 16 and 17);
- *bli* + predicative denoting function (Example 18);
- *bli* + participle (Example 19).

(15) *Far þy niþir ii diupt hæluite ok **bliff þær** tel doma dagh.* (Bur 20, ca. 1330)
'Descend into the deep hell and **remain there** until the day of judgement.'

- (16) *Hedhne men äru swa marghe dödhe at aff hundradha hundradhom **bleeff** ängin lifwandis. (KM 273)*
 'So many heathens were dead that of hundreds of hundreds none **remained** alive.'
- (17) *[...] thaa **bliffwer** thz järnith blöth som bly. (PM 417)*
 '[...] then the iron **becomes** soft as lead.'
- (18) *Thå Valander dödher war **bleeff** hans son Visbur konung. (Petri 21)*
 'When Valander died his son Visbur **became** king.'
- (19) *Oc han skulle silffwer sedan **bliffwa** aff satther oc mystha riked. (Troj 2)*
 'And he should **be** deposed himself and lose the kingdom.'

The results for each construction are given in Table 3 below. Since the values are low, we present numbers of instances in each grammatical structure rather than percentages. All uses of the verb *bli* that fall outside the typology proposed above were collected under the heading Other (they included mainly the use "arise" as in II in Modern Swedish, e.g., *Det blir nog regn* "There will probably be rain").

Table 3. Distribution of *bli* across functions in Old Swedish

Period	<i>bli</i> + locative adverbial	<i>bli</i> + adjective/manner adverbial	<i>bli</i> + predicative denoting function	<i>bli</i> + participle	other
Period I (1330-1450)	35	18	0	4	0
Period II (1450-1550)	28	40	5	14	4
Period III (1550-1680)	10	47	21	152	16
Sum	73	105	26	170	20

We saw in Table 2 that the frequency of *bli* gradually rises from ca. 11.6 in period I to 63.67 in period III. In Table 3 we can further see that there are large discrepancies between the texts in each period, too. We can see that while there are few examples of *bli* in other uses than with locative adverbials and manner adverbials in Period I, while from Period II onwards the percentage of uses of *bli* with participle steadily rises and the locative use declines.

The data obtained from the text sample show that the original meaning of the verb *bli* was "to remain", and in this meaning the verb appears in all the texts chosen for the study. It is the only meaning, in which the verb is used in the oldest text in the sample, *Codex Bureanus* from ca. 1330.

4. Detailed results and discussion

In this chapter we present a detailed account of the uses of *bli* in the text sample. They are subdivided into the four major categories presented above and discussed separately, with relevant examples.

4.1 *bli* + locative adverbial

The use of *bli* with locative adverbials is the main use of the verb in period I (1330–1450). It is the only use found in the oldest text in the sample (Bur, ca. 1330) and it is the most frequent one in other texts in this period.

(20) *Han bidhir thic mykit at han maghe än bliua i sällanom twa dagha älla thre.*
(HML 217, ca. 1385)

'He asks your permission to **remain in the cell** for two or three days.'

In period II (1450-1530) other uses of *bli* gain in frequency, however in the oldest text in the period, *Sjärens kloster* (= SK), still almost half of the examples of *bli* (6 out of 13) include locative adverbials, and *bli* is used clearly denoting "remain", as illustrated below (21):

(21) *Oc thu closter iomffru, war oc **bliff** idkelika i thinom cella.* (SK 59)

'And you, nun, be and **remain** in your cell.'

A possible bridging context (in the sense of Heine 2002) is given in Example (22), where the locative is followed by a participle *innelykktet* (of the transitive *innelykta* "confine, lock up").

(22) *För thy enghen **bliffwer** i cellan jnnelykktet jn til dödhen, wtan han är wt waldher.* (SK 60)

'For this reason nobody **remains** locked in the cell unless he is chosen.'

Of the texts chosen from this period, *Peder Månssons läkekonst* (= PM) has the highest frequency of the verb *bliva*, with only three instances of *varpa* (the shortest text in the sample, it was excerpted in its entirety). There are 17 examples of *bli* with a locative adverbial, however, as many as 15 of them include the particle *ater* (Modern Swedish *åter* "again, back"), in Modern Swedish found in *återstå* "remain" or exchanged for *kvar* "left, remaining" in the expression *bli kvar*. It seems that the use of *bli* as "remain" is no longer the only one possible and when reading "remain" is intended, the author clarifies this by adding the particle. This is illustrated by examples below.

(23) *Sidan blanda thz samma distillerada wathnith mz the som **atherbleff** j glaseno.*
(PM 414)

'Then mix the same distilled water with what **remained** in the glass.'

(24) *[...] oc thz som **bliffwer ather** pa bothnenom kallas quinta essentia sulfuris.* (PM 429)

'[...] and what **remains** on the bottom is called the quintessence of sulphur.'

Similarly, in Troj we find examples where *bli* is accompanied by the particle *kvar*.

- (25) *Saa mage j som hr bliffwen qwarre wiid stranden skicke edert folk j tree.* (Troj 27)
'So may you who **remained** here on the beach send your men in three armies.'

Although *bli* is used with locative adverbials in each of the texts from period III (1530–1680), the examples (26-27), the use is less and less frequent until becoming marginal and the locative adverbials more metaphoric than concrete, as can be seen in the example (28) below.

- (26) *[...] men Måns Nielsson dristade icke bliffua hema wid sin gård.* (Brahe 4)
'[...] but Måns Nielsson did not want to **remain** home in his farm.'

- (27) *Och alltså bleef Celadon uthi Epheso.* (Hiarn 6)
'And thus Celadon **stayed** outside Ephesus.'

- (28) *Doch läät han Scåne bliffua vnder Swerige, och satte ther öffuer en sin skyldman aff Norige.* (Petri 25)
'Yet he let Scania to **remain** as part of Sweden and placed one of his relatives from Norway (to rule) there.'

Bli is used with the particle *kvar* in Hiarn and there is only one locative use in Speg, the youngest text in the sample. In Modern Swedish this use has become as good as obsolete, or is at least strongly marked as archaic (see SAOB). This is the only use of *bli*, in which the intended meaning must have been "to remain", the source meaning. It is also the one at odds with the target meaning "to become" and this may have been the reason why it was as good as lost in Modern Swedish.

4.2 *bli* + predicative

In period I (1330–1450) *bli* with the locative adverbial is the most frequent use of the verb. Of other uses of *bli*, the majority can still be understood as "remain" due to the context, some examples are given below.

(29) *Hedhne men äru swa marghe dödhe at aff hundradha hundradhom bleeff ängin lifwandis.* (KM 273)

'So many heathens died that of hundreds of hundreds none **remained** alive.'

(30) *Än han bläf stapughir. hällir viliande dö än lyba diäflomen.* (HML 187)

'But he **remained** faithful, wanting rather to die than to obey the devils.'

(31) *Jomfrun lydde hanom. oc bliw langan tima saman i renlifue.* (HML 199)

'The virgin obeyed him and they **stayed** together in celibacy for a long time.'

The most common adjectives used with *bli* are *stadughir* "faithful" (see Example 30 above) and *dödher* "dead". The latter use seems to be modelled on the Middle Low German one (see Example 3 above).

(32) *Thy war thz ey vnder thz then vsle mannen bleff dödher fore sina gire som han haffdhe badhe til silff oc gull.* (SVM 142)

'It was therefore no wonder that the bad man **remained** dead as a punishment for his greed of gold and silver.'

(33) *Ok ginstan han kom vt a kyrkio gardhen mz mere folkino tha wardh han gripin aff diäflinom ok bleff dödhir.* (Jart 28)

'And immediately he left the churchyard, followed by more people, *he was than taken* by the devils and **remained** dead.'

There is nothing in the wider context that should favour the reading "become dead" rather than "remain dead", but nor is there anything to make such a reading impossible. In fact, the combination of the verb *varþa* and adjective "dead" or a corresponding adversative participle (e.g., *killed*, *hurt*, *betrayed*) is frequently attested in Runic inscriptions from ca. 800 onwards (Examples (34-35) below) and in the oldest Swedish text written in Latin alphabet, *Äldre Västgötalagen* (= VgL, ca. 1225, Example 36).

(34) *Þiupreipr reispi stein þisa eftiR biurn buta sin aR **uarþ** hauin.* (ca. 900)
'Tjudred raised this stone to the memory of her husband who **was** killed.'

(35) *Han **uarþ** taupr a suqþiaupu.* (ca. 950)
'He **was** dead in Svealand.'

(36) ***Uarþær** lekæri barþær þæt skal e vgilt uaræ.* (ca. 1225)
Becomes fool hit/hurt it shall unpaid be.
'Hurting a fool is not punishable.'

In the Runic Swedish material the verb *varþa* appears most often with participles formed from adversative verbs (see also Propst 2001: 229), although this may merely be an effect of the genre – the majority of the inscriptions are carved in the memory of a dead person, and many state where or how he or she died, thus the most frequent adjective with *varþa* is *död* "dead" and the most frequent participle is *drepinn* "killed". Other verbs attested include the adversative *svika* "disappoint, betray".

(37) *Han **uarþ** suikuin.* (ca. 1100)
'He **was** betrayed.'

The use of *bli* with the adjective "dead" is therefore a potential bridging context (in the sense of Heine 2002) between the pure "remain" reading of *bli* and its polysemous character where it acquires the meaning "become".

In period II (1450–1530) the first uses of *bli* denoting "become" may be found. Admittedly, some contrast between *bli* and *varþa* must have still existed, but both can appear in the same clause, as illustrated by the example below (38):

(38) *Renlikheten är the dygdh, hwilken ensam i tässo dödheliko liffwe bewisar oc ther odödhelika äronna stadgha, hon är the wällustande balsama smöriilse, mz*

hwilkom wara kroppa smordhe, orötelika wardha oc bliffwa. (SK1 73, ca. 1500)

'Purity is this virtue which alone can constitute immortal glory in this mortal life; she is the fragrant balsamic ointment which when oiled onto our bodies makes them **become** and **remain** unputrescent.'

Even though the natural reading of *bli* in the example above (38) is "to remain", it should be noted that such reading must extend to *varþa*. This would imply that the two verbs were indeed in the process of coalescence. In the examples below (39 and 40) we see *bli* used as *varþa* would have been, meaning "to become".

(39) [...] *gambla bliffwa wnge.* (Troj 10, ca. 1529)

'[...] the old **become** young.'

(40) *Jtem slækker tw järn manga resor j hwith win, oc sidan slækker ther j smälth bly, tha bliffwer blydh harth.* (PM 417)

'Thus quench iron many times in white wine and then quench molted lead in the same wine and the lead will **become** hard.'

In these examples, there is a contrast between the state before and after some action was taken and executed: old vs young, molten vs hard.

The reading "to become" is also clear in examples with predicatives denoting functions, as in (41).

(41) [...] *til ath bliffwa hans drotning.* (Troj 34)

'[...] in order to **become** his queen.'

We have seen in discussion on *bli* with locative adverbials how the author of PM has reinforced the verb with particle *ater* (see Examples 23-24), which may imply that for

him the reading "remain" was not the dominant one of *bli*. A number of examples with predicatives found in the text suggest the reading "to become" rather than "to remain".

(42) [...] *oc snarlika bliffwer som eth smör.* (PM 416)

'[...] and soon **becomes** (smooth) as butter.'

(43) [...] *oc säth j starkan solennas hitha oc aff järneno bliffwer saffran.* (PM 429)

'[...] and place the iron in the heat of the Sun and the iron will **become** (=turn into) saffron.'

We can also find uses of *bli* denoting "come to pass, happen" (compare meaning II in Modern Swedish). Such uses are not passive, but they are impersonal.

(44) *Tha bleff stort slag oppa nyth [...] tha störtte manga troyaner.* (Troj 28)

'A great battle became (=took place) again [...] many Trojans fell then.'

In period III (1550–1680) the majority of uses with predicative are with those denoting functions. It seems that, for some authors at least, *bli* and *varpa* are fully interchangeable in this construction, as illustrated by the following examples.

(45) *Thå Attil dödher war, bleff Digner konung, och epter hans död wardt Dagher konung i Swerige.* (Petri 23)

'When Attil died, Digner **became** king and after his death, Dagher **became** king in Sweden.'

For examples with adjectival predicatives the reading "to become" seems the most natural.

(46) *Bleffve belätet intet lijkt, så vore hans anseende, som han medh så stoor möda förskaffad sigh, om intet.* (Hiarn 20)

'If the likeness **became** (=was) not like enough, his reputation would suffer, the reputation he took great pains to build.'

4.3 *bli* + participle

At the earliest stages of grammaticalization the frequencies of *bli* are low and (with the exception of HML) are also much lower than the frequencies of *varþa* (see Table 2). The meaning "to remain" is clearly prevalent. It is seen not only in the original uses with locative adverbials, but also in the early uses of the verb with participles, as in the examples below (47-49). Observe that in the oldest text in the sample, in which *bli* with participles has been found, the participles are all negated (with a prefix *o-*, denoting negation).

(47) *Ok thäs vphängda manzsens likame **bleff** orutin ok vtan onda lokt thre wiku.*
(Jart 22, ca. 1385)

'And the body of the hanged man **remained** unrotten and free of foul smell for three weeks.'

(48) *Oc swa hände at thän som korsit bar **bleff** oskaddir, ok han som thz andwardhadhe fran sik **wardh** skutin ok bleff döðhir.* (Jart 49)

'And it so happened that he who carried the cross **remained** unhurt and he who refused to carry it **was** shot and dead.'

(49) *Tha **wardher** iak fräls aff döðh [oc i **bliffwin**] ofordärffwadhe.* (SVM 114)

'And then I **was** saved from death and you **remain** unspoilt.'

Note how in the examples above (48 and 49) the text fluctuates between the two auxiliaries *bli* and *varþa*: *bli* is used with a participle denoting no change of state (the negative prefix *o*: *oskaddir* "unhurt" and *ofordärffawadh-e* "unspoilt-PL", both verbs are intransitive), while *varþa* is used with a participle formed from a perfective verb denoting change of state (*skutin* "shot" and *fräls* "saved"). Had the meaning of both

been the same we would expect only one to be used and only once, with ellipsis of the second instance (Menzel 2016).

A further argument in favour of reading all instances of *bli* as "to remain" is the fact that there were no uses with a predicate denoting function (of the type "become king") found in the texts chosen from that period.

Things change in Period II (1450–1530) when we find first examples of *bli* with past participles denoting change of state. There are none in the oldest text from this period, SK, in which only one example with participle has been found, similar to Period I example, i.e. with a negative prefix.

(50) *Swa räknar han all war fiäth, at ey aldra mindsta tankana, ey minzsta oc lösasta ordhet, huilken wi för enkte hallom, skulu **bliffwa** oransakat i hans stranga dome.* (SK 30)

'He counts each step we take so that not the smallest thoughts nor the smallest words which to us mean nothing should **remain** un-examined in his severe doom.'

However, the remaining texts all show examples of participles from transitive verbs, and used as in Modern Swedish.

(51) *[...] oc han skulle silffwer sedan **bliffwa** aff satther oc mystha riked.* (Troj 2)
'[...] and he himself would later **become** deposited and lose the kingdom.'

(52) *[...] oc oppa thz at wij matthom seger wannara wara offwer wara fiender at wij nw strax for dagen kommer oc foren wij **bliffwom** bespeyada.* (Troj 26)
'[...] and so that we may be the winners over our enemies we come before daylight, before we **are** spied upon.'

We also find first examples of agentive phrases, the appearance of which is a clear mark of the passive nature of the construction.

(53) *Hercules **bleff** fängneliga anamad aff konung thelamon.* (Troj 24)

'Hercules **was** received by king Thelamon with joy.'

The growing frequency of the agentive phrases is a hallmark of the grammaticalization of the verb *bli* into passive auxiliary (see also Haspelmath 1990: 56). In Modern Swedish the default agentive phrase is *av X* "by X"; in the texts studied the agentive phrases could also be constructed with the preposition *igenom* "through, by". In the six older texts in the sample (Bur, HML, Jart, KM, SK, SVM) no agentive phrases were found with the verb *bli*. In the younger texts, the frequency of the agentive phrases rises steadily, which is illustrated in Table 4 below.

Table 4. Frequency of agentive phrases with *bli* in Swedish

Text	Number of agentive phrases	% of <i>bli</i> with agentive phrases
Troj	2	8.00%
Petri	2	3.80%
Brahe	7	6.10%
Hiarn	2	6.70%
Speg	7	20.00%

In Period III, the use of *bli* with participles is the most frequent one (152 instances vs. 14 in Period II and only 4 in Period I).

(54) *Men gör han thet som ondt är, så **bliffuer** han straffat så wel medt eth ont ryckte som altt annat, som Gudh honom på lägger.* (Petri 17)

'But if he does what is wrong, he **will be** punished with bad reputation as well as everything else that God will lay upon him.'

Before we conclude this section, we will briefly show how the original passive auxiliary, *varþa*, is represented in the texts studied.

4.4 The verb *varþa* in the corpus

In Periods I-III *varþa* is used with predicatives, both adjectives (Examples 55-56) and predicates denoting functions (57-59), and with participles (60-61). There are no uses corresponding to the locative *bli*, since *varþa* denoted only "become" and not "remain".

(55) *Gup giuar iþar goþa dotor hæna namþn skal vara maria hon skal hælag **warþa** i moþor liue ok siþan.* (Bur 4, ca. 1330)

'God gives you a good daughter. Her name shall be Mary. She will **be** holy in her mother's womb and later.'

(56) *Ok tha **wardher** kesarin swa rædder at han far oppa thz höxsta tornith som i borghinne är.* (KM 257, ca 1380)

'And the emperor **became** so scared that he leapt on the highest tower in the castle.'

(57) *Habraam husfru fic sit första barn gamul kærlingh þa han hafþe liuat. xc ar ok **warþ** ysaac patriarca.* (Bur 4, ca. 1330)

'Abraham's wife had her first child as an old woman when he had lived forty years and Isaac **became** a patriarch.'

(58) *[...] oc fiol a siin knä for honum oc thakkadhe honum at watnith war bort gangith oc **wardh** hans man.* (KM 263)

'[...] and he fell on his knee before him, thanked him for removing the water and **became** his man.'

(59) *Hwat ey for mat þw nw **varþa** renliuis man. siþan þw äst mättir aff alle orenlikhet.* (HML 186)

'You may not **become** a virtuous man as long as you are full of sin.'

(60) *Santillus **varþ** gripin ii hans staþ ok dōmdar vndi suærþ.* (Bur 57)

'Santillus **was** seized in his town and convicted under sword.'

(61) *Aldre skal min frānde **wardha** lastadher fore mina skuld.* (KM 268)

'Never shall my relative **be** burdened by me.'

There is no change in the scope of use of *varþa* in the studied material, rather the frequency of the verb is gradually lower with each period in favour of the higher frequency of *bli* (see Table 2).

In his study of the origins of *bli*-passive in North Germanic, Propst (2001) states that the original construction with the verb *varþa* was used as a mutative passive (denoting a transition from one state to another, see also de Knop 2016), and also that participles of adversative verbs (denoting actions with unpleasant or undesirable results) were more frequent. In his study he gives examples from the Old Norse translation from French (Strengleikar, ca. 1250) and translation from French to Old Swedish (Ivan Lejonriddaren, ca. 1300). The Swedish text does not exhibit the same restrictions as the Old Norse one, which the author explains with the discrepancy in their ages (the Swedish text is at least fifty years younger). Nor should we disregard the fact that the two texts represent what by that time have become two separate languages. Nevertheless, the origins of the *varþa*-passive may well lie in an adversative serial-verb construction.

In the process of grammaticalization, an adversative serial verb such as "suffer" first becomes the grammaticalized marker of an adversative passive, as in Mandarin Chinese, Japanese, Thai, or Vietnamese. Such a construction may eventually expand its functional scope to become a generalized passive, as in Mandarin (Givón 2006: 339).

This affinity between adversative verbs and passivization, at least at the early stages of grammaticalization, is indeed captured by the name of the category itself (Latin *passivum* is derived from *pati* "suffer", see also Haspelmath 1990).

4.5 Animacy of the subject with participles

It has been noted that animacy of the subject of a passive clause is an important factor in the choice of a passive construction in Modern Swedish (Engdahl 1999). We have therefore completed our excerpt with a study of the animacy of the subjects in the material. We have only considered uses of *bli* with participles, therefore texts where such uses were not found are not included in the results. The results are presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Animacy of the subject with *bli*-passive in Old and Middle Swedish

Period	Subject inanimate	Subject animate
Period I (1330–1450)	3	2
Period II (1450–1550)	2	2
Period III (1550–1680)	50	91

The results show that apart from two texts, Jart and PM, the animate (and human) subjects constitute the majority of subjects in clauses with *bli* and participle. The results for Jart, PM, SK, and SVM, the four oldest texts reported here, are not very informative due to the low number of examples in each. The results for Brahe, Hiarn, Petri, and Speg, Period III texts, are more reliable, and all show that the animate subjects make up at least 60% of all subjects. However, inanimate subjects with *bli*-passive can also be found, as in the examples below (62 and 63):

(62) ***Blef refererat**, at Kungen i Danmark sampt medh Printz Jörgen och Hertigen af Plön wore reeste åt Köpenhamn.* (Speg 36)

'It **was reported** that the king in Denmark travelled to Copenhagen together with Prince Jörgen and the earl of Plön.'

(63) [...] och bräditt **bleff** wpsatt på ehn ganska höij stacke. (Brahe 6)

'[...] and the plank **was placed** on a quite high stack.'

5. Concluding remarks

At the beginning of our paper we have posed two questions concerning the history of the *bli*-passive in Swedish:

1. Given that *remain*-verbs seldom grammaticalize into passive auxiliaries, what are the prerequisites for the process to be initiated?
2. In what constructions is the grammaticalization process most likely to start and how does it proceed?

The material gathered for our study has allowed us to follow the development of the lexical *bliva* "remain" into passive auxiliary *bli* in Old and Middle Swedish. The data show that the prerequisite for the grammaticalization to be initiated is a polysemous nature of the verb, which no longer only denotes "remain" but "become" as well. As long as the verb could only be used in the meaning "remain", it did not occur with predicatives denoting functions (e.g., *king*), a use, which constitutes a bridge between the lexical and the grammatical use of the verb, gradually allowing it to appear with past participles denoting change of state. It can be claimed that the polysemy arises in period II (1450–1550), which is illustrated by the fact that the uses of the verb *bliva* in the meaning "remain" are often strengthened with locative particles such as *ater* or *kvar*, as if the original meaning was no longer unequivocal. In this period *bliva* appears in two new constructions, in which only *varþa* was found in earlier texts, namely with predicatives denoting functions and in impersonal constructions "there happened/took place" (see Chapter 3, Example 10 and Chapter 5, Example 44). These uses seem to predate the constructions, in which *bliva* ousts *varþa* as passive auxiliary and appears with past participles.

An influence from Middle Low German cannot be excluded, although no studies show unequivocally that the verb *bliven* had any auxiliary potential in Middle Low German,

before it was borrowed in Swedish. Also, the results of the present study suggest that the early occurrences of the verb in Swedish were limited to the purely lexical uses in the meaning "to remain", and the polysemy with "to become", which led to the grammaticalization, arose first in Swedish and was not part of the meaning of the verb in Middle Low German.

As is the case with most linguistic change, we cannot be certain as to what caused this development. One potential bridging context is the frequently employed phrase *bliva dödher* "remain dead", which, though in itself most likely not denoting any change of state, could have been confused with equally frequent and well-attested phrase *varpa dödher* "become dead". This particular phrase is named in SAOB. However, it is equally likely that the bridging context was constituted by constructions, in which more than one adverbial appears, i.e. a locative and a manner adverbial, as in "in the cell confined" (Example 22). Furthermore, the early examples with participles with negative prefixes (Examples 47-50) may have also constituted a bridging or even a switch context for grammaticalization of the passive auxiliary – the subject of the clause is an object of some action, even though it remains unchanged by this action. Nevertheless, the subject can be construed as a patient. This is not to say that the development from this point is inevitable, since such structures are perfectly acceptable in English, without, apparently, giving rise to passive readings.

List of abbreviations

Brahe – Per Brahe

Bur – Codex Bureanus

C – common gender

DEF – definite

Hiarn – Urban Hiärne: Stratonice

HML – Helga manna lefverne

Jart – Järteckensboken

KM – Karl Magnus

KWIC – key word in context
N – neuter gender
NP – noun phrase
PASS – passive
Petri – Olavus Petri
PL – plural
PM – Peder Månssons Läkebok 9
SAOB – Svenska akademiens ordbok
SG – singular
SK – Själens kloster
Speg – Haqvin Spegel
SVM – Sju vise mästare
Troj – Historia Trojana
WALS – World atlas of language structures

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Resumé

Modern Swedish is a language with two passives: morphological *s*-passive and periphrastic *bli*-passive, formed with the auxiliary *bli* and a past participle. The auxiliary is a Middle Low German loanword in Swedish with the first attestation ca. 1300, originally meaning "remain". At the time when the verb was borrowed, there already was a periphrastic passive constructed with the auxiliary *varþa* "become". The aim of the paper is to study the substitution of *bli* for *varþa* as passive auxiliary and to identify the bridging contexts, which facilitated this substitution. In particular, the paper seeks to answer the question of how the process is initiated. The sources include 11 Swedish texts (ca. 126.000 words), spanning 350 years, from 1330 to 1680, representing religious and profane prose and historical chronicles. The data show that the prerequisite for grammaticalization to be initiated is a polysemous nature of *bli*, which no longer only denotes "remain" but "become" as well. It is claimed here that polysemy arises around 1450–1550, which is illustrated by the fact that the "remain"-uses of the verb *bliva* are often strengthened with locative particles, suggesting the original meaning was no longer transparent and that the verb could be used with predicatives denoting function, e.g., *king*. Having acquired the additional meaning of "to become", *bli* comes to be used with participles, to begin with only negated ones, denoting no change of state, while *varþa* continues to be used with participles formed from verbs denoting change of state. The negated participles constitute a bridging

context, since once the negation was separated from the participle, the verb *bli* could be understood as a passive auxiliary. By 1680 *bli* appears in all contexts previously reserved for *varþa*, the frequency of which declines resulting in its loss in Modern Swedish.

Key words: passive voice, auxiliary, grammaticalization, Swedish, analytical passive, diachrony.

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VERBAL AND NON-VERBAL FACETS OF METAEPHRASTIC WRITING: A COGNITIVE STUDY OF JOHN BERGER'S ESSAYS ON VISUAL ART¹

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Abstract: Addressing the cognitive poetic status of ekphrasis, this paper suggests the notion of *metaekphrasis* to account for verbal and non-verbal essayistic contexts that surmount ekphrasis as a literary representation of a work of art. For this purpose, the paper examines John Berger's essays for eliciting his vision of writing about art in order to reveal the rationale for his metaekphrastic passages through interpreting verbal and non-verbal (visual) instantiations of this underlying script.

Key words: ekphrasis, metaekphrasis, verbal, visual, cognitive poetics, essay, visual art.

1. Introduction

This paper approaches metaekphrasis as an instance of intermediality, traced in John Berger's essays on art (2015) and viewed from a cognitive poetic standpoint. Since ekphrasis is understood either as some correspondence between verbal and non-verbal (paintings, sculpture, music, dance) artefacts (Schaefer & Rentsch 2004: 132) or as "a central concept in studies that deal with the relation between word and image, and

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between literature and art" (Koopman 2014: 3), in recent studies it has been respectively interpreted in a double way: as a form of intermediality (Koopman 2014: 3; Schaefer & Rentsch 2004: 132) or as a functional component of intermediality (Юхимук 2015: 156). In our study we bring together our experience of analysis of Berger's ekphrasis (Луньова 2018; Lunyova 2020a; 2020b; Lunyova in print) and research into intermediality (Vorobyova 2017b; 2020; Vorobyova in print) to approach both essayistic ekphrasis and metaekphrasis as forms of intermediality and regard them as semantic phenomena that arise through the interaction of the verbal and the visual in the personalised discussion of art. As such the paper aligns with the three topical domains of current research: i) studies into the interconnection between the verbal and the visual – an area that has currently been of great interest to scholars in a range of related disciplines such as linguistics (Anthonissen 2003; Pagano et al. 2018; Panasenko 2020), rhetoric (Gross 2009), and neuroscience (Amit et al. 2017; Amit et al. 2019), ii) the burgeoning domain of intermediality studies (Brosh 2015; Bruhn 2016; Chrzanowska-Kluczevska 2017; Vorobyova 2017b; 2020; Vorobyova in print; Wolf 2011), as well as iii) research dealing with reflexivity, awareness, and self-consciousness in language use (Gnezdilova 2017; 2018; Tykhomyrova 2018).

Berger's essays contain numerous cases of ekphrasis, viewed as descriptive (mimetic) representations of paintings, drawings, sculptures, and photographs, as, a verbal ekphrasis from the essay about Piero della Francesca¹, e.g.:

(1) "*Look, for instance, at **the overall composition of his work**. Its centre [...] is Christ's hand, holding his robe as he rises up*" (Berger 2015, p. 14).

However, Berger's writings are not limited to ekphrastic representations of artworks. Rather, Berger expounds on the topics related to works of art represented ekphrastically. Thus, the same essay contains the author's ponderings over the difficulties of being an artist. Such and similar contexts which derive from ekphrasis and reach beyond an artwork representation, are designated here by the term 'metaekphrasis' which we take from several sources discussed further in this paper

(Armas 2005: 22; Webb 2009/ 2016: 185-186), e.g.:

(2) "... *I was thinking about the scientist's social predicament. And it struck me then how different **the artist's predicament** is*" (Berger 2015, p. 12).

While there were successful attempts to study ekphrasis via cognitive poetic methodology (Андреева & Белобородько 2016; Изотова 2018: 285-290; Panagiotidou 2017; Verdonk 2005; Vorobyova 2017b), metaekphrasis, to our knowledge, has not yet been described in cognitive poetics terms. It has only been tackled in a cursory way in literary-historic studies (Armas 2005: 22; Webb 2009/ 2016: 185-186).

2. Ekphrasis: The range of phenomena and the scope of the term

The term *ekphrasis* is of Greek origin (History and etymology for ekphrasis, *s.a.*), where *ékphrasis* means "description", being derived from *ekphrad-*, stem of *ekphrázein* "to tell over, recount, describe" (from *ek-* + *phrázein* "to point out, show, tell, explain" of uncertain origin) + *-sis* (*ibid.*).

The earliest ekphrasis as a specific phenomenon is traced back to Homer's "Iliad" (Heffernan 1991: 298; Koopman 2014: 2). The most frequently referred to ekphrastic passage is found in Book 18 of the "Iliad" and deals with Hephaestus forging a new elaborately decorated shield for Achilles (Koopman 2014: 2).

As a term, *ekphrasis* appeared in late-antique rhetorical handbooks, known collectively as "*Progymnasmata*" (Chinn 2007: 267; Koopman 2014: 3; Webb 2009/ 2016: 17). In the ancient world the meaning of this term was broader in comparison with its modern interpretation (Chinn 2007: 256; Koopman 2014: 3; Webb 1999: 8) as it encompassed "descriptions of all types, usually characterised by the common feature of vividness (*enargeia* in Greek; *evidentia* or *perspicuitas* in Latin)" (Chinn 2007: 256). The contemporary, narrower definition of ekphrasis (Koopman 2014: 3) is that of "the rhetorical or literary description of works of visual art" (Chinn 2007: 256) or just

"description of a work of art" (Webb 1999: 9-10). As Goehr put it: "before it became attached rather too exclusively to the 'arts', ekphrasis was part of a much broader range of political, legal, and pedagogical exercises" (2010: 390). Following Schaefer and Rentsch (2004: 137), Koopman elucidates the main difference between these two definitions of ekphrasis: "in the late-antique definition ekphrasis is characterised by its *effect*, whereas according to the modern definition it is the reference to an *artefact* that characterizes ekphrasis" (2014: 3) (italics [sic]).

The main characteristics of ekphrasis in the ancient tradition was "the ability of ekphrastic language to create the illusion that the absent object of description is actually present in discourse" (Chinn 2007: 267). Hence, ekphrasis "was defined in terms of its impact on an audience" (Webb 1999: 12), thus focusing "on the impact of speech acts" (Goehr 2010: 395). For ancient rhetoricians ekphrasis "could be a description of a person, a place, even a battle, as well as of a painting or sculpture" (Webb 1999: 8). The contrast between the ancient and the modern definitions of ekphrasis comes down to the following: as for the ancients "works of art as a category are of no particular importance" (ibid., 11), contemporary scholars take ekphrasis as a "description of works of art" (ibid., 9-10, 11, 13). Commenting on the specificity of the ancient approach to ekphrasis, Webb claims:

"And even though highly polished and sophisticated descriptions of paintings or artifacts, like Philostratos' Imagines, or the Shield of Achilles, were classified as 'ekphraseis' in antiquity, the technical writers on ekphrasis hardly evoke discussion of the visual arts, or the special questions raised by their translation into a verbal medium" (1999: 8).

Modern interpretations of ekphrasis are either traced to the late nineteenth century (Goehr 2010: 397) or attributed to Spitzer who, in 1955, suggested the definition of *ekphrasis* as "the poetic description of a pictorial or sculptural work of art" (1955: 207) while analysing Keats' "Ode on a Grecian urn", which has become a representative example of ekphrasis in its new interpretation when ekphrasis began to be viewed as "description of a work of art" (Webb 1999: 10).

The difference between the late-antique and modern approaches to ekphrasis becomes evident in the reception of Homer's famous description of the shield of Achilles. While in "Progymnasmata" this episode is given as an example of a specific kind of ekphrasis (ekphrasis of process) (Chinn 2007: 276, 277), the modern tendency is to present this description as the first example of ekphrasis in Western literature (ibid., 276), i.e. ekphrasis in its modern narrow understanding. Goehr contrasts modern ekphrasis and ancient ekphrasis in the following way: "Modern ekphrasis focuses on *works* that bring other *works* to *aesthetic* presence; ancient ekphrasis focused on *speech acts* that brought objects, scenes, or events to *imaginary* presence" (2010: 397) (italics [sic]).

The divergences between ancient and modern understandings of ekphrasis are summarised in Table 1, the common feature for both being the focus upon the medium of ekphrasis, i.e. ekphrastic means – verbal language.

Table 1. Ancient and modern interpretations of ekphrasis compared

Type of ekphrasis Aspect of comparison	Ancient ekphrasis	Modern ekphrasis
phenomena covered by ekphrasis (scope of ekphrasis)	persons, objects, places, events; not restricted to objects; not restricted to art objects	restricted to art objects
status of the works of art	works of art are of no special importance	works of art are the core of ekphrasis
sphere of application	political, legal, and pedagogical spheres	the arts
focus	speech acts that bring objects, scenes, or events to imaginary presence	works that bring other works to aesthetic presence
the main properties	effect, impact on the audience	reference to an artefact

Modern interpretation of ekphrasis has not remained confined to verbal description of art works, or, in Heffernan's wording, "the translation of visual art into words" (1996: 262), "the verbal representation of visual representation" (ibid.). It has developed via expanding the range of phenomena covered by ekphrasis (scope of ekphrasis), media of ekphrasis, and sphere of its application.

Along with works of visual art (paintings, drawings, and sculptures), works of music (Юхимук 2017: 9, 11; Goehr 2010: 407), as well as "uncanonized" art forms, "such as television, cinematography, photography, commercial and consumer advertising, comics, posters, and soap operas" (Persin 1997: 18), have been embraced under the umbrella term of ekphrasis. Likewise, media of ekphrasis have been expanded to include other arts besides painting, drawing, and sculpture. Thus, music (Goehr 2010: 407), cinema (Познер 2002: 152; Rusieshvili & Dolidze 2015), and other arts can now be treated as means of ekphrasis. Anyway, as Goehr summarises, ekphrasis in its modern evaluation presupposes that one work of art becomes a "re-expression or re-presentation" of another (2010: 406). Whether different media should be treated as involved in the ekprastic process remains disputable (ibid.). Hence, it is feasible to interpret a visual representation (e.g., photo reproduction) of a visual work of art (e.g., painting) as ekphrasis, the stand, which we adopt in our study.

Though expanded, the interpretation of *ekphrasis*, however, remained restricted to the sphere of arts. When Heffernan suggests that ekphrasis "must also open itself up to the vast body of writing about pictures which is commonly known as art criticism" (1991: 304), he paves the way to transferring ekphrasis from the domain of arts into the domain of writing about arts. Similarly, Wagner acknowledges the extension of ekphrasis into "art criticism and art history" by Bernadette Fort (1996: 13). The tendencies of ekphrasis expansion are generalized in Fig. 1 below.

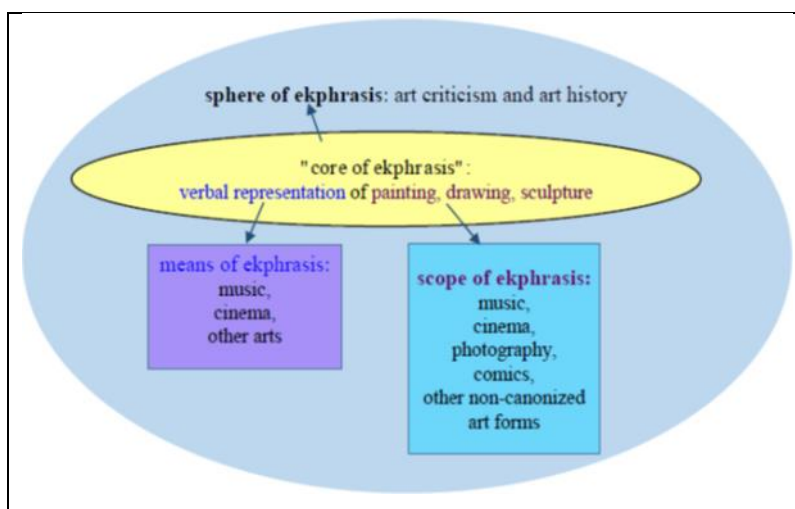


Figure 1. Modern tendencies in expanding the interpretation of ekphrasis

The "core" of ekphrasis is still its understanding as a verbal representation of visual art. The application of ekphrasis to any representation of any artwork by any medium as well as its extension to the domains of art criticism and art history focusing on writing about visual arts are relevant for this research, which addresses essayistic discourse. Thus, here we analyze verbal and non-verbal (visual) ekphrastic representations of paintings, drawings, sculptures, and photographs in the collection of Berger's essays, where he provides historical and aesthetic insights alongside critical analysis of the works of visual art. The purpose of the paper is to further the studies of ekphrasis by analyzing Berger's writing about art, in particular through the application of the notion of metaekphrasis which represents a phenomenon related to and yet different from ekphrasis.

3. Metaekphrasis: A tentative definition

Before suggesting our interpretation of metaekphrasis, let us resort to a parallel with music. Commenting upon the nature of musical ekphrasis, Goehr takes as an example a composition by Luciano Berio² (2010: 406). The piece under scrutiny is Berio's "Ekphrasis (Continuo II) (1996)", which "serves as a commentary on one of his earlier musical works: *Continuo for orchestra* of 1990" (Goehr 2010: 406). As Berio himself explains: "*Ekphrasis (continuo II)* is a reserved and reflective commentary on an adagio which I wrote in 1990. It is a commentary on a continuous and ever changing soundscape formed from a lace of repeated patterns" (1997). Goehr comes to the conclusion that "Ekphrasis (Continuo II)" "ultimately produces a picture of Berio's compositional *life as a whole*" (italics [sic]) (2010: 406), thus claiming that in such a way "the concept of ekphrasis begins to be broadened beyond the work-to-work relation to become a testament also to a musical life lived" (ibid.).

In this respect Berger's essays on art can be compared to Berio's "Ekphrasis (Continuo II)", since they also are broader than just rendering paintings, sculpture, or photography in writing. More often than not Berger's essays become accounts of life: stories of the life of an artist, contemplations on human life as such, or stories from his own life.

Since such parts of essays are not ekphrastic in the sense of "work-to-work relation", we choose not to broaden the meaning of 'ekphrasis' but to use another term for defining such a phenomenon.

Our suggestion is to employ the term 'metaekphrasis', which appears in quite a few works discussing ekphrasis (Armas 2005: 22; Webb 2009/ 2016: 185-186). Armas uses the term 'meta-ekphrasis' to consider ekphrasis within another ekphrasis: "an ekphrasis can be contained within another ekphrasis, creating a meta-ekphrasis such as the drawing of the battle with the Basque within the description of the discovered manuscript of don Quixote in chapter nine of the novel" (2005: 22). Webb makes use of the term 'meta-ekphrasis' in the title of one of her chapters "The poetics of ekphrasis: Fiction, illusion and meta-ekphrasis" (2009/ 2016: 167) and a subchapter within it "Descriptions of works of art as meta-ekphrasis" (2009/ 2016: 185). She applies it to refer to reflections upon the nature of experiencing ekphrasis and to a meta-fictional function of the latter:

"Ekphraseis of all types of subjects, and not only those that present works of art, may therefore have a meta-fictional function in the novel, causing the reader not only to reflect upon the nature of his or her experience of fiction but also, through the dialectic of engagement ad distance set in place in the episodes analysed above, making him or her experience in various ways the disjunction between the fictional world and reality. In a similar way, I would suggest that certain examples of ekphrasis of paintings and sculptures perform their own commentary on the nature of ekphrasis in the broad sense of the word" (2009/ 2016: 185-186).

Following the linguistic tradition of using the terms with 'meta-': 'metalanguage' (Berry 2005: 3; Dakowska 2007: 79-80), 'metatext' (Popovič 1976: 225; Witosz 2017: 107), 'metagrammar' (Spitzer 1955), 'metacommunicative' (Gnezdilova 2017), 'metapragmatics' (Gnezdilova 2018), 'metafiction' (Tykhomyrova 2018), 'meta-parody' (Pleshakova 2016), and 'metamethod' (Vorobyova 2017a) as well as the interpretation of ekphrasis as "a *metalinguistic* reflection on the metaphoric content of a painting" (Шатин 2004) (italics are ours), we apply the term 'metaekphrasis' to such contexts, which are grounded in ekphrasis but transcend a sheer representation of works of art. According to Shatin, ekphrasis includes the viewer's explicated impression of the

painting (ibid.). Given the meaning of the prefix 'meta-' as "situated behind or beyond" (meta- prefix, *s.a.*), we use the term 'metaekphrasis' to refer to fictionalized or essayistic discussion of or meditation on existential, aesthetic, artistic, cultural, social, political, as well as psychological issues prompted by the ekphrastic representation of a work of art.

Delineated in this way, essayistic metaekphrasis might be described as an intermedial phenomenon, since it arises from the perception of a work of visual art and its content rendered by verbal means.

4. A case study of metaekphrastic writing: Material and methods

The material for research embraces Berger's 74 essays about visual art published in his book "Portraits: John Berger on artists" (2015) that comprises 502 pages and one-page long "Preface" from the same edition (ibid., xi-xii). John Berger (1926–2017) is a "British essayist and cultural thinker as well as a prolific novelist, poet, translator, and screenwriter" (Blumberg 2015). Berger's significant contribution to the contemporary intellectual discourse has been widely acknowledged as well as his book "Portraits: John Berger on artists" highly praised³.

Berger's inclination to provide metaekphrastic representation and/or interpretation of art works has been noted, though indirectly, by the painter and art critic Alexi Worth in his review of the 'Portraits: John Berger on artists':

"Again and again, Berger asks that straightforward question: What is the key theme, the subject that is "home" for a particular artist? His answers are ingenious, jargon-free and direct – often to the point of bluntness. [...] Occasionally, his solutions seem tendentious, or too simple. Did Michelangelo really dream "in the last coil of his longing" of "the fantasy of men giving birth"? Did Matisse think only "in terms of silks, fabulous furnishings, the shuttered sunlight of the Côte d'Azur"?" (2015).

In this comment Worth highlights Berger's search for the artist's "key theme", which does not directly fall within the definition of ekphrasis as a verbal representation of an artwork. The quotes from Berger's essays about Michelangelo (Berger 2015, p. 63) and

Matisse (ibid., 282) selected by Worth to represent Berger's approach can be viewed as examples of metaekphrasis since they operate in the domains of the artist's imagination (*Michelangelo really **dream***) and reasoning (*Matisse **think** only*) without representing the paintings in the narrow sense.

Among the total of 74 essays under study there are those that focus on one type of art (e.g., painting or sculpture) or discuss various types of visual art⁴. The thematic distribution of Berger's essays is represented in Fig. 2.

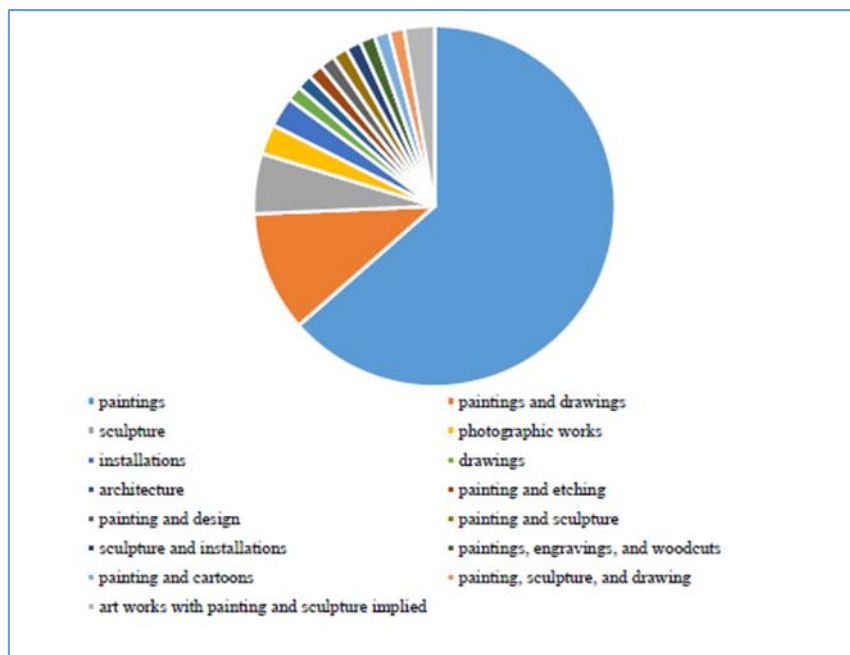


Figure 2. Thematic distribution of Berger's essays (2015, p. 1-502)

The research employed a combination of conceptual and contextual interpretative analyses complemented with the analysis of dictionary definitions. The following steps were taken: 1) ekphrastic and metaekphrastic contexts were identified based on the criterion of representation of an artwork/discussion of various issues stemming from perception of an artwork, 2) the pattern that underlies metaekphrastic contexts was modelled; for that purpose, Berger's "Preface" to his book "Portraits: John Berger on artists" (2015, p. xi-xii) was analysed through the prism of the notion of script following Schank and Abelson who "use the term to describe a canonical sequence of

events presupposed by social activity" (Croft & Cruse 2004: 17), 3) the actualisations of the modelled script in Berger's essays were registered and metaekphrastic contexts were interpreted to reveal the meanings created in an essay. The criterion for discrimination between ekphrastic and metaekphrastic contexts is the presence (in case of ekphrasis) or absence (in case of metaekphrasis) of explicit verbal statement whether a work of art is directly described, such as "*you see this fresco between two fictitious, painted pillars*" (Berger 2015, p. 14), "*In the first picture there is very little space*" (ibid., 45), "*In a drawing of a woman with a mantle over her head*" (ibid., 168).

5. Beyond the work of art: Berger's metaekphrasis

Berger's metaekphrasis is grounded in his ekphrasis, both verbal (a description of what a painting, a drawing, a photograph, a sculpture look like) and non-verbal (visual) (a photograph of an artwork). Since this paper primes the phenomenon of metaekphrasis, we will further concentrate on this aspect of Berger's writing about art.

5.1 Before discussing artworks: Berger's approach to writing about art

In "Preface" to his book "Portraits: John Berger on artists" (2015, p. xi-xii) Berger discloses his approach to writing about art (3). Since this reflexive (self-conscious) explanation precedes the whole body of the essays in the book, we assume that it applies to all the essays and thus can be analysed to elicit the cognitive template, or a blueprint for his writing about art:

(3) "*Yet what happens when I write – or try to write – about art?*

Having looked at a work of art, I leave the museum or gallery in which it is on display, and tentatively enter the studio in which it was made. And there I wait in the hope of learning something of the story of its making. Of the hopes, of the choices, of the mistakes, of the discoveries implicit in that story. I talk to myself, I remember the world outside the studio, and I address the artist whom I maybe know, or who may have died centuries ago. Sometimes something he has done replies. There's never a conclusion. Occasionally there's a vision which makes us both gasp – gasp as one does before a revelation" (ibid.).

Berger's "*I write – or try to write – about art*" can be interpreted in the context of the above passage as comprising both ekphrasis and metaekphrasis. Since Berger, by his own account, proceeds from the perception of a work of art (*Having looked at a work of art*) rather than discussion of a theory of art, it is plausible to assume that in his writing he will somehow ekphrastically represent the artwork to be discussed. However, Berger's prime interest seems to be that of metaekphrasis because he chooses "*the story of its* [a work of art. – O.V., T.L.] *making*" as the object of his aspirations (*I wait in the **hope** of learning something*). The story of making an artwork, though necessarily related to the work of art, extends the verbal representation of this artwork (i.e. ekphrasis *per se*) into artistic, historical and cultural, political, social, as well as psychological spheres, thus turning into metaekphrasis. The phrase "*I write – or try to write – about art*" represents the first slot of the cognitive blueprint (script) for Berger's writing about art, i.e. WRITING ABOUT ART while the phrase "*learning something of the story of its* [a work of art – O.V., T.L.] *making*" verbalises the slot LEARNING THE STORY OF MAKING AN ARTWORK.

Berger singles out four key components he finds particularly relevant to the story of an artwork making: "*the hopes*", "*the choices*", "*he mistakes*", "*the discoveries*" of an artist. It means that he approaches metaekphrastic writing with a deliberate choice of events he would like to consider as a part of making an artwork: Berger is interested in what an artist hoped for, what kind of choices, mistakes, and discoveries they made rather than, for example, in whether the artist achieved financial success with their artworks or not. These lexical units represent the slots THE ARTIST'S HOPES, CHOICES, MISTAKES, AND DISCOVERIES of the script underlying Berger's essays about art. Besides, while focusing on the story of an artwork making, Berger relates it to the wider world, to real life, he does not succumb to the discussion of art for art's sake (*I remember the world outside the studio*). So, the slot NOT OBLIVIOUS OF THE WORLD OUTSIDE THE STUDIO is a component of the script which is being modelled. Thus, Berger's metaekphrastic writing has two foci. The primary focus is that of how a work of art has been made with a particular emphasis on the artist's hopes, choices, mistakes, and discoveries,

while the secondary focus is that of the world outside the artist's studio.

In his search for the story of an artwork making, Berger goes to an artist's studio (*tentatively enter the studio in which it was made* – the slots AN ARTIST'S STUDIO and VISITING THE ARTIST'S STUDIO) and initiates a real (when the artist is alive) or imaginary (when the artist has died) dialogue with the artist (*I address the artist whom I maybe know, or who may have died centuries ago* – the slots AN ARTIST and HAVING A DIALOGUE WITH THE ARTIST ABOUT HIS/HER ART). Berger's reliance upon a dialogue for producing metaekphrastic writing about art correlates with the ancient Greek tradition of "conversation that is related to the painting, providing its description" (Брагинская 1994: 275), which Braginskaya calls a "dialogic ekphrasis" (ibid.). The latter unfolds according to the following scheme: "during the journey, a traveller or travellers come to a temple or shrine where they find an enigmatic, mysterious painting; suddenly a person appears and in his conversation with the travellers explains to them the hidden meaning of the painting" (ibid.). The scholar asserts that the pattern of "dialogic ekphrasis" occurs with some modifications in various writings of different ages, genres, and styles (ibid.). Thus, Berger's interpretation of his metaekphrastic writing about art as a dialogue with the artist is grounded in a deeply embedded cultural tradition.

What Berger, according to his own account, achieves with his writing about art, is not a definite conclusion but a revelation (*There's **never a conclusion**; gasp as one does before a **revelation***). This extract represents the slot ACHIEVING IF NOT A DEFINITE CONCLUSION THAN A REVELATION.

Overall, the aforementioned passage from Berger's "Preface" represents the author's conceptualisation of metaekphrastic writing about art. This conceptualisation can be modelled as the script "Berger's writing about art" that includes three stages (see Fig. 3): 1) looking at a work of art and contemplating upon it; 2) providing ekphrasis; 3) coming up with metaekphrastic representation/interpretation of the work of art. The third stage, in its turn, contains three constituents of metaekphrasis, i.e. the information about an artwork and connected with an artwork that the author wants to find out (the foci of metaekphrasis),

ways of obtaining the sought after knowledge, and the results of metaekphrastic activity. This latter stage can be modelled as the more focused script "Berger's metaekphrastic writing": *"to write about art is to go into an artist's studio to have a real or imaginary dialogue with the artist about his/her art in order to learn the story of artwork making (particularly, about the artist's hopes, choices, mistakes, and discoveries), not oblivious of the world outside the studio, thus achieving if not a definite conclusion than a revelation"*. The slots of this script (WRITING ABOUT ART, AN ARTIST, AN ARTIST'S STUDIO, VISITING THE ARTIST'S STUDIO, HAVING A DIALOGUE WITH THE ARTIST ABOUT HIS/HER ART, LEARNING THE STORY OF MAKING AN ARTWORK (OF THE ARTIST'S HOPES, CHOICES, MISTAKES, AND DISCOVERIES), NOT OBLIVIOUS OF THE WORLD OUTSIDE THE STUDIO, ACHIEVING IF NOT A DEFINITE CONCLUSION THAN A REVELATION) shape a template for Berger's essays about particular artists and their artworks (see Fig. 3).

Besides discussing his approach to writing about art, Berger arguments his choice of using visual representations of artworks in his book (4):

(4) *"The illustrations in this book are all in black and white. This is because glossy colour reproductions in the consumerist world of today tend to reduce what they show to items in a luxury brochure for millionaires. Whereas black-and-white reproductions are simple memoranda"* (Berger 2015, p. xi).

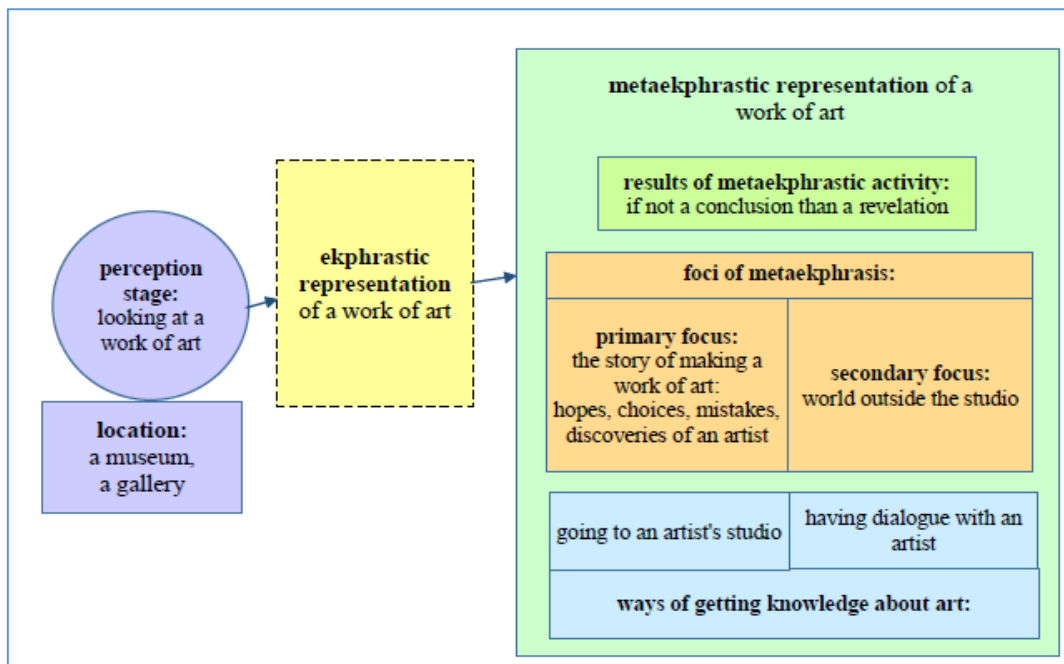


Figure 3. The pattern of Berger's metaekphrasis as explicated in his "Preface" (2015, p. xi-xii)

Berger's preference for black-and-white reproductions over colour ones is evident as the latter can be afforded by the rich only. By implication, Berger strives to reach a wider audience of readers than just those who are well-off. This aspiration is linked with the abundance of metaekphrastic contexts in Berger's essays since in such contexts Berger discusses issues that can be relevant to all people rather than to few. For example, Berger touches upon the contemporary problem of emigration in his essay about The Fayum portrait painters⁵ (ibid., 7-11):

(5) "*There is a second reason why the Fayum portraits speak today. This century, as has been pointed out many times, is the century of emigration, enforced and voluntary*" (ibid., 11).

5.2 Discussing art and beyond: Berger's verbal metaekphrasis

The pattern of "Berger's metaekphrastic writing" is instantiated in his essays in two ways: 1) when all the components of the script are actualised; or 2) when several components of the script are objectified.

5.2.1 Full implementation of the script

The former is rather an exception, occurring only once in his essay about Rembrandt⁶ (ibid., 137-158), e.g.:

(6) "*Just outside Amsterdam there lives an old, well-known, and respected Dutch painter* [AN ARTIST]. *He has worked hard throughout his life – but he has only produced, as far as the world knows, a few drawings and one large canvas which is in the National Museum. I went to see his second major work, a triptych of the war* [VISITING THE ARTIST'S STUDIO]. *We spoke of war, old age* [NOT OBLIVIOUS OF THE WORLD OUTSIDE THE STUDIO], *the vocation of the painter* [HAVING A DIALOGUE WITH THE ARTIST ABOUT HIS/HER ART]. *He opened the door of his studio* [AN ARTIST'S STUDIO] *to let me go in first* [VISITING THE ARTIST'S STUDIO]. *The huge canvases were white. After years of work he had that day calmly destroyed them. The second major work of his life was still unfinished* [LEARNING THE STORY OF MAKING AN ARTWORK].

The point of this story is that it shows how persistently something very like Calvinism can still influence Dutch art even today [ACHIEVING IF NOT A DEFINITE CONCLUSION THAN A REVELATION]. *In itself the Calvinist religion had discouraged art, and all important Dutch artists have had to fight against it. But it has influenced them nevertheless* [WRITING ABOUT ART]. [...] *Their central fight – as with my friend – has been with their own consciences* [ACHIEVING IF NOT A DEFINITE CONCLUSION THAN A REVELATION]" (ibid., 137).

Though this passage addresses several artworks (*a few drawings and one large canvas which is in the National Museum; his second major work, a triptych of the war*), only one of them (*his second major work, a triptych of the war*) is represented ekphrastically, however very briefly: "*The huge canvases were white*". The major part of this extract focuses on metaekphrastic writing that mainly deals with the influence of a particular religious denomination on art (*how persistently something very like Calvinism can still influence Dutch art even today; In itself the Calvinist religion had discouraged art, and all important Dutch artists have had to fight against it. But it has*

influenced them nevertheless).

The script "Berger's metaekphrastic writing" zeroes in on specific information about a particular artist (*an old, well-known, and respected Dutch painter*), the reason for Berger's going into the artist's studio (*I went to see his second major work, a triptych of the war*), the aspects of art discussed in his dialogue with the artist (*We spoke of ... the vocation of the painter*), the world outside which matters a lot both for the artist and the writer (*We spoke of war, old age*), dramatic events that accompanied the artist's vocation (*The huge canvases were white. After years of work he had that day calmly destroyed them. The second major work of his life was still unfinished*), and getting an insight of the religious influence upon Dutch art (*The point of this story is that it shows how persistently something very like Calvinism can still influence Dutch art even today*).

5.2.2 Partial implementation of the script

In the rest of the 73 essays only several slots of "Berger's metaekphrastic writing" script can be traced. For example, Berger's essay about Vija Celmins's⁷ (*ibid.*, 430-433), contains the following slots: AN ARTIST, AN ARTIST'S STUDIO, VISITING AN ARTIST'S STUDIO, NOT OBLIVIOUS OF THE WORLD OUTSIDE THE STUDIO, and ACHIEVING IF NOT A DEFINITE CONCLUSION THAN A REVELATION.

The slot ARTIST is specified as painter (*paints and draws, paints, draws*), e.g.:

(7) "*Vija Celmins is sixty-three years old. [...] She both paints and draws, paints in oils, draws [AN ARTIST] with graphite*" (*ibid.*, 430), the slot ARTIST'S STUDIO is represented as Vija Celmin's studio – *her studio* (*ibid.*, 431), the slot VISITING AN ARTIST'S STUDIO is concretized as an imaginary visit – "*I picture her in her studio*" (*ibid.*), the slot NOT OBLIVIOUS OF THE WORLD OUTSIDE THE STUDIO is represented as an observation on a typical human activity – "*She takes eleven pebbles from the beach to look at (like everybody does when idle)...*" (*ibid.*, 432) and reference to the real huge tragedies – "*Hiroshima is razed*" (*ibid.*, 431) and smaller yet still painful disasters – "*A roof burns*" (*ibid.*), and

the slot ACHIEVING IF NOT A DEFINITE CONCLUSION THAN A REVELATION is narrowed down to 'a search for the answer' (*a clue*), with the latter grounded in comparing the painter with the mythic character of Penelope – "*And this is where Velázquez's Tapestry Weavers offers us a clue* [ACHIEVING A DEFINITE CONCLUSION]. *Vija Celmins is the artist as Penelope*" (ibid.).

Berger's essay about Albrecht Dürer⁸ (ibid., 56-61) contains another cluster of slots, i.e. AN ARTIST (*the first painter*), HAVING A DIALOGUE WITH THE ARTIST ABOUT HIS/HER ART (*an imaginary conversation*), NOT OBLIVIOUS OF THE WORLD OUTSIDE THE STUDIO (*a man paint(s) himself*), and ACHIEVING A DEFINITE CONCLUSION (*express the terms of this incompatibility*) together with RESERVATIONS OVER THE CONCLUSION (*a very abstract statement, to enter Dürer's experience*), e.g.:

(8) "***Dürer was the first painter*** [AN ARTIST] *to be obsessed by his own image*" (ibid., 56), "*We are more than five hundred years away from Dürer's birth. [...] When they seem short, it appears to be possible to understand Dürer and an imaginary conversation with him becomes feasible* [HAVING A DIALOGUE WITH THE ARTIST ABOUT HIS ART]" (ibid.), "*Why does a man paint himself?* [NOT OBLIVIOUS OF THE WORLD OUTSIDE THE STUDIO] *Among many motives, one is the same as that which prompts any man to have his portrait painted. It is to produce evidence, which will probably outlive him, that he once existed* [NOT OBLIVIOUS OF THE WORLD OUTSIDE THE STUDIO]" (ibid., 56-57), and "*Dürer's independence as an artist* [AN ARTIST] *was sometimes incompatible with his half-medieval religious faith. These two self-portraits* [AN ARTIST] *express the terms of this incompatibility.* [DEFINITE CONCLUSION] *But to say this is to make a very abstract statement* [RESERVATIONS OVER THE CONCLUSION]. *We still do not enter Dürer's experience* [RESERVATIONS OVER THE CONCLUSION]" (ibid., 56).

Partial actualisation of the script in 73 out of 74 essays rather than of its complete structure is a characteristic feature of Berger's verbal metaekphrasis. The way the "Berger's metaekphrastic writing" script is employed is reminiscent of creating and perceiving a painting since every essay is similar to an artwork with its unique

combination of basic elements rather than a scholarly account which rigorously follows a definite pattern.

To fully appreciate the uniqueness of each essay, let us compare Berger's texts about two contemporary women artists: Liane Birnberg⁹ (ibid., 445-447) and Cristina Iglesias¹⁰ (ibid., 475-477).

5.2.2.1 The "Berger's metaekphrastic writing" script in the essay about Liane Birnberg

The essay about Liane Birnberg highlights several components of the script, focusing on the figures of artist and her interlocutor: AN ARTIST, verbalised by the key words '*a painter*' as well as '*paintings*' and '*painted*' (9), and HAVING A DIALOGUE WITH THE ARTIST ABOUT HER ART, represented as an imaginary or potentially real dialogue with the painter about the challenges of interpreting her artworks (*to interpret them for somebody else would be to limit them*) (10), e.g.:

(9) "*In the past's space (of which you are mistress as **a painter**) [THE ARTIST]*" (ibid., 447); "*The first authenticity of these **paintings** [ART] is proved by the way the **painted** light [ART] touches what **is painted** [ART]*" (ibid., 446);

(10) "*Liane, I don't want to interpret your paintings for a third person [HAVING A DIALOGUE], because they are independent and free, and to interpret them for somebody else would be to limit them*" (ibid., 445).

In the quoted extract the concept DIALOGUE is verbalised as a direct appeal to the painter (*Liane, I don't want to interpret your paintings*), with the concept ART being marked by the possessive word combination *your paintings*. The challenge of interpreting Birnberg's artworks as the focus of the dialogue is rendered via the author's refusal to provide such an interpretation (*I don't want to interpret your paintings*) because of the contradiction between the limits of interpretation (*to limit*) and the nature of the artist's paintings (*they are independent and free*).

The slot NOT OBLIVIOUS OF THE WORLD OUTSIDE THE STUDIO is concretized as an account of

the experience in using linen for clothing and bedding (11), e.g.:

(11) "*Linen never clings and it invariably lets breathe* [NOT OBLIVIOUS OF THE WORLD OUTSIDE THE STUDIO]. *There is always air between it and body touching it – even if the body is lying on it* [NOT OBLIVIOUS OF THE WORLD OUTSIDE THE STUDIO]" (ibid., 445).

The slot ACHIEVING IF NOT A DEFINITE CONCLUSION THAN A REVELATION is instantiated by the concepts IMAGE, LIGHT, MYSTERY (12), MEMORY (13), STORY (14), and SOUND (15), that jointly represent an attempt to disclose the mystery of the paintings through observing and comprehending the specificity of the painted light, cf.:

(12) "*These are **images*** [IMAGE] *which demand to be looked at [...]. They demand to be looked at because one immediately recognises that **the light, the painted light in them*** [LIGHT], *is falling on something real, something existent. **The light in them*** [LIGHT] *authenticates the rest. **This is why, for all their mystery*** [MYSTERY], *they celebrate **substance***. [ACHIEVING A DEFINITE CONCLUSION]" (ibid.).

In the passage that follows the striving for conclusion or revelation is shaped as a question to be answered, with the latter being a tentative one (*they tell something new*) rather than a definite statement (13), e.g.:

(13) "*And **what is being painted, what is there?** They are images from the past; they evoke **the past*** [MEMORY], *as do certain Watteaus – with those palette they have something in common. Yet **your paintings** are not about performances, nor **about players who have left*** [MEMORY]; *they are about **what remains*** [MEMORY]. *And it is here that **they tell something new about memory*** [MEMORY]" (ibid., 446).

The extract below begins as an assertive statement (*Your paintings are wordless stories*), which is, however, immediately questioned (*How can there be any narrative without word?*), thus the certainty of the conclusion gets undermined (14), e.g.:

(14) "***Your paintings are wordless stories*** [STORY / CONCLUSION]. ***The term may sound strange. How can there be any narrative without word?*** [...] *I know that **new stories*** [STORY] *begin wordlessly*" (ibid, p. 446-447).

The last paragraph of Berger's essay about Liane Birnberg, with the question inside the statement (*and the secret of this space is close, no?, to the mystery of acoustics*) and evocation of the concepts, SOUND, SECRET, and MYSTERY, offers no final conclusion as to Birnberg's paintings (15), e.g.:

(15) "*In the past's space (of which you are mistress as a painter) colours often float like sounds [SOUND], and the secret [SECRET] of this space is close, no?, to the mystery [MYSTERY] of acoustics? In any case, I cannot look at your paintings without listening to them [SOUND]*" (ibid., 447).

Overall Berger's essay about Liane Birnberg offers two plausible interpretations of her artworks as complementary explanations: Birnberg's paintings represent a unique vision on how past and present are connected (ibid., 446) and they tell stories without words (ibid., 447).

5.2.2.2 *The "Berger's metaekphrastic writing" script in the essay about Cristina Iglesias*

The essay about Cristina Iglesias manifests four slots of the "Berger's metaekphrastic writing" script: (i) artist-oriented – AN ARTIST, concretized professionally as *an installation artist* and ideologically as *not a didactic artist* (16); (ii) writer-oriented – LEARNING THE STORY OF MAKING AN ARTWORK, represented as the artist's attempt to overcome the meaninglessness of life and find its sense (*a sense of the inexplicable, to find a way out of meaninglessness*) (17), (iii) ACHIEVING IF NOT A DEFINITE CONCLUSION THAN A REVELATION, and (iiii) world-oriented – NOT OBLIVIOUS OF THE WORLD OUTSIDE THE STUDIO (18), cf.:

(16) "*How to persuade you to go to the first-ever exhibition in Britain of the incompatible Spanish installation artist [AN ARTIST] Cristina Iglesias?*" (Berger 2015, p. 475); "*Iglesias is not a didactic artist [AN ARTIST]*" (ibid., 476);

(17) "*Perhaps I should start by saying where I believe her works have come from [LEARNING THE STORY OF MAKING AN ARTWORK] – rather than what's in them. They come from a sense of the inexplicable [SENSE], and from the disappointment, confusion, loss,*

as well as wonder, which often accompany that *sense* [SENSE]. This is **not what the works express** [SENSE], **it is what they seek a way out of** [LEARNING THE STORY OF MAKING AN ARTWORK] [...]. They come from – and address – the human need to find a way out of **meaninglessness** [SENSE/ MEANINGLESSNESS]" (ibid., 475).

The concepts SENSE/MEANINGLESSNESS are also used to concretize the slot NOT OBLIVIOUS OF THE WORLD OUTSIDE THE STUDIO (18), when Berger gives his insight into the global processes in the world, disclosing totalitarian inclinations of the so called New World Order, from which, according to the writer, escape is possible with the help of Iglesias's artworks since they offer "A shared but secret way out" (ibid.) e.g.:

(18) "**We are living at a moment** [NOT OBLIVIOUS OF THE WORLD OUTSIDE THE STUDIO] *when meaninglessness* [SENSE/MEANINGLESSNESS] *is particularly dense. The criminal and absurd war taking place today* [NOT OBLIVIOUS OF THE WORLD OUTSIDE THE STUDIO] *accentuates this [...]. The New World Order of corporations and B-52s constructs not roads or railways or airstrips but blind walls* [NOT OBLIVIOUS OF THE WORLD OUTSIDE THE STUDIO]. *Walls for physically separating the rich from the poor, walls of misinformation, walls of exclusion, walls of virtual ignorance* [NOT OBLIVIOUS OF THE WORLD OUTSIDE THE STUDIO]. *And all these walls insinuate together a global non-sense* [SENSE/MEANINGLESSNESS]" (ibid., 476).

The slot ACHIEVING IF NOT A DEFINITE CONCLUSION THAN A REVELATION is specified as "a search for meaning" (19) and "finding ways out of meaninglessness" (20), thus explaining the key meaning of the painter's artworks as a consistent dominant idea, or rather, the painter's striving to embody this idea in her art, e.g.:

(19) "*She is silent singer who transports the listener to an elsewhere, which is hidden but familiar, and which encourages a personal quest for meaning* [SEARCH FOR MEANING]" (ibid., 477);

(20) "**Ways out of meaninglessness** [FINDING WAYS OUT OF MEANINGLESSNESS], *varied an artful, discovered in silence*" (ibid.).

As it has been shown, both essays have the slots AN ARTIST, NOT OBLIVIOUS OF THE WORLD OUTSIDE THE STUDIO, and ACHIEVING IF NOT A DEFINITE CONCLUSION THAN A REVELATION instantiated, which reveals that both foci of Berger's metaekphrasis are of great importance to him. However, the character of these slots verbalization and the concepts that specify them differ as Berger approaches each artist with an original set of ideas responding to the uniqueness rather than the regularities in art. Furthermore, the slot HAVING A DIALOGUE WITH THE ARTIST ABOUT HIS/HER ART is specified in the essay about Liane Birnberg while the slot LEARNING THE STORY OF MAKING AN ARTWORK is objectified in the essay about Cristina Iglesias, which reflects Berger's preference for taking a personal approach to writing about art rather than following a rigorous plan of analysis. Such flexibility of the "Berger's metaekphrastic writing" script enables Berger to give credit to the originality of each artist, making his essays heuristic and thus engaging for the readers.

Overall, the slots ARTIST, NOT OBLIVIOUS OF THE WORLD OUTSIDE THE STUDIO and ACHIEVING IF NOT A DEFINITE CONCLUSION THAN A REVELATION are actualised in all essays under study, which demonstrates that Berger was primarily concerned with providing an insightful yet not restricting interpretation of the works of art as well as revealing the links between the art and the real world. Hence his readers are guided – however not forcefully pushed – towards certain conclusions about the artworks because Berger does not impose his interpretation as the only one which is absolutely true. Besides, the readers are encouraged to contemplate the relevant issues in the real world as each essay highlights some existential experience or current social and political problems.

5.2.2.3 The slot LEARNING THE STORY OF MAKING AN ARTWORK in Berger's essays

As it was mentioned earlier, the slot LEARNING THE STORY OF MAKING AN ARTWORK includes four subcomponents: HOPES, CHOICES, MISTAKES, and DISCOVERIES OF AN ARTIST, which are selectively objectified in Berger's essays. This selectivity contributes to crafting a unique verbal response to different artworks created by different artists.

Let us compare two of Berger's essays to savour the idiosyncrasy of each metaekphrastic reaction to various artworks sustained by the single script. For example, in Berger's essay about Jean-Louis-André-Théodore Géricault¹¹ (Berger 2015, p. 209-214) the concept DISCOVERIES is specified as striving for discovery of respect (*let me discover respect*) and the concept HOPES is instantiated as hope to find beauty (*the beauty he hoped to find*) (21), while the concept CHOICES is represented as a choice of the people to be depicted because of a special interest in them (*why Géricault painted these patients, he knew and thought of them by their names. The names of their souls*) (22). Meanwhile, the concept MISTAKES is not actualised. Such a choice of the concepts to give an account of Géricault's art enables Berger to highlight the artist's professional interests (ambitions) and their realisation as well as speculate about his professional feelings as consistent through the artist's career and present these features as a succinct and vivid characteristics of the artist, e.g.:

(21) "*Behind everything that Géricault imagined and painted [...] one senses the same vow: Let me face the affliction, **let me discover respect** [DISCOVERY OF AN ARTIST] and, if possible, find a beauty! Naturally **the beauty he hoped to find** [HOPE] meant turning his back on most official pieties"* (ibid., 209);

(22) "*Exactly **why Géricault painted these patients** [CHOICES] we can only guess. Yet **the way he painted them** makes it clear that **the last thing he was concerned with was the clinical label**. His very brush marks indicate he knew and thought of them by **their names. The names of their souls** [CHOICES]"* (ibid., 210).

In contrast, in Berger's essay about Fernand Léger¹² (ibid., 290-303), the concepts CHOICE and DISCOVERIES OF AN ARTIST are actualised, while the concepts HOPES and MISTAKES OF AN ARTIST are not. Thus, the essay offers a sharp focus on the artist's professional interests (ambitions) and their attainment without an insight into the artist's feelings or an account of his failures. The concept CHOICE is specified in the essay as a choice of people for depiction (*a man who always preferred to begin with something tangible, He himself always referred to his subjects as 'objects'*) (23) and a

choice of artistic means (*Léger chose a similar vocabulary because of what he wanted to say*) (24), verging on DISCOVERY OF AN ARTIST, associated with the discovery of a special use of colour (*the special use to which he discovered he could put colour*) (25), which taken together create a lucid representation of the key features of Léger's artworks, e.g.:

(23) "*Léger was a man who always preferred to begin with something tangible* [CHOICE] (*I shall refer later to the effect of this on his style*). *He himself always referred to his subjects* [CHOICE] *as 'objects'*" (ibid., 296);

(24) "*Léger chose a similar vocabulary* [CHOICE] *because of what he wanted to say*" (ibid., 301);

(25) "*The second point I want to make about Léger's style in his third period concerns the special use to which he discovered he could put colour* [DISCOVERY OF AN ARTIST]" (ibid., 298).

5.2.2.4 *The slot NOT OBLIVIOUS OF THE WORLD OUTSIDE THE STUDIO in Berger's essays*

While all the other components of the "Berger's metaekphrastic writing" script are mainly employed in his essays to discuss artworks, it is the slot NOT OBLIVIOUS OF THE WORLD OUTSIDE THE STUDIO that takes Berger's metaekphrasis beyond a particular artwork and very often beyond the domain of arts. This slot is in some way actualised in all the 74 essays, which certainly testifies to the importance Berger placed on the relationship between an artwork and its context as well as that between art and real life.

The slot NOT OBLIVIOUS OF THE WORLD OUTSIDE THE STUDIO is concretized by the concepts that belong to two thematic domains "Existential issues" and "Political and social problems". When the former domain is activated, these are the questions of how people perceive and assess their lives, what values they hold.

For example, in his essay about Matthias Grünewald¹³ (ibid., 49-55), having considered Grünewald's "Insenheim Altarpiece"¹⁴ and his own interpretations of the painting, Berger turns to discussing the question of how contemporary people see themselves in

relation to previous generations (26), e.g.:

(26) "*Usually, however, this knowledge is used to distinguish between 'them' (in the past) [ANCESTORS] and 'us' (now) [CONTEMPORARIES]. There is a tendency to picture them and their reactions to art as being embedded in history [ANCESTORS HAVE VIEWS BEING BY THE TIME THEY LIVED IN], and at the same time to credit ourselves with an overview, looking across from what we treat as the summit of history [CONTEMPORARY PEOPLE'S VIEWS ARE NOT LIMITED BY HISTORY]. The surviving work of art then seems to confirm our superior position. The aim of its survival was us [CONTEMPORARY PEOPLE ARE PRIVILEGED OVER THEIR ANCESTORS]. This is illusion. There is no exemption from history [THE ASSUMPTION IS FALSE]*" (ibid., 55).

Here, Berger first discloses that contemporary people tend to entertain the assumption that they are privileged over their ancestors as having better understanding of the past, since their ancestors were limited by their epoch while contemporary people do not think they are. He then challenges the validity of this assumption by stating that it is an illusion. Berger clarifies his point with a brief summary of how his perception of Grünewald's "Insenheim Altarpiece" changed after he realised the erroneous nature of seeing oneself as exempt from historic limitations (27), e.g.:

(27) "*The first time I saw the Grünewald I was anxious to place it historically. In terms of medieval religion, the plague, medicine, the Lazar house [ASSUMPTION]. Now I have been forced to place myself historically [REINTERPRETATION OF THE ASSUMPTION]*" (ibid.).

In this passage Berger contrasts placing the painting historically (*I saw the Grünewald I was anxious to place it historically*) with placing himself historically (*I have been forced to place myself historically*), thus acknowledging his own limitations and biases in the interpretation of the artwork as well as any other artwork.

When the slot NOT OBLIVIOUS OF THE WORLD OUTSIDE THE STUDIO activates the domain "Political and social problems", Berger expresses his concern and/or criticism of the

contemporary world. For example, in his essay about Randa Mdah¹⁵ (ibid., 497-502), Berger focuses on the artist's installation "Puppet theater" (ibid., 500-502), outlining its connection with the situation in the Gaza Strip (ibid., 499, 501): "*This work prophesied the Gaza Strip.*" (ibid., 501). While writing about the Gaza Strip, a part of the real world outside the artist's studio, Berger voices his deep distress over the situation in that area (28). He then brings together the situation in the real world and the content of Mdah's installation (29) and in such a way makes an appeal to the readers to take an active position and join those "*voices across the world*" which "*are raised in protest*" (ibid., 500), e.g.:

(28) "***Gaza, the largest prison*** [SUFFERING] *in the world, is being transformed into an abattoir* [KILLING]. *The word 'Strip' (from Gaza Strip) is being drenched with blood, as happened sixty-five years ago to the word 'ghetto'* [SUFFERING].

[...] *The massacre* [KILLING] *will soon be followed by pestilence [...]*" (ibid., 499-500).

In this extract Berger characterises the political and social situation in the Gaza Strip through its comparison with a prison (*the largest prison in the world*), an abattoir (*transformed into an abattoir*) as well as a Jewish ghetto during World War II (*sixty-five years ago to the word 'ghetto'*) and condemns it as a mass killing of civilians (*The massacre*). In the next extract (29) describing Mdah's installation that "*prophesied the Gaza Strip*", Berger reveals how it represents the sufferings (*Their hands, torsos, faces are convulsed in agony*) of the people being forcefully killed (*The ... figures ... are being hurled to the ground ... Again and again until their heads split*), e.g.:

(29) "*The three solid, palpitating figures attached to the invisible puppeteers' cords are being hurled to the ground, head first, feet in the air. Again and again until their heads split* [KILLING]. *Their hands, torsos, faces are convulsed in agony* [SUFFERING]" (ibid., 501).

Overall, through verbal metaekphrasis Berger succeeds in convincingly demonstrating the relevance of art to every person, while tackling not only artistic but existential, political, and social issues. Without imposing a rigorous way of analysing artworks but

offering his readers a variety of interpretation routes instead, Berger manages to preserve the uniqueness of art while discussing it against the background of world issues. This approach fosters reader's interest in both Berger's essays and the artworks he writes about as well as makes the reader (more) aware of the current burning problems in the real world.

5.3 Berger's non-verbal metaekphrasis

Berger's non-verbal (visual) metaekphrasis in the collection of his essays that have been brought to discussion in this study is of two types: (i) photographs of the artists and (ii) reproductions of Berger's own sketches of other artists' paintings. The former include two artists' photographs: (a) the photo of Pablo Picasso¹⁶ (ibid., 285) and (b) that of Alberto Giacometti¹⁷ (ibid., 325). There are also two reproductions of Berger's own sketches of other artists' paintings: one is entitled "Author's work, from Bento's Sketchbook, 2011" (ibid., 18), it is the drawing of the figure of Christ from the painting "Christ crucified" by Antonello da Messina¹⁸. The other has the title "From a woman's portrait by Willem Drost" (ibid., 166), being a drawing after Willem Drost's¹⁹ painting "Young woman in a brocade gown".

5.3.1 Photographs as metaekphrastic means

Pablo Picasso's photo, entitled "Fish-eye Picasso" (ibid., 285), was taken by David Douglas Duncan²⁰. The photograph, which represents Picasso's naked torso, in no way shows what the painter looked like because of its unusual angle and a very close shot, rather it evokes the concepts of SEXUALITY and OLD AGE marked by the photograph's date, 1963, against the years of Picasso's life (1881–1973). These two concepts play the key role in verbal metaekphrasis in the essay "Pablo Picasso" which discusses Picasso's late works in the context of probing the theme of sexuality in art (30) and contemplating the predicaments of old age (31) as well as Picasso's personal challenges of getting old (32), e.g.:

(30) "*The stuff of colours possesses a **sexual charge** [SEXUALITY]*" (ibid., 287);

(31) "*And so he was alone – like **the old** [OLD AGE] *always are*" (ibid., 288);*

(32) "***He was becoming an old man*** [OLD AGE], ***he was as proud as ever, he loved women as much as he ever had*** [SEXUALITY] ***and he faced the absurdity of his own relative impotence*** [SEXUALITY]. ***One of the oldest jokes in the world became his pain and his obsession – as well as a challenge to his great pride***" (ibid., 286).

Jointly verbal and visual metaekphrases in Berger's essay about Picasso instantiate the slot NOT OBLIVIOUS OF THE WORLD OUTSIDE THE STUDIO of the "Berger's metaekphrastic writing" script with the concepts that belong to the domain "Existential issues". Thus, the reader is invited to pay attention to the sensitive topic of ageing.

While Duncan's photograph of Picasso was not described in Berger's essay Cartier-Bresson's²¹ photograph of Giacometti is (33). Such a description helps the reader clearly identify the artist who is less known than Picasso, e.g.:

(33) "***The week after Giacometti's death Paris Match published a remarkable photograph of him*** ***which had been taken nine months earlier. It shows him alone in the rain, crossing the street near his studio in Montparnasse***" (ibid., 324).

Berger puts forward the claim that this photograph epitomises Giacometti's character as a person and an artist (*suggests more than that about Giacometti's character*) (34), explaining the artist's character through the concept of LIFESTYLE (*his isolation*) (35), e.g.:

(34) "***But what makes the photograph remarkable is that it suggests more than that about Giacometti's character*** [AN ARTIST]" (ibid., 324);

(35) "***Nothing during Giacometti's lifetime broke through his isolation*** [LIFESTYLE]" (ibid., 326).

The author expounds on this statement by letting the readers know that Giacometti shared his life even with the loved ones only temporarily (ibid.). Berger develops his point further by establishing the causal links between Giacometti's worldview and the social relationships during his lifetime. The writer represents the latter through the idea

of social fragmentation and maniac individualism as specific characteristics of his lifestyle as a true bourgeois intelligent (36), e.g.:

(36) "*Insofar as **Giacometti's view** could not have been held during any preceding historical period, one can say that **it reflects the social fragmentation** [LIFESTYLE] and **manic individualism** [LIFESTYLE] of the late bourgeois intelligentsia*" (ibid., 327).

All in all, verbal and visual metaekphrases in Berger's essay under analysis jointly instantiate the slot NOT OBLIVIOUS OF THE WORLD OUTSIDE THE STUDIO through the concepts of OLD AGE and SEXUALITY in their reference to "Existential issues" domain and the concept of LIFESTYLE in its reference to "Existential issues" and "Political and social problems" domains. Overall, photographs of the artists as means of non-verbal metaekphrasis are used by Berger to both reveal the key features of the artists' personalities and discuss their artworks in wider existential and social contexts.

5.3.2 *Sketches as metaekphrastic means*

Berger's sketches of other artists' paintings represent only certain details of the respective canvases. His sketch after Antonello da Messina's "Christ crucified" shows only the figure of Christ on the cross, while the original painting depicts two other figures of "the Virgin Mary and his disciple John the Evangelist" (Christ crucified) against the landscape. The sketch after Willem Drost highlights the face of the woman in the painting, while leaving out her torso and a hand. Both essays, along with Berger's sketches, include visual ekphrastic representations of the respective paintings, i.e. their photo reproductions (ibid., 22, 160), so that the reader should compare the original and the copy to determine the focus of Berger's metaekphrasis.

In his essay about Antonello da Messina Berger recounts the way he contemplated Antonello's painting "Christ crucified" (ibid., 18-19) at the National Gallery in London on Good Friday of the year 2008 (ibid., 17) thus specifying the slot NOT OBLIVIOUS OF THE WORLD OUTSIDE THE STUDIO (37), focusing on the sources of the depicted figures' authenticity (*the surrounding painted space exerts a pressure → they then resist this pressure → It is this resistance which makes them so undeniably and physically*

present), e.g.:

(37) "*I find Antonello Crucifixion easily [...]. What is so striking about the heads and bodies he painted is not simply their solidity, but the way the surrounding painted space exerts a **pressure** [AUTHENTICITY] on them and the way they then **resist this pressure** [AUTHENTICITY]. It is this **resistance** [AUTHENTICITY] which makes them so undeniably and physically present. After looking for a long while, I decide to try to draw only the **figure of Christ**" (ibid., 18-19).*

This passage, placed next to Berger's sketch, interprets the original painting in terms of two key concepts, PRESSURE and RESISTANCE, as the sources of the figures-in-the-canvas AUTHENTICITY, explaining how these figures resist the pressure of the space around them.

Chronicling his act of drawing, Berger resorts to the same concepts of PRESSURE (*exert no pressure*) and RESISTANCE (*no resistance*) to elucidate the procedure of analysing the painting and verifying the adequacy of his sketch (38), e.g.:

(38) "*I start drawing. [...] The crucial question is the scale of the cross on the page. If this is not right, the surrounding space will exert no **pressure** [ADEQUACY], and there'll be no **resistance** [ADEQUACY]" (ibid., 19-20).*

Narrating at length his being confronted by an armed security guard who insisted on Berger holding his bag while painting, Berger emphasized that he found it impossible and pleaded to let him finish the sketch within ten minutes with his bag on the floor. However, the security guard called his superior and together they escorted Berger out of the gallery (ibid., 20-22). This story, or rather two interconnected stories about Antonello da Messina's resistance against the people, unable to comprehend his artwork, on the one hand, and Berger's resistance against the people who were unable to empathise with his creative impulse, on the other, can be interpreted as a parable of an artist's resistance against the pressure of the hostile surroundings. Hence, in this essay verbal and non-verbal metaekphrases work together towards actualising the slot

NOT OBLIVIOUS OF THE WORLD OUTSIDE THE STUDIO, specifying it with the concepts from the "Political and social problems" domain.

The other sketch, after Willem Drost's painting (ibid., 166), is thematically connected with the respective verbal metaekphrasis on one's experience of being desired via the simile that brings together this mighty feeling (*to be so desired, the one who is desired, to be desired, feeling immortal*) and the sensation of being protected by armour (*No suit or armour from the galleries downstairs ever offered, when worn, a comparable sense of protection, fearless*) (39) and participates in instantiation of the slot NOT OBLIVIOUS OF THE WORLD OUTSIDE THE STUDIO with the concepts from the "Existential issues" domain, e.g.:

(39) "*I was reminded of something of which one is not usually reminded in museums. To **be so desired** [HUMAN FEELINGS] – if the desire is also reciprocal – renders the one who **is desired** [HUMAN FEELINGS] fearless. No suit or **armour** [PROTECTION] from the galleries downstairs ever offered, when worn, a comparable **sense of protection** [PROTECTION]. To **be desired** [HUMAN FEELINGS] is perhaps the closest anybody can reach in his life to **feeling immortal** [HUMAN FEELINGS]*" (ibid., 161).

On the whole, Berger's non-verbal metaekphrasis is not self-sufficient and depends on his verbal metaekphrasis. Together they contribute to the instantiation of the slot NOT OBLIVIOUS OF THE WORLD OUTSIDE THE STUDIO, involving concepts from the "Existential issues" and "Political and social problems" domains.

6. Conclusion

Acknowledging the long tradition of employing the term *ekphrasis*, one should not be misguided by its modern application as a complete equivalent of its ancient usage. While in ancient rhetoric ekphrasis covered vivid description of a wide range of phenomena, in its contemporary use ekphrasis was first restricted to verbal representation of the works of art, further expanding to embrace other arts as well as other media to reach beyond the domain of literature into the domain of art history and

criticism. However, ekphrasis cannot be taken to account for all the instances of representing art in writing, since the context might "take off" an artwork to become a prompt for discussing burning problems in the real world outside an artist's studio. Our suggestion is to call such contexts *metaekphrastic*. Being closely linked to ekphrasis *per se*, metaekphrasis inherits its intermedial nature as a "contact zone" between visual art and verbal response to it.

In his essays, Berger finds a unique approach to writing about visual art through masterful handling of metaekphrastic contexts. Berger's essayistic metaekphrasis is grounded in his well-thought conception of writing about art, which can be modelled following its self-reflexive representation by the author, as the "Berger's metaekphrastic writing" script. The latter contains the following slots: WRITING ABOUT ART, AN ARTIST, AN ARTIST'S STUDIO, VISITING AN ARTIST'S STUDIO, HAVING A DIALOGUE WITH THE ARTIST ABOUT HIS/HER ART, LEARNING THE STORY OF MAKING AN ARTWORK (OF HOPES, CHOICES, MISTAKES, DISCOVERIES OF AN ARTIST), NOT OBLIVIOUS OF THE WORLD OUTSIDE THE STUDIO, ACHIEVING IF NOT A DEFINITE CONCLUSION THAN A REVELATION. While the first six components of the script are mainly used to elaborate on the art itself, the latter two serve as a bridge between art and the real world.

The aforementioned script, being a flexible template of Berger's essayistic writing, provides a solid conceptual foundation for the diverse essayistic responses to various artworks by different artists. In each essay the script "Berger's metaekphrastic writing" is concretized by a set of more specific concepts. Such a strategy allows Berger to offer a personalised approach to each artist and his/her artworks, since they are not described with the inventory of standard terms and concepts but are endowed with specifically tailored verbal expressions and conceptual structures. This strategy is also an invitation to the readers to get involved in art and experience its relevance in their daily lives.

Berger's non-verbal metaekphrasis, represented by artists' photographs and reproductions of his own sketches, pertaining to their artworks, depends on verbal

metaekphrasis, making the intermedial play of visual and verbal even more intricate and thus more expressive.

The study proves that Berger's essays on art are rich in verbal and non-verbal metaekphrases, which might be a characteristic feature of essays about art as a sub-genre, thus paving the way to further research in the area of intermediality.

7. Notes

1. Piero della Francesca (c. 1415–1492) – "painter whose serene, disciplined exploration of perspective had little influence on his contemporaries but came to be recognized in the 20th century as a major contribution to the Italian Renaissance" (Watson, *s.a.*).

2. Luciano Berio (1925–2003) – "Italian musician, whose success as theorist, conductor, composer, and teacher placed him among the leading representatives of the musical avant-garde" (Luciano Berio, *s.a.*).

3. In their obituary to Berger, sociologists Yasmin Gunaratnam and Vikki Bell assert that he "has had a profound influence on the popular understanding of art and the visual image" (2017). Berger shot to fame as an intellectual in 1972 with his BBC television series "Ways of Seeing" that challenged the way art had been interpreted (McNay 2017, *s.a.*). The subsequent book with the same title has become "a key text in art history education into the 21st century" (Blumberg 2015, *s.a.*). Berger is acclaimed as an author who had "a rare gift" of "the ability to communicate complex ideas about history in language that is accessible to more than just the most highly educated and privileged" (Schor 2017, *s.a.*). Berger's collection of essays "Portraits. John Berger on Artists" (2015) has been praised by many renowned authors for the ingenious insights into art and its perception as well as mastery of expression (Reviews, *s.a.*).

4. Among the total of 74 essays under study 47 focus on paintings, 8 on paintings and drawings, 4 on sculpture, 2 on photographic works including photomontage, 2 on installations, 1 on drawings, 1 on architecture (a building). The rest have a mixed content, with 1 related to painting and etching, 1 to painting and design, 1 to painting

and sculpture, 1 to sculpture and installations, 1 to paintings, engravings, and woodcuts, 1 to painting and cartoons, 1 to painting, sculpture, and drawing, and 2 to art works with painting and sculpture implied.

5. Fayum portrait – "any of the funerary portraits dating from the Roman period (1st to the 4th century) found in Egyptian tombs throughout Egypt but particularly at the oasis of al-Fayyūm" (Fayum Portrait, *s.a.*).

6. Rembrandt (1606–1669) – "Dutch Baroque painter and printmaker, one of the greatest storytellers in the history of art, possessing an exceptional ability to render people in their various moods and dramatic guises" (van de Wetering, *s.a.*).

7. Vija Celmins (born in 1938) – "an American-Latvian contemporary artist known for her photo-based drawings and paintings of the ocean, rocks, spider webs, and stars in the night sky" (Vija Celmins, *s.a.*).

8. Albrecht Dürer (1471–1528) – "painter and printmaker generally regarded as the greatest German Renaissance artist" (Ruhmer, *s.a.*).

9. Liane Birnberg (born in 1948) – a German painter, photographer and composer born in Bucharest in 1948 (Liane Birnberg, *s.a.*).

10. Cristina Iglesias (born in 1956) – "a Spanish installation artist and sculptor" (Cristina Iglesias, *s.a.*).

11. Jean-Louis-André-Théodore Géricault (1791–1824) – "painter who exerted a seminal influence on the development of Romantic art in France" (Théodore Géricault, *s.a.*).

12. Fernand Léger (1881–1955) – "French painter who was deeply influenced by modern industrial technology and Cubism" (McMullen, *s.a.*).

13. Matthias Grünewald (c. 1480–1528) – "one of the greatest German painters of his age, whose works on religious themes achieve a visionary expressiveness through intense colour and agitated line" (Harbison, *s.a.*).

14. The "Isenheim Altarpiece" by Grünewald was painted for the Antonite monastery at Isenheim (in southern Alsace) (Harbison, *s.a.*). It "consists of a carved wooden shrine with one pair of fixed and two pairs of movable wings flanking it. Grünewald's paintings on these large wing panels consist of the following. The first set of panels

depicts the *Crucifixion*, the *Lamentation*, and portraits of *SS. Sebastian and Anthony*. The second set focuses on the Virgin Mary, with scenes of the *Annunciation* and a *Concert of Angels*, a *Nativity*, and the *Resurrection*. The third set of wings focuses on St. Anthony, with *St. Anthony and St. Paul in the Desert* and the *Temptation of St. Anthony*" (ibid.).

15. Randa Mdah (born in 1983) – a contemporary artist, educated and residing in Syria who, in her own words, usually works "with painting, etching and sculpture" (Randa Maddah, *s.a.*).

16. Pablo Picasso (1881–1973) – "Spanish expatriate painter, sculptor, printmaker, ceramicist, and stage designer, one of the greatest and most-influential artists of the 20th century and the creator (with Georges Braque) of Cubism" (McCully, *s.a.*).

17. Alberto Giacometti (1901–1966) – "Swiss sculptor and painter, best known for his attenuated sculptures of solitary figures" (Hohl, *s.a.*).

18. Antonello da Messina (c. 1430–1479) – "painter who probably introduced oil painting and Flemish pictorial techniques into mid-15th-century Venetian art" (Antonello da Messina, *s.a.*).

19. Willem Drost (1633–1659) – "Dutch painter, active in Italy for part of his very brief career" (Willem Drost, *s.a.*), "one of the most gifted of Rembrandt's pupils, but also one of the most enigmatic" (ibid.).

20. David Douglas Duncan (1916–2018) – "American photojournalist noted for his dramatic combat photographs of the Korean War" (David Douglas Duncan, *s.a.*), "a renowned war photographer, photojournalist [...] [who was] among the most influential photographers of the last century, capturing World War II, the Vietnam War" (Picasso through the lens of David Douglas Duncan, *s.a.*). David Douglas Duncan is also known as the photographer who "developed a lasting friendship with Picasso over the course of 17 years during which time" and "captured an astounding visual archive of the artist's life at La Californie" (ibid.).

21. Henri Cartier-Bresson (1908–2004) – "French photographer whose humane, spontaneous photographs helped establish photojournalism as an art form" (Scharf, *s.a.*).

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Résumé

Having acknowledged the rich tradition in the studies of ekphrasis with the focus on the differences between its ancient and modern conceptions, this paper adopts a new, cognitive poetic approach to ekphrasis in essays on art and suggests the notion of metaekphrasis to elucidate such contexts that reach beyond representation of a work of art. The analysis is directed towards explicating verbal and non-verbal metaekphrases in John Berger's essays on visual art. For that purpose, a combination of conceptual and contextual interpretative analyses complemented by the analysis of dictionary definitions was employed. Alongside three stages of the research were implemented:

(i) identification of ekphrastic and metaekphrastic contexts based on the criterion of representation of an artwork/discussion of various issues, (ii) modelling the underlying cognitive pattern of Berger's verbal and non-verbal metaekphrases in terms of a script, and (iii) interpretation of the meanings evolving in metaekphrastic contexts in the essays. The "Berger's metaekphrastic writing" script is a flexible template of his writings that ensures a robust conceptual foundation for varying responses to different works of art. This script is specified with a set of more concrete concepts that differ from essay to essay. It results in developing a personalised approach to each artist and their artworks while encouraging the reader to contemplate the relevance of art and its relation to current burning issues in the real world. Berger's non-verbal metaekphrasis is subordinate to his verbal metaekphrasis. In their intermedial interplay the verbal and non-verbal metaekphrases generate rich and unique essayistic meanings. The abundance of verbal and non-verbal metaekphrases in Berger's essays on art makes it possible to arrive at the tentative conclusion of its being a characteristic feature of essays on art, which opens a new perspective for the further studies of intermediality.

Key words: ekphrasis, metaekphrasis, verbal, visual, cognitive poetics, essay, visual art.

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