State University of Applied Sciences in Nowy Sącz

Państwowa Wyższa Szkoła Zawodowa w Nowym Sączu

At the crossroads: Papers on language and culture in the 20th and 21st centuries

edited by

Katarzyna Jasiewicz
Monika Zięba-Plebankiewicz

Nowy Sącz 2021

Redaktor Naukowy
dr Katarzyna Jasiewicz

Redaktor Wydania
dr Robert Rogowski

Recenzja
dr hab. Anna Bugajska, prof. AIK

Redaktor Techniczny
dr Tamara Bolanowska-Bobrek

ISBN 978-83-65575-85-2

Wydawca
Wydawnictwo Naukowe Państwowej Wyższej Szkoły Zawodowej w Nowym Sączu
ul. Staszica 1, 33-300 Nowy Sącz
tel. 18 443 45 45, e-mail: wn@pwsz-ns.edu.pl

Adres Redakcji
Nowy Sącz 33-300, ul. Staszica 1
tel. +48 18 443 45 45, e-mail: tbolanowska@pwsz-ns.edu.pl

Druk
Wydawnictwo i drukarnia NOVA SANDEC s.c.
Mariusz Kałyniuk, Roman Kałyniuk
33-300 Nowy Sącz, ul. Lwowska 143
tel. 18 547 45 45, e-mail: biuro@novasandec.pl

Contents

Introduction

The underlying idea of the present volume is that of crossroads, understood as a meeting point between various perceptions of the world, or various influences shaping contemporary cultures and languages. The 20th century was a watershed when many influences crashed, new theories emerged and were tested. Harari (2018) writes about the three ideologies which dominated this millennium: fascism, communism, and liberalism. The first two were discredited and it appeared that liberalism would dominate the mental makeup of the 21st century humanity. However, the changes triggered by technological revolution continue to undermine the liberal standpoint and achievements of democracy. In addition, the downfall of colonial empires of England and the USA resulted in racial tensions and the need to revisit old discourse on slavery and concepts of white supremacy and cultural hegemony. Such transformations have far-reaching consequences for cultures and languages of multiple societies, which must face the new challenges, and often redefine their nature and status.

The process of globalization, once perceived by the public as relating mainly to the complex system of interdependence in economy, also concerns the social, cultural and language fields. The easily accessible international travel, popular entertainment and the development of the Internet have facilitated sharing of ideas, attitudes, values, and elements of language systems, which have had strong consequences on communities. No longer sovereign nation-states are seen as strictly insular bodies, as now they must operate on worldwide level, necessarily in relation to other countries. This has had a considerable impact on language communities too, resulting in a variety of consequences, such as borrowing or bilingualism. Similarly, no longer their citizens are surrounded by the local cultural environment. Local cultures get into contact, influencing each other in a way that modifies traditions and lifestyles. People's perceptions, values, aspirations, and everyday activities are reshaped, including the mirror of their culture, that is their language. Language is an important part of culture because it is through language that people learn about the norms shared by their community with which they associate their cultural identities.

Cultures and languages in the globalized world

Cultural and linguistic globalization is often considered a threat, because in consequence of a mutual impact of two cultures, one of them will prove stronger and will impose itself on the weaker ones. After World War II, due to its economic, technological, and military power, it was the Anglo-American culture that became the model for Europe, which is now the most conspicuous in such areas as music, fashion, and entertainment. In language, this influence is seen in the vast numbers of English loanwords in everyday language, in corporate jargons, or in the choice of language for scientific papers.

Ceramella (2012) discussed the popularity of English in various European countries, such as Scandinavian ones, where English is the lingua franca and 84% of Danish doctoral theses are published in this language. According to Statista (2021), in March 2019, Sweden, the Netherlands, Norway and Denmark boasted over 67% of population proficient in English. In Poland and other central-European countries the number of proficient English speakers ranges between 60% and 65%, and the lowest numbers (46%-51%) are found in Azerbaijan, Turkey, and Albania. English was thus one of the most commonly used languages in Europe and one of the three working languages in EU Commission, along French, and German. Recently, Brexit brought considerable changes to the European political scene, because of which it is the official language of only two member states, Ireland, and Malta, amounting to just 1% of

the total EU population. Its status as an official EU language is uncertain, as France and Germany opt for a better balance between EU languages (Kużelewska, 2020). It seems, though, that English will remain dominant in Europe since it is the most spoken foreign language not only in the EU, but also in the world, and it is likely that it will keep its influence on other languages.

Thie first part of the book describes various aspects of language contact, including its impact on bilingualism. As the chapter by Anna Skałba emphasizes, bilingualism is becoming more widespread due to the growing demands of the globalized world. The effect of competence in two or more languages on the mind and how these linguistic systems are processed by the brain are issues that draw attention of various specialists, psycholinguists and educators included. Several studies have attempted to find insight into a multilingual mind, and the author describes them in detail, focusing on challenges of experimental studies.

A different perspective on multilingualism is presented by Marvin Dolhem, who focuses on the linguistic and cultural results of coexistence of various language communities. The complicated relations and their impact on the languages in question are exemplified by the experiences of the ethnic groups of Lithuania, which shed light on the challenges that bilinguals may face. These findings can prove valuable for those who work in a multi-cultured groups or who teach students of various backgrounds.

As stated before, globalisation in the 21 century involves the considerable importance of English as the Lingua Franca, which results in the growing number of people around the world getting into contact with this language. As English is the most common language of science and international business, the need to learn it becomes a must. Zuzana Hrdličková addresses the issue of idiomacity as one of the basic but challenging elements of English that must be acquired by non-native speakers because idiomatic language tends to appear in business and academic English. A quantitative and qualitative analysis of the most frequently used idioms performed in in the KEGA Project provides important insights for educators and learners.

On the other hand, one language dominating others in the globalized world is not the only force that can observed. Monika Zięba-Plebankiewicz states that in brand naming, apart from the strong influence of English that makes companies design names based on loanwords from English, a preference for particular speech sounds can be noticed. A considerable number of brand names are based on sound symbolism, involving a universal recognition of certain meanings hidden behind individual vowels and consonants. This feature can override differences between languages and contribute to the company's success on a foreign market.

The second part of the volume is dedicated to broadly understood cultural, social and literary implications of the crossroads created by the historical and political changes of the 20th and 21st century. These crossroads often involve a choice of socio-political discourse on the perception of the past, the present and/or the future. The American neo-slave narrative genre, investigated by Katarzyna Jasiewicz, results from such adjustment of perspective on slavery: the genre emerged in the wake of socio-political changes of the 1960s, and partly as a response to a debate on cultural appropriation. The neo-slave narrative genre was aimed at undermining the hegemonic discourse on slavery and presenting the cultural, economic and political repercussions of slavery. Having established the background and qualities of the classic neo-slave narrative, Jasiewicz takes a close look at selected post-millennial renderings of the genre, tracing the legacy of the neo-slave narrative, particularly its revisionist nature, and analyzing the commentary these novels make on the present-day America.

Paulina Napierała focuses her attention on black liberation theology as a cultural narrative; it emerged in the late civil rights era and was conceived as a protest against the hegemony of 'white theology'. The chapter examines the roots and assumptions of black liberation theology, setting it in the context of the period, with reference to Martin Luther King's nonviolent activism and Black Power ideology. Napierała investigates the works and ideas of James Cone, the founding father of black liberation theology, presenting the criticism they met with in the American academy but also the ways in which they contributed to important reinterpretations of African American history.

The final chapter in the volume investigates a juxtaposition of two contrasting interpretations of a quotation from a poem; the crossroads in question here result from two distinct socio-historical contexts. Michał Palmowski compares and contrasts Don DeLillo's *Cosmopolis* with Zbigniew Herbert's poem, emphasizing their incompatible historical contexts, literary traditions and concerns, arguing that Herbert's phrase was re-appropriated for DeLillo's own purpose. The clash between the two readings of the phrase produces the effect of irony, which, in line with the postmodernist nature of the novel, suggests that dehistoricized judgement is never possible, as everything depends on history.

Katarzyna Jasiewicz
Monika Zięba-Plebankiewicz

References

Ceramella, N. (2012). "Is English a Killer Language or an International Auxiliary? Its Use and Function in a Globalised World". *International Journal of Language Translation and Intercultural Communication, 1*, 9.

Harari, Y. N. (2018). *21 Lessons for the 21 Century*. London: Random House.

Kużelewska, E. (2020). "Quo Vadis English? The Post-Brexit Position of English as a Working Language of the EU." *Int J Semiot Law*.

Statista. *Share of population with knowledge of English in non-native European countries as of March 2019*. (2021). Retrieved from: https://www.statista.com/statistics/990547/countries-in-europe-for-english/.

PART 1.
AT THE CROSSROADS OF LANGUAGES

Anna SKAŁBA
Uniwersytet im. Adama Mickiewicza w Poznaniu

CHALLENGES IN RESEARCHING SYNTACTIC REPRESENTATIONS IN THE BILINGUAL MIND

Abstract

Psycholinguistics offers new possibilities of researching the processing of language, including the organisation of grammatical knowledge in the bilingual mind. However, owing to the difficulty in designing experiments directly addressing syntactic processing, only a limited number of studies have so far focused on the level of integration of grammatical information. Therefore, the present chapter aims to discuss challenges related to testing the shared-syntax (Hartsuiker et al., 2004) vs. separate--syntax (de Bot, 1992; Ullman, 2001) hypotheses for the bilingual mind. Although the main on-line method used in bilingual research of syntax is cross-linguistic syntactic priming, its current usage is restricted to constructions with an alternative structure expressing the same meaning. It may also be impossible to state with confidence whether the observed effects result from purely structural elements, or lexical repetition, thematic roles, animacy. In turn, having selected eye-tracking during reading, the researcher faces the challenges of controlling for a number of factors while preparing target stimuli, as well as of selecting only the most appropriate measures in order to avoid inflating the risk of type I error. Finally, the Rapid Parallel Visual Presentation paradigm aimed at investigating bilingual sentence superiority effect entails the selection of target sequences formally equivalent in the languages under investigation, whose length cannot exceed working memory capacity. As all these factors contribute to a relative difficulty in investigating the representation of syntax in the bilingual mind, the chapter will also attempt to propose solutions to some of the discussed challenges.

Introduction

Nowadays, bilingualism has become a norm, while monolingualism is gradually being treated as an exception (Grosjean, 2010). This should come as no surprise given that there exist an estimated 7,000 languages all over the world (Gordon, 2005) spoken in no more than 195 sovereign nations. With the growing effects of globalisation, the need to know and use more than one language in both professional and social life is on a constant increase. Furthermore, the dynamic changes on the labour market, rapid technical and technological development, as well as facilitated mobility make their contributions to the constantly growing number of people able to communicate in more than one language. Hence the demand to investigate mental processes underlying bilingualism.

Such social changes have become the object of experimental studies on the processing of language in real time. The organisation of linguistic knowledge in the mind of a bilingual person constitutes one of the prime interest areas of psycholinguists, concerned with the processes occurring in the mind during language comprehension, production, and acquisition (Warren, 2013). To date, the vast majority of research questions surrounding this topic pertain to the organisation of semantic knowledge in the mental lexicon. Experimental studies have spurred following Weinreich's (1953) division of bilingualism into three types: compound, coordinate, and subordinate. The first entails the presence of one, integrated concept in the mental lexicon, which is represented in two forms on the lexical level. In contrast, coordinate bilingualism assumes two distinct concepts for words in the two known languages, which are kept separate. Finally, in line with the subordinate type, accessing a word in L2 corresponding to an appropriate

concept is lexically-mediated via L1. This distinction, later elaborated and encoded as the separated-lexicon and integrated-lexicon hypotheses (Dijkstra, van Heuven, 2002), has been addressed in a considerable number of experimental studies, which have provided ample empirical evidence in favour of the latter. Therefore, it is widely recognised that bilinguals store all known words in a single, integrated mental lexicon.

While there exists abundant research aimed at the organisation of the mental lexicon, the issue of syntactic knowledge is much more contentious. Judging from the conclusions drawn from lexical processing experiments, one can plausibly hypothesise that the grammatical systems as well enter into interaction during language processing. However, this belief might be challenged on the grounds of fundamental structural differences between any pair of languages. Indeed, the simultaneous activation of two syntactic systems might significantly reduce linguistic performance. Nonetheless, a number of attempts have been made to visualise the interactions into which grammatical constructions from all the known languages enter. Following the two conflicting hypotheses regarding the organisation of the lexicon in the bilingual mind, Hartsuiker et al. (2004) opposed the separate-syntax account (cf. language-selective view) to the shared-syntax one (cf. non-selective-language view). According to the former, a bilingual person stores the mental grammar of each language separately, thus avoiding potential interference. In turn, the latter envisages cross-linguistic sharing of grammatical constructions, provided they are equivalent to a certain extent. However, this view necessitates a highly efficient inhibition mechanism, responsible for the selection of the appropriate language.

Prior to describing challenges related to researching the level of integration of syntactic structures from two different languages, it is deemed necessary to outline key models serving as a theoretical background for empirical research. Amongst the most influential ones in line with the separate-syntax account are de Bot's (1992) bilingual blueprint of the speaker and Ullman's (2001) declarative/procedural model. The bilingual blueprint of the speaker, based on Levelt's (1989) monolingual framework, assumes that knowledge is subserved by three processing levels. The conceptualiser constructs a preverbal message, language-specific formulators are responsible for grammatical and phonological encoding, whereas the articulator renders the output of the previous stage pronounceable. In turn, the declarative/procedural model envisages a dissociation between the lexicon and the grammar, subserved by declarative and procedural memory systems, respectively. Nonetheless, since procedural memory entails a certain degree of automaticity, it cannot be fully responsible for syntactic processing in an imperfectly acquired language. Therefore, while grammatical processing in an L1 is wholly dependent on procedural cognitive system, sentence-level operations in an L2 rely on them both. With time, the proportions of reliance shift, with proficient bilinguals exhibiting more procedural memory processing for grammatical constructions.

Among the proposals in line with the shared-syntax account, the most oft-cited is Hartsuiker et al.'s (2004) model. It predicts a common representation of grammatical structures provided they are sufficiently similar. Constituting a bilingual version of Pickering and Branigan's (1998) model, it envisages different levels related to linguistic information. The use of lexical and syntactic elements is enabled by the activation of nodes, encoding particular information. Content words present at the lemma level are connected by combinatorial nodes to the conceptual level, specifying constructions in which they can be used. Lemma nodes are also linked with nodes specifying grammatical category, semantic content, and featural information, such as number, grammatical tense, and aspect. Language-independent information at the lemma level is connected to language nodes, which allows for sharing combinatorial nodes of a single construction across languages.

Although grounded on clearly disparate premises, all the afore-described models have undoubtedly made their contributions to the current understanding of processes occurring in the bilingual mind at the very moment of language processing. The existing data seem to favour the shared-syntax account, whereby equivalent grammatical constructions are unspecified for language, and thus stored jointly (e.g., Hartsuiker et al, 2004; Kantola, van Gompel, 2011). Nonetheless, relatively little empirical research has been conducted with a view to testing these hypotheses. They have been mainly based on the cross-linguistic syntactic priming paradigm and addressed combinatorial information, leaving featural one largely unexplored.

Therefore, the question arises as to the reasons for the disproportion in the number of lexical and syntactic processing studies. This phenomenon unequivocally originates from the difficulty in devising appropriate experiments directly tapping into unconscious treatment of language, along with numerous challenges related to particular tasks. In contrast to the mental lexicon, syntactic knowledge fails to be autonomous, as it cannot occur independently from the lexical element. Hence, the scarcity of experimental studies focused on the on-line processing of grammar reflects the difficulty in designing tasks disentangling lexical and syntactic knowledge, which directly tap into the ways in which grammatical structures are activated and processed during both speech perception and production. The situation becomes all the more complex in a bilingual context. Little can the experimenter deduce from traditional research methods about the facilitatory or – conversely – interfering effect resulting from the knowledge of two different languages (Desmet, Declercq, 2006).

With a number of innovative techniques at their disposal, psycholinguists are nowadays better-equipped to address the issue of syntactic processing in the bilingual mind than ever before. Thus, the present chapter aims to shed light on main challenges related to addressing the distinction between separate-syntax and shared-syntax accounts. It will present three on-line methods in the order of decreasing application for this research question. Section 2 will concentrate on the cross-linguistic syntactic priming paradigm, reflecting the facilitatory effect resulting from presenting the participant with a formally equivalent construction in one language prior to their exposal to the target stimulus in a different language. The next part will describe the predicaments of the Rapid Parallel Visual Presentation paradigm, based on the sentence superiority effect in sequences of words from two different languages. It will be followed by Section 4, outlining the difficulties related to the eye-tracking method, registering eye movements in real time. Each of the sections will be concluded with suggestions how the scope of application of the presented techniques could be extended with a view to researching the organisation of syntactic knowledge in the bilingual mind.

1. Cross-linguistic syntactic priming

To date, the most widely-used on-line method aiming to tap into the mental organisation of grammatical knowledge is syntactic priming[1]. This phenomenon consists in the facilitation of the processing of a phrase or sentence after the exposure to one formally equivalent to a significant extent. In experimental settings, this typically involves the production of a sentence with a given grammatical construction, as opposed to its alternative, having been exposed to a prime sentence with the same structure. Priming may also take the form of a more rapid

[1] Many researchers distinguish between *syntactic* and *structural priming*. The former assumes lexical influence on the mechanisms governing the processing of target stimuli, whereas the latter solely focuses on formal aspects of a construction, irrespective of lexical overlap. The term *syntactic priming* is used throughout the present chapter due to the impossibility of disentangling semantic factors from purely structural ones.

processing of the target sentence if the prime includes the same syntactic structure. For instance, seeing the passive sentence in English *The book has been read* increases the chances of producing a passive one in French *La lettre a été écrit* 'The letter has been written', as opposed to its more common active version, *Il/elle a écrit la lettre* 'He/she has written the letter'. Alternatively, the time of reacting to or reading the French sentence may be shorter as compared with its processing, having encountered the active version of the English one: *He/she has read the book* beforehand.

The syntactic priming technique was first used in a bilingual context by Loebell & Bock (2003). The experimenters adapted Bock's (1986) highly-influential and oft-cited monolingual study in order to address the degree of integration of grammatical knowledge in the mind of German-English bilinguals. The results confirmed the shared-syntax account, yet only to a certain extent. While priming occurred in the case of dative sentences (e.g. *The father promised a car to his daughter* vs. *The father promised his daughter a car*), which have an equivalent structure in German, no effect was observed for passive constructions, differing in word order in the two languages. These findings proved highly inspirational for many researchers worldwide, who have since been using the cross-linguistic syntactic priming paradigm to establish the representation of grammatical knowledge across other languages (e.g., Spanish-English: Hartsuiker et al., 2004; Dutch-English: Schoonbaert et al., 2006).

Syntactic priming can be used in different ways so as to research the organisation of syntactic knowledge. McDonough and Trofimovich (2009) outline four main tasks which have been implemented, albeit with slight adjustments, since the beginnings of syntactic priming studies. The first one, originally used by Bock (1986), is the picture description task presented under the guise of a memory experiment. The participant is supposed to repeat or read aloud a sentence they have just heard or seen with a view to facilitating memorisation. Then they are presented with a picture they are supposed to describe with the use of one sentence only. After a few trials, they need to answer the question whether or not they have already encountered a given picture or sentence in the session. Somewhat related, yet involving two people engaging in picture description, is the scripted interaction task, addressing alignment in dialogue. It requires the presence of an assistant pretending to be a naïve participant, who reads the sentences from their computer screen, whereas the real participant has to construct a sentence on the basis of a picture. The two remaining tasks do not require the use of illustrations. Probably the most straightforward one is the sentence completion task, whereby the participant fills in sentence fragments. While some items impose the selection of a given structure, others provide a relative freedom for the participant, who is nevertheless primed by the previously completed sentence(s). Finally, sentence recall task requires the participant to repeat a previously presented sentence. The difficulty lies in engaging them in a distractor task by exposing them to an alternative version of the structure within the Rapid Serial Visual Presentation[2] paradigm.

Nonetheless, what may seem thought-provoking is the relatively limited number of grammatical structures investigated. Apart from the abovementioned passives and datives, these also encompass relative clause attachment (e.g., Desmet, Declercq, 2006) and genitives (e.g., Bernolet et al., 2013), whereas the vast majority of constructions, such as indirect speech or grammatical tenses, are yet to be explored (Nezakat-Alhossaini, Ameri-Golestan, 2012). This disproportion results from the so-far uncontested prerequisite that syntactic priming can be

[2] The Rapid Serial Visual Presentation (RSVP) paradigm consists in the presentation of items, be it letters, words, or whole phrases, one after another. As each participant sees every item for an equal period of time, comprehension questions verify the memorisation of selected linguistic elements, which is indicative of processing difficulties (Martin, Altarriba, 2016).

applied solely to grammatical constructions possible to be rendered in two alternative ways of undisputed grammaticality, which represent but a minor percentage of the syntax of a given language. Indeed, the overwhelming majority of experiments investigate only those structures whose semantics can be expressed in two equally acceptable, albeit usage-dependent, ways. The rationale lies in the assumption that a participant has a choice between two renditions of the semantic content of a sentence, which is experimentally biased towards the construction applied in the prime (McDonough, Trofimovich, 2009).

The limited scope of application of cross-linguistic structural priming technique, clearly one of its major restrictions, has far-reaching consequences, as one is liable to enquire about the generalisability of such obtained results. Thus arises the question of the extent to which these findings can be used in hypothesising about the metal representation of other grammatical structures. This issue becomes all the more contentious in the light of inconclusive findings of studies addressing the influence of word order on syntactic priming. While some results indicate that priming is dependent on equivalence in surface word order (e.g., Loebell, Bock, 2003; Bernolet et al., 2007), others clearly point to the integration of languages irrespective of word order differences (e.g., Kutasi et al., 2018; Rodrigo et al., 2020). Thus, the remainder of this section will give some attention to challenges related to the experimental procedure itself, including target population and stimuli.

One of the factors which needs to be taken into consideration while designing a cross-linguistic syntactic priming study is the target population (McDonough, Trofimovich, 2009). It is the selection of participants which influences the choice of task, the complexity of sentences used, their number, as well as the number of filler items. Hence, children and elementary learners will require much easier phrases than proficient bilinguals. The experimenter's task is to ensure that all the lexical items and the target structures are familiar to the participants. For instance, little priming effect related to the active/passive distinction can be expected from intermediate students who have yet to learn the construction of passives in their foreign language. Additionally, while adults can easily remain concentrated during a half-an-hour experiment, the attentional capacity of children is much shorter, which requires certain adjustments, such as the reduction of filler items.

The task having already been adapted to the target population, the researcher needs to address a number of potentially confounding variables related to experimental stimuli (McDonough, Trofimovich, 2009). One issue inherent to syntactic priming is the difficulty in tapping into purely structural processes while leaving the semantic level aside. Constituting the building blocks of a sentence, words cannot be ignored in syntactic priming studies. Yet, in contrast to researching the organisation of the mental lexicon, in this case the role of individual words is secondary, as they do not constitute the true object of study.

Due to the non-autonomous nature of syntax, the experimenter needs to take into account the results confirming the integrated lexicon hypothesis, especially those relating to the facilitatory role of accessing translation equivalents. This phenomenon is referred to in the literature as the *lexical boost effect*, whereby the use of cognates[3] increases the magnitude of priming, which has already been confirmed by empirical data (e.g., Schoonbaert et al., 2007; Cai et al., 2011). For instance, from their experiment targeted on Korean learners of English,

[3] The psycholinguistic definition of cognate departs from that found in diachronic studies, for it denotes a pair of words in two languages whose orthographic and/or phonological forms overlap to a considerable extent, for instance English *telephone*, French *téléphone*, and Polish *telefon*. They may, but need not, come from the same proto-word as this term also encompasses borrowings (de Groot, 2011).

Kim and McDonough (2008) have concluded that lexical items themselves can account for the priming effect, with less proficient bilinguals being more reliant on individual verbs when making choices between active and passive constructions. Yet, this finding might also point at the changeable nature of syntactic knowledge organisation, which, in line with Hartsuiker's (2004) integrated-syntax model, shifts from language-specific to shared representation. This hypothesis has already been confirmed by Bernolet et al. (2013), who observed significantly stronger effects for more proficient bilinguals than for participants with limited L2 knowledge.

Furthermore, there exist two different, albeit closely related, stands treating thematic roles and animacy as potential aspects influencing syntactic priming. This distinction pertains to the level of language playing a decisive role in grammatical encoding (Pickering and Ferreira, 2008). According to the former, thematic roles indicate the position of a phrase in a sentence. This can clearly be observed in the example of voice. While the subject is associated with an agent in an active sentence, this position is occupied by the patient in a passive one, whereas the agent might, but need not, be added in a prepositional phrase. The latter stand focuses on the association between animacy and word position in the sentence. The subject of an active sentence usually pertains to an animate entity, whereas that of a passive one is typically associated with an inanimate one. Both accounts have found their support in empirical data. For instance, Salamoura and Williams (2007) have demonstrated that an overlap in thematic roles is required for syntactic priming to occur. In the same vein, a recent study by Mercan and Simonsen (2019) has provided evidence that the likelihood of creating a passive construction increases in the case of pictures showing inanimate agents, as compared to animate ones.

The position occupied by a given word in a sentence also reflects the linear processing of language. For instance, the processing of *cat* will vary in sentences *The dog chased the cat* and *The cat was chased by the dog*, as in the latter sentence this word occurs earlier than in the former. Moreover, the memorisation of different parts of a sentence is inconstant, as initial and final elements are recalled better than the middle part (Reisberg, 2015). This is closely linked to emphasis differences, which manifest themselves in the active-passive opposition. While active sentences give priority to the subject, passive ones accentuate the object. Hence, in order to draw reliable conclusions regarding priming, one needs to compare words occupying equivalent positions in a sentence.

A further issue requiring consideration refers to the possibility of implementing lexical items in the selected task, especially that requiring the use of illustrations. More precisely, verbs intended to elicit a given response need to be concrete enough to be easily illustrated, with pictures eliciting participants' responses. Coupled with the fact that certain words are more frequently used in a particular structure than in its alternative, this strictly limits the selection of words used as experimental stimuli. Picture description and scripted interaction tasks might require the presentation of several pictures related to a single structure, whose elicitation is enabled by one verb. Therefore, many researchers include only a few key verbs which are implemented in a variety of contexts, thereby limiting the scope of their studies (McDonough, Trofimovich, 2009).

All the aforementioned factors from various levels of language organisation make their contributions to the multifaceted nature of cross-linguistic syntactic priming. One of its key limitations seems to be the necessity to research a structure whose semantics can be rendered in an alternative way. However, this assumption could be challenged on the basis of Hatzidaki et al.'s (2011) study, examining subject-verb agreement of nouns differing in numerosity between Greek and English (e.g., *money* is singular in English but plural in Greek) in a sentence completion task. The participants were presented with a noun phrase serving as a subject of the sentence

they were to construct (e.g., *The money…*). Crucially, the target items included nouns divergent cross-linguistically in terms of numerosity. As hypothesised, the number of incongruent responses exceeded the level of chance in the case of divergent nouns, which unequivocally points to the integration of syntactic knowledge. This shows that researchers are constantly devising new methods to overcome challenges in addressing the integration of syntax in the bilingual mind.

This study design, accompanied with prime sentences, could be expanded to other constructions and language pairs. Hence, the divergence between languages does not necessarily have to be an obstacle, but an opportunity to delve into mental processes underlying language processing. For instance, grammatical tenses would easily lend themselves to such an investigation as, cross-linguistically, they are frequently composed of equivalent elements, with only partial overlap in meaning. In such a scenario, incorrect responses in one language, whose literal translations would be acceptable in another, would provide evidence for the integration of syntax. This offers a possible line of investigation for future research.

2. Rapid Parallel Visual Presentation

The shortage of empirical techniques used to research the organisation of syntactic information in a bilingual mind constantly incites experimenters to devise new ones or to adapt the existing techniques for the purposes of new research questions. One recent example is the Rapid Parallel Visual Presentation (RPVP) paradigm, based on Cattell's (1886) finding of the sentence superiority effect. This phenomenon pertains to more successful memorisation of grammatically correct sequences of words as compared with the same words presented in a randomly-arranged order (Snell, Grainger, 2017). First used in the monolingual context by Asano and Yokosawa (2011), the RPVP technique consists in the presentation of a sequence of words followed by a display of a post-cue location. The participant is asked to recall the word which has been presented in the position indicated. For instance, having seen the sequence *a very interesting book*, the participant has to indicate which word occupied one of the positions.

It was Declerck et al. (2019) who introduced this research method to bilingual studies aimed at the level of integration of syntactic knowledge. The researchers presented four-word sequences, two from each of the languages under investigation (e.g., *ses feet sont big*), to French--English bilinguals in order to detect a cross-linguistic sentence superiority effect. The results confirmed this hypothesis, which has been interpreted as evidence in favour of the integration of syntax in the bilingual mind.

However, one may inquire whether the sentence superiority effect originates from shared grammar, or from other linguistic phenomena. Indeed, Declerck et al. (2019) have envisaged a number of alternative hypotheses, yet have refuted them with sound evidence. One of them relates to the potential translation of the mixed-language sequences into a single language. Nonetheless, this strategy would have yielded a significant proportion of translation equivalents provided at the post-cue location, whereas this affected fewer than 2% of incorrect responses. Another explanation might result from the epiphenomenon of the experimental design, for half of the items included a sequence of two adjacent words belonging to the same language, which might have accounted for the overall sentence superiority effect. Yet, separate statistical analyses clearly invalidated this possibility. These findings led the researchers to unequivocally ascribe the findings to the shared representation of grammatical structures.

Despite the promising results and the high potential for future psycholinguistic use, there exist a number of problems inherent to the RPVP technique. Probably the major one is related to limited working memory capacity, which cannot be exceeded so that the participants are well able to retain experimental stimuli. In opposition to long-term memory, containing

all the individual's knowledge and beliefs, the working system's task is to process information currently thought of. Apart from the evanescent nature of its contents, it is also largely limited in capacity. On average, people are able to recall 7 ± 2 items which have yet to be stored in long-term memory. A controversial issue surrounds the definition of the term *item*. According to the task at hand, it may designate letters, syllables, digits, or any other material chunked into manageable units. As a matter of fact, a reasonable increase in the size of the items has little influence on working memory capacity, yet it positively impacts the amount of information retained (Reisberg, 2015).

Working memory capacity constitutes a considerable difficulty in devising cross-linguistic RPVP studies aimed at syntactic organisation, for it limits the length of word sequences used in the task. While a grammatical sentence could be processed as a whole item, the memorisation of a string of unrelated words requires greater cognitive capacity as every word is represented individually. Hence, the participant cannot resort to chunking. Given that the memory span does not exceed five items in the case of some people, the string of words forming experimental trials should not be longer. Since bilingual version of this task requires the presence of an equal number of words in both languages, the only possibility is to prepare four-word stimuli. Thus, the restriction on the number of words creates substantial limits as to the choice of syntactic constructions which can be investigated with the use of this method. The analysis of the passive voice, reported speech, or conditional sentences, to name but a few, would prove problematic with no more than four words at one's disposal.

The choice is further limited by the prerequisite for a certain degree of formal equivalence. Little evidence could be gathered from the comparison of structures with no equivalent version in another language, or with a difference in the number of function words. The former situation may be exemplified by the English *future perfect* tense, which is not rendered syntactically in Polish (e.g., English: *She will have left* vs. *She will leave*; Polish: *(Ona) Wyjdzie*). These sentences also show the inadequacy of using this paradigm or different types of languages, namely analytic and synthetic. While the former, represented by English and French, express syntactic relations with the use of auxiliary verbs and prepositions, the latter, including Polish, heavily rely on morphology. This creates a lack of equilibrium in the number of words, which should remain constant for all trials throughout the experiment. Even within one type of languages the variation may be too significant to be ignored. For instance, the simple English imperative phrase *Go home!* is rendered in French with the use of the preposition *à* and the feminine definite article *la*: *Va à la maison!*

A further consideration pertains to interlingual homographs preventing the participant from deciding which language has been intended. This can be observed in the case of the English indefinite article *a*, whose occurrence in French indicates the third person singular form of the verb *avoir* 'to have'. The situation is even more complex for so-called false friends, whose incorrect interpretation poses the risk of creating ambiguities or even rendering the whole phrase ungrammatical. Additionally, the similarity of a chosen word to its neighbours may activate them, with either facilitatory or inhibitory effects. Therefore, similarly to other on-line techniques, the researcher ought to control for any potential confounding variables.

In short, despite constituting a highly informative technique, the RPVP paradigm is not free from challenges. It is highly inadequate for addressing grammatical structures requiring word units exceeding four items as that might invalidate the results on the grounds of working memory limitations. Not every construction can become the object of the study also due to meaningful differences in the number of individual lexical items necessary to render a particular

meaning. Furthermore, similarities between the target words and their neighbours or cognates are liable to create ambiguities. Nonetheless, given that the RPVP paradigm is particularly new in research on mental grammar, its assets have yet to be explored in greater detail.

Although the RPVP paradigm is mainly criticised owing to working memory constraints, this limitation could possibly be overcome. As the presence of grammatical sequences of words from two different languages is prone to chunking, thus provoking the sentence superiority effect, the length of sequences might potentially be extended. However, in such a case, the percentages of correct responses would be much lower both for grammatical and ungrammatical sequences. The impossibility to recall the word in the post-cue position would be attributed to the failure to resort to chunking for random sequences. In turn, a better recollection of items forming an acceptable bilingual sequence would show that the participant has managed to memorise the sequence as a whole, which would not be possible if it were not for the integration of grammatical knowledge.

3. Eye-tracking

In contrast to cross-linguistic syntactic priming and RPVP, eye-tracking still has not been used to address the shared-syntax vs. separate-syntax accounts. However, the high temporal sensitivity of this technique renders it adequate for measuring cognitive processes, including language functioning (Carter, Luke, 2020). As a matter of fact, it has already been used for syntactic processing (e.g., van Gompel et al., 2005; Staub, 2010), yet not in order to address this particular research question. Still, its application could be expanded to test the integration of grammatical knowledge in the bilingual bind. Such a novel application would be possible if accompanied with an adequate linguistic task drawing on syntactic knowledge, for instance based on grammaticality judgements[4] or translation. Therefore, the aim of the present section is to highlight challenges inherent to using eye-tracking with a view to addressing this research question. Having outlined this method, it will discuss such factors as the specification of regions of interest, the preparation of experimental stimuli, and the analysis of obtained data.

This technique measures eye movements in real time. While the participant is executing a given task displayed on the computer screen, the eye-tracking device registers their gaze patterns. The application rests on the principle of shining a ray of infrared light into the participant's eye, whose reflection on the cornea allows for the registration of fixated elements by a specialised software (Carter, Luke, 2020). Eye-tracking research of language processing would not be possible were it not for the eye-mind hypothesis (Just and Carpenter, 1980), whereby the focus of human eyes reflects cognitive processes. In other words, the object of mental processing corresponds to what one is looking at. Furthermore, the duration of fixations provides insight into the mental effort necessary to process the scrutinised information. In the context of reading, this assumption implies that words more difficult to comprehend require longer fixations, whereas elements easy to process attract shorter fixations, or can be skipped altogether. Therefore, the preparation of materials for an eye-tracking study requires painstaking control of factors which influence visual word recognition, and, by the same token, the time spent on fixating individual words (Conklin et al., 2018).

[4] The grammaticality judgement task, also referred to in the literature as acceptability judgement, is a metalinguistic task requiring participants to take conscious decisions as to the correctness, or lack thereof, of presented sentences (Branigan, Pickering, 2016).

An indispensable part of preparing an eye-tracking study is the specification of regions of interest, which remain at the core of statistical analyses. Hence, the experimenter needs to select only those parts of sentences which are likely to contribute to the understanding of the issue at hand. An important issue to bear in mind is the size of a region of interest. Even if interested in only a small portion of text, for instance one word, the researcher should prevent a situation where the whole region is not fixated at all. This is of particular relevance to experiments aimed at syntactic processing in analytic languages, as function words tend to be relatively short, thus increasing the probability of skipping. A potential solution might be concentrating on both fixation duration and skipping rates of target stimuli as compared with filler items (Godfroid, 2020).

Furthermore, on no account should the visual display of interest areas be random, for, apart from linguistic effects, low-level factors also influence language processing. Given that readers tend to disregard elements occurring at the edges of a line and eye-trackers are usually less sensitive towards screen edges, leaving appropriate margins is essential. It is advisable to place regions of interest within up to seven letter spaces of its beginning and end (Rayner, 2009). What also needs to be taken into account is the imprecision of eye movements at line breaks. Due to the imperfect estimation of distance, the word beginning a new line is frequently subject to corrective saccades aiming to adjust fixations to the text. Hence, it is advisable to assign double- or triple-line spacing, thus avoiding misestimations between the neighbouring lines. Even the best devices cannot provide reliable data if spacing between lines is insufficient. Apart from the impossibility of stating with confidence which line the participant intended to fixate, additional information from neighbouring lines enters the eye involuntarily, thus invalidating the results (Conklin et al., 2018).

As far as experimental stimuli are concerned, eye-tracking literature draws particular attention to three factors influencing visual perception of language, namely word frequency, length, and predictability. Thus, owing to their significance, the "big three" (Kliegl et al., 2006) will be discussed in greater detail. Word frequency effect relates to the finding that frequently--occurring words are more easily recognised in running text due to their increased activation, as opposed to occasionally-used lexical items. Somewhat related are neighbourhood effects, modulating the speed of retrieval as a function of the number of lexical items similar in terms of spelling patterns. The influence consists in an increased cognitive load related to the recognition of words with few neighbours. While word frequency effect overrides the influence of neighbours for high-frequency words, it cannot be overlooked in the case of low-frequency ones. What also plays a meaningful role is the lexical frequency of individual neighbours. Overall, all other factors being equal, a low-frequency word with few frequently-occurring neighbours will be processed more rapidly than an infrequent lexical item whose few neighbours are rarely used. The main way of keeping lexical frequency constant is corpus research (Godfroid, 2020).

Closely related to frequency is the word length effect, also the object of corpus investigation. This correlation pertains to a natural property of language, according to which short words tend to occur more often in opposition to longer lexical items, whose meaning is frequently restricted to specific contexts. As far as eye-tracking research is concerned, the experimenter needs to control for the length of target stimuli understood as the number of letters. Empirical studies have shown that longer words require more time for processing than shorter ones, which are frequently skipped in reading (Godfroid, 2020). For example, a single fixation enables the reader of an alphabetic language read from left to right to collect information 14-15 characters to the right and 3-4 characters to the left of the fixation point. Still, these numbers are far from constant, as they are highly dependent on difficulty (Rayner, 1998). The more complex the text, the greater

fixation duration, with more frequent regressions and shorter saccades. Word length is closely correlated with the distinction between content and function lexical items. Being primarily short words, the latter are fixated less than the former. Indeed, while the probability of fixating two- and three-letter words is about one fourth, it is rare for the participant to skip items of at least eight letters, which are frequently the objects of multiple fixations (Rayner, McConkie, 1976).

The final predictor from the "big three" is predictability, also known as contextual constraint. In contrast to frequency and word length, measuring predictability cannot be based on a corpus study, for it necessitates conscious judgements. Hence, the most common technique used to control for this parameter is an open close task. A group of participants from the same population as the experimental sample are asked to fill in gaps with one word in sentences highly constraining the choice. The rationale for conducting such a norming study lies in the frequency of processing, which depends to a considerable degree on predictability. Highly expected words in a given context are fixated less, since predictions assessed during reading can be made even prior to seeing them. In the same vein, lexical items failing to fit the context require additional time for activation, which is further hindered by semantic anomalies (Godfroid, 2020).

Ensuring data quality fails to be restricted to these three factors. Nonetheless, controlling for every single potential confound will prove so daunting as to render the whole study literally unrealisable. Hence the idea to keep the most significant measures constant and ensure the greatest possible homogeneity of others (Conklin et al., 2018). For instance, norming studies involving Likert-scale ratings are used to estimate the age of acquisition of words as well as the extent to which the participants are familiar with their meanings. Well-known lexical items acquired in early stages of life are processed more rapidly than recently-learnt words, whose meanings remain vague for the participant (Williams, Morris, 2004; Juhasz, Rayner, 2006). Amongst yet other predictors liable to play a meaningful role are part of speech and concreteness. Experimental studies have provided evidence that nouns require less time for processing than verbs (Bultena et al., 2014), and that concrete words, including literal idioms, are more easily accessible (Siyanova-Chanturia et al., 2011).

Yet another group of factors which need controlling for pertains to lexical relations. Of particular relevance are polysemy, homonymy, and homophony. The former two may create ambiguity, especially when used in a neutral context. In the lack of information pointing at the appropriate interpretation, the meanings irrelevant for the purposes of sentence understanding may also be activated, thus slowing down their processing. Nevertheless, it is primarily ambiguous words with two (or more) similarly predictable meanings which are influenced by this effect, whereas it is annihilated by a strong preference for one of the interpretations. In addition, a restricting context plays a meaningful role in disambiguation, regardless of the dominance of meaning, or lack thereof (Duffy et al., 1988). A similar scenario may occur in the case of homophones whose disambiguation is not ensured by the context (Rayner et al., 1998). In such a situation, the processing of homophonous lexical items requires more time. A miscomprehension of a word critical for the correct understanding of an ambiguous sentence leads to regressions, thereby increasing the reading time (Frazier, Rayner, 1982).

Linguistic factors influencing fixation duration need to be matched across conditions. Ensuring this predominantly takes the form of either experimental or statistical control (Kliegl et al., 2004). The former involves manipulating the stimuli so that they differ in solely one respect, whose comparability is measured by the analysis of variance. The latter method, the more and more frequently used to date, consists in using a multivariate regression model with all the three factors treated as predictor variables. Instead of adjusting these measures during

the preparation of the experimental design, they are included in data analysis a posteriori. Still, the traditional experimental control remains the mainstream technique of controlling stimuli for linguistic variables in sentence-based research (Godfroid, 2020).

Although eye-tracking method is not typically used in parallel with priming methods, the researcher should not forget about the findings analysed in Section 2. Indeed, priming effects may influence fixation times to a meaningful extent. A previous activation of a word facilitates the access to a semantically related lexical item, which is likely to distort the results. This fails to pertain solely to adjacent words, as priming effects have been shown to persist for a number of experimental trials (Bock, Griffin, 2000). Predictability left aside, a common semantic field speeds up processing (Morris, 1994). Therefore, the word *brother* is likely to be read more rapidly in the sentence *While Kate's sister was doing her homework, her brother was reading a book*, whereas no similar effect will be expected in the case of replacing *brother* by *policeman*: *While Kate's sister was doing her homework, a policeman was reading a book*.

Closely related to linguistic factors are effects reflecting language processing. One of them is the spill-over effect, inherent to the processing of low-frequency words (Roberts, Siyanova--Chanturia, 2013). Due to their lower availability, such lexical items require more time for activation and full identification. This is not without consequences for the neighbouring words, though. The increased fixation duration of a low-frequency word 'spills over' onto the following ones, affecting their processing. This inflation of time may be addressed by investigating the behaviour of eyes on both the word potentially creating this effect and the next one. The same scenario pertains to ambiguous words, which cannot be unequivocally comprehended without fixating the following words liable to narrow down the interpretation (Conklin et al., 2018).

Another noteworthy phenomenon is the so-called wrap-up effect (Rayner et al., 1995), whereby the processing of sentence-final words is longer than of lexical items found in other positions. This effect stems from the extended amount of time required for the ultimate comprehension of a sentence once all the elements are already in place. Coupled with the spill-over effect, this may as well influence the first word of the following sentence. Hence the necessity to avoid placing target stimuli at the ends of a sentence. The wrap-up effect may relate to units smaller or larger than sentences as well. As physical properties of screen display affect visual perception, words at the end of a line are processed nowhere near as rapidly as those in the middle of a line. As far as larger units are concerned, whole sentences may exhibit certain deviations. This applies to reading whole paragraphs, where the opening and closing sentences attract more attention than the middle part (Conklin et al., 2018).

What is of particular importance in bilingual studies is the writing system itself, for little consistency can be expected from the comparison of English alphabetic writing read from left to right, Arabic abjad read from right to left, and Chinese logograms. Investigating the level of syntactic organisation is rendered even more complex by the fact that function words, generally short in length, are resistant to fixations more than twice as often as content words (fixations 38% of the time for function words vs. 83% for content words). Words equal to or shorter than three letters are much more likely to be skipped in reading (e.g., Brysbaert, Vitu, 1998; Rayner, McConkie, 1976). Therefore, the results gathered from the analysis of French with a great number of short words may depart to a considerable extent from that of German, known for its long compound nouns.

Finally, one of the main merits of eye-tracking may easily become its greatest weakness if used improperly (Carter, Luke, 2020). The abundance of data gathered in a study is liable to tempt the researcher to analyse the largest possible number of measures pertinent to the purposes

of the experiment. Nonetheless, this can invalidate the results given the dependency between variables. For instance, time spent on a certain region of interest by definition includes first fixation duration. By the same token, saccade length is positively correlated with its velocity. As a matter of fact, no variable is autonomous, as the eyes move in a highly synchronised manner. Therefore, the onus is on the experimenter to select but the most telling dependent variables, which can actually provide insight into the processing of the element of language aimed at in a given study. A failure to do so decreases the validity of results, irrespective of the attentiveness to other relevant details, by increasing the chance of committing Type I error, the so-called false positive. This implies rejecting the null hypothesis when there are no valid grounds for doing so. In the case of studies aimed at the integration of grammatical knowledge in a bilingual mind, this might involve believing that an investigated structure is stored jointly in the two languages, whereas in reality there exist two separate representations.

The present section has clearly shown that preparing an eye-tracking study is anything but simple. Not only is there a prerequisite to control for such linguistically-related elements as word frequency, length, and predictability, but one also needs to take into consideration a number of effects inherent to processing visual stimuli. Although the amount of obtained data might tempt the researcher to perform statistical analyses on many available dependent variables, this practice ought to be abandoned with a view to avoiding uncovering non-existent correlations. Despite all those challenges, in no way do the issues related to this method, mostly technical in nature and encompassing both the preparation of stimuli for experimental purposes, belittle the value of conclusions which can be drawn from the substantial amount of data which can be obtained in an eye-tracking study.

Therefore, similarly to cross-linguistic syntactic priming and RPVP, the application of eye-tracking could also be expanded. A possible line of investigation might involve tracking the participants' gaze when engaged in an acceptability judgement task. The use of sentences ambiguous in the bilingual context as for their acceptability would enable the experimenter to assess the activation of two different languages. Whereas a cross-linguistic overlap in acceptability should be conducive to shorter fixations due to facilitated processing, sentences with divergent acceptability across languages should provoke interference, reflected in longer fixations on the regions of interest. A comparison with a monolingual control group would offer sound evidence as to the provenance of certain fixation patterns.

Conclusions

In the light of the disproportion between bilingual studies aimed at the organisation of the mental lexicon and grammar, the present chapter has attempted to discuss the challenges inherent to experimental studies concerned with testing the shared-syntax vs. separate-syntax accounts for the bilingual mind. Above all, the scarcity of studies addressing these hypotheses results from a relatively small number of experimental techniques which can be applied to test on-line processing of grammatical constructions. In contrast to the lexicon, syntactic knowledge fails to be autonomous, for individual words carrying some semantic content constitute the building blocks of whole sentences. The interpretation of syntactic study results thus presents a challenge given the interwoven nature of language levels. Nevertheless, thanks to a rapid development of psycholinguistics, the number of methods with their viable applications are on a constant increase. Amongst highly-informative ones are cross-linguistic syntactic priming, RPVP, and eye-tracking.

Despite being the most frequently used technique for researching the organisation of grammatical knowledge, cross-linguistic syntactic priming relies on the existence of two equally acceptable constructions within a single language, which can convey the same semantic content. This narrows down its scope of use, especially in the case of genetically unrelated languages, whose syntactic properties are at odds. Furthermore, the impossibility of disentangling syntactic structure from meaning, thematic roles, animacy, and position in the sentence leaves the experimenter with little room for manoeuvre. These effects also have some bearing on the choice of task, which needs to be well-suited for the target population.

The prime limitation inherent to the RPVP paradigm pertains to working memory capacity. As a bilingual study requires an even number of words from each language of an investigated pair, the only optimal solution is the presentation of four lexical items overall, so as to prevent exceeding the capacity of some participants. This creates a considerable obstacle for using this technique for numerous grammatical constructions, let alone whole complex sentences. Owing to the relatively recent inclusion of RPVP to address the shared-syntax vs. separate-syntax hypotheses, its further merits and shortcomings are yet to be investigated.

The main challenge related to the eye-tracking method consists in the multitude of factors which need to be taken into consideration when preparing a study aimed at fine-grained syntactic detail. As the level of informativeness of a linguistic technique frequently goes in pair with painstaking preparation of the study, the researcher needs to control for such linguistic factors as word frequency, length, and predictability, with paying special attention to the visual display of experimental stimuli. Additionally, dependent variables for statistical analyses have to be selected with caution, as inappropriately chosen measures can easily invalidate the results, thus rendering the entire effort futile.

Nonetheless, the afore-described challenges should by no means impede the research on the mental organisation of bilingual grammatical knowledge. Hence, the chapter has also proposed a number of novel lines of investigation with the use of syntactic priming, RPVP, and eye-tracking. Firstly, cross-linguistic syntactic priming need not be selected solely for syntactic structures with an alternative, for an increase in grammatically unacceptable responses may be insightful evidence as well. Secondly, the RPVP paradigm can overlook working memory capacity to a certain extent, provided the researcher accepts a lower number of correct answers. And lastly, while applied alongside a different task, even one based on metalinguistic knowledge, eye-tracking offers the possibility to unravel the source of slower or less accurate responses.

Therefore, the present use of techniques in psycholinguistic research by no way precludes their application to address other research questions. With a bit of creativity, the functions of various techniques can be adapted to so-far unexplored contexts. What is more, psycholinguistics is such a rapidly-developing discipline that innovative methods are constantly implemented with a view to measuring fine-grained detail of language processing. Over fifteen years after the publication of the first study aimed at determining the organisation of syntactic information in the bilingual mind, researchers attempting to uncover the processing of grammar in real time are the more and more numerous. Thanks to the unprecedented technological development, they have a growing number of tools at their disposal, which unquestionably help them unravel the mysteries of the human mind.

References

Asano, M., Yokosawa, K. (2011). Rapid extraction of gist from visual text and its influence on word recognition. *The Journal of General Psychology, 138*, 127-154.

Bernolet, S., Hartsuiker, R.J., Pickering, M.J. (2007). Shared syntactic representations in bilinguals: Evidence for the role of word-order repetition. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Learning, Memory, and Cognition, 33*, 931-949.

Bernolet, S., Hartsuiker, R.J., Pickering, M.J. (2013). From language-specific to shared syntactic representations: The influence of second language proficiency on syntactic sharing in bilinguals. *Cognition, 127*(3), 287-306.

Bock, J.K. (1986). Syntactic persistence in language production. *Cognitive Psychology, 18*, 355-387.

Bock, K., Griffin, Z.M. (2000). The persistence of structural priming: Transient activation or implicit learning? *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General, 129*, 177-192.

Branigan, H., Pickering, M. (2016). An experimental approach to linguistic representation. *Behavioral and Brain Sciences, 40*, e282.

Brysbaert, M. Vitu, F. (1998). Word skipping: Implications for theories of eye movement control in reading. In: G. Underwood (ed.), *Eye guidance in reading and scene perception* (pp. 125-148). Elsevier.

Bultena, S., Dijkstra, T., van Hell, J.G. (2014). Cognate effects in sentence context depend on word class, L2 proficiency, and task. *The Quarterly Journal of Experimental Psychology, 67*(6), 1214-1241.

Cai, Z.G., Pickering, M.J., Yan, H., Branigan, H.P. (2011). Lexical and syntactic representations in closely related languages: Evidence from Cantonese-Mandarin bilinguals. *Journal of Memory and Language, 65*, 431-445.

Carter, B.T. Luke, S.G. (2020). Best practices in eye tracking research. *International Journal of Psychophysiology, 155*, 49-62.

Cattell, J.M. (1886). The time it takes to see and name objects. *Mind, 11*, 53-65.

Conklin, K., Pellicer-Sánchez, A. Carrol, G. (2018). *Eye-tracking: A guide for applied linguistics research*. Cambridge University Press.

De Bot, K. (1992). A bilingual production model: Levelt's 'Speaking' model adapted. *Applied Linguistics, 13*, 1-24.

Declerck, M., Wen, Y., Snell, J., Meade, G. Grainger, J. (2019). Unified syntax in the bilingual mind. *Psychonomic Bulletin & Review, 27*(1), 149-154.

Desmet, T., Declercq, M. (2006). Cross-linguistic priming of syntactic hierarchical configuration information. *Journal of Memory and Language, 54*(4), 610-632.

Dijkstra, T. van Heuven, W.J.B. (1998). The BIA model and bilingual word recognition. In: J. Grainger, A.M. Jacobs (eds.), *Scientific psychology series: Localist connectionist approaches to human cognition* (pp. 189-225). Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers.

Dijkstra, T., van Heuven, W.J.B. (2002). The architecture of the bilingual word recognition system: from identification to decision. *Bilingualism: Language and Cognition, 5*, 175-197.

Duffy, S.A., Morris, R.K., Rayner, K. (1988). Lexical ambiguity and fixation times in reading. *Journal of Memory and Language, 27*, 429-446.

Frazier, L., Rayner, K. (1982). Making and correcting errors during sentence comprehension: Eye movements in the analysis of structurally ambiguous sentences. *Cognitive Psychology, 14*, 178-210.

Godfroid, A. (2020). *Eye Tracking in Second Language Acquisition and Bilingualism. A Research Synthesis and Methodological Guide*. Routledge.

Gordon, R.G., Jr. (ed.). (2005). *Ethnologue: Languages of the world*. SIL International.

Groot de, A.M.B. (2011). *Language and Cognition in Bilinguals and Multilinguals: An Introduction*. Psychology Press.

Grosjean, F. (2010). *Bilingual: Life and reality*. Harvard University Press.

Hartsuiker, R.J., Pickering, M.J., Veltkamp, E. (2004). Is syntax separate or shared between languages? Cross-linguistic syntactic priming in Spanish–English bilinguals. *Psychological Science, 15*, 409-414.

Hatzidaki, A., Branigan, H. Pickering, M. (2011). Co-activation of syntax in bilingual language production. *Cognitive Psychology, 62*, 123-150.

Juhasz, B.J., Rayner, K. (2006). The role of age of acquisition and word frequency in reading: Evidence from eye fixation durations. *Visual Cognition, 13*(7-8), 846-863.

Just, M. Carpenter, P. (1980). A theory of reading: From eye fixations to comprehension. *Psychological Review, 87*, 329-354.

Kantola, L., van Gompel, R.P.G. (2011). Between- and within-language priming is the same: Evidence for shared bilingual syntactic representations. *Memory and Cognition, 39*(2), 276-290.

Kim, Y. McDonough, K. (2008). Learners' production of passives during syntactic priming activities. *Applied Linguistics, 29*(1), 149-154.

Kliegl, R., Grabner, E., Rolfs, M., Engbert, R. (2004). Length, frequency, and predictability effects of words on eye movements in reading. *European Journal of Cognitive Psychology, 16*(1-2), 262-284.

Kliegl, R., Nuthmann, A., Engbert, R. (2006). Tracking the mind during reading: The influence of past, present, and future words on fixation durations. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General, 135*(1), 12-35.

Kutasi, T., Suffill, E., Gibb, C.L., Sorace A., Pickering, M.J., Branigan, H.P. (2018). Shared representation of passives across Scottish Gaelic and English: Evidence from structural priming. *Journal of Cultural Cognitive Science, 2*, 1-8.

Levelt, W.J.M. (1989). *Speaking: From intention to articulation*. MIT Press.

Loebell, H., Bock, K. (2003). *Structural priming across languages. Linguistics, 41*, 791-824.

Martin, J.M., Altarriba, J. (2016). Rapid Serial Visual Presentation: Bilingual lexical and attentional processing. In: R.R. Heredia, J. Altarriba, A.B. Cieślicka (eds.), *Methods in bilingual reading comprehension research* (pp. 61-98).

McDonough, K., Trofimovich, P. (2009). *Using priming methods in second language research*. Routledge.

Mercan, G., Simonsen, H.G. (2019). The production of passives by English-Norwegian and Turkish-Norwegian bilinguals: A preliminary investigation using a cross-linguistic structural priming manipulation. *Journal of Cultural Cognitive Science, 3*, 89-104.

Morris, R.K. (1994). Lexical and message-level sentence context effects on fixation times in reading. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Learning, Memory, & Cognition, 20*, 92-103.

Nezakat-Alhossaini, M., Ameri-Golestan, A. (2012). The application of syntactic priming in second language research. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research, 3*(5), 898-903.

Pickering, M.J., Branigan, H.P. (1998). The representation of verbs: Evidence from syntactic priming in language production. *Journal of Memory and Language, 39*, 633-651.

Pickering, M.J., Ferreira V.S. (2008). Structural priming: A critical review. *Psychological Bulletin 134*(3), 427-459.

Rayner, K. (1998). Eye movements in reading and information processing: 20 years of research. *Psychological bulletin, 124*(3), 372-422.

Rayner, K. McConkie, G.W. (1976). What guides a reader's eye movements? *Vision Research 16*, 829-837.

Rayner, K., (2009). Eye movements and attention in reading, scene perception, and visual search. *The Quarterly Journal of Experimental Psychology, 62*(8), 1457-1506.

Rayner, K., Pollatsek, A., Binder, K.S. (1998). Phonological codes and eye movements in reading. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Learning, Memory, and Cognition, 24*, 476-497.

Rayner, K., Raney, G., Pollatsek, A. (1995). Eye movements and discourse processing. In: R.F. Lorch, E.J. O'Brien (eds.), *Sources of coherence in reading* (pp. 9-36). Erlbaum.

Reisberg, D. (2015). *Cognition: Exploring the science of the mind* (6th edition). W.W. Norton & Company.

Roberts, L., Siyanova-Chanturia A. (2013). Using eye-tracking to investigate topics in L2 acquisition and L2 processing. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition, 35*, 213-235.

Rodrigo, L., Tanaka, M., Koizumi, M. (2020). The role of word order in bilingual speakers' representation of their two languages: The case of Spanish-Kaqchikel bilinguals. *Journal of Cultural Cognitive Science, 4*, 275-291.

Salamoura, A., Williams, J.N. (2007). Processing verb argument structure across languages: Evidence for shared representations in the bilingual lexicon. *Applied Psycholinguistics, 28,* 627-660.
Schoonbaert, S., Hartsuiker, R.J., Pickering, M.J. (2007). The representation of lexical and syntactic information in bilinguals: Evidence from syntactic priming. *Journal of Memory and Language, 56,* 153-171.
Siyanova-Chanturia, A., Conklin, K., Schmitt, N. (2011). Adding more fuel to the fire: An eye-tracking study of idiom processing by native and non-native speakers. *Second Language Research, 27*(2), 251-272.
Snell, J., Grainger, J. (2017). The sentence superiority effect revisited. *Cognition, 168,* 217-221.
Staub, A. (2010). Eye movements and processing difficulty in object relative clauses. *Cognition, 116,* 71-86.
Ullman, M.T. (2001). The neural basis of lexicon and grammar in first and second language: The declarative/procedural model. *Bilingualism: Language and Cognition, 4,* 105-122.
Van Gompel, R.P.G., Pickering, M., Pearson, J., Liversedge, S.P. (2005). Evidence against competition during syntactic ambiguity resolution. *Journal of Memory and Language, 52,* 284-307.
Warren, P. (2013). *Introducing psycholinguistics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Weinreich, U. (1953). *Languages in contact, findings and problems*. Linguistic Circle of New York.
Williams, R., Morris, R. (2004). Eye movements, word familiarity, and vocabulary acquisition. *European Journal of Cognitive Psychology, 16*(1-2), 312-339.

Marvin DOLHEM
Institut National des Langues et Civilisations Orientales

THE POLISH MINORITY IN LITHUANIA: A LINGUISTIC OVERVIEW

Abstract

Poland and Lithuania share a long and complex history. Within the period spanning from the establishment of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in 1569 to the Second World War, Polish and Lithuanian citizens frequently shared the same territory. Due to this cohabitation, there is still a large Polish community in Lithuania, especially around Vilnius and Šalčininkai in the Dzūkija region, situated in the southern part of the country. The presence of two nations on a common territory favoured socio-cultural exchanges, which exerted considerable influence on language. Therefore, the present chapter will research the case of the Polish minority in terms of its linguistic habits. While some inhabitants of the former Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth are proficient bilinguals, the knowledge of Lithuanian of those educated in Polish institutions or living in a Polish-speaking environment is somewhat limited. Hence, these linguistic differences are liable to influence their behavior within a Lithuanian-speaking population. Furthermore, the chapter will inquire into the ways in which this presence of a Polish--speaking community in Lithuania is reflected in the language. Relevant data show that linguistic habits are affected by the coexistence of other languages: not only Lithuanian, but also Russian, albeit to a lesser extent. Finally, the analysis of the Lithuanian language, with particular interest in the specific lexicon used to describe Polish-speaking people, provides evidence that language can influence unconscious representations, especially in the context of multilingualism.

Introduction

Poland and Lithuania were closely linked for several centuries. Their common history can be traced back to 1385, when the Union of Krewo was signed. As a result, the Grand Duke of Lithuania Jogaila Algirdaitis, in exchange for the Polish crown and the marriage with the Queen Jadwiga of Poland, converted to Christianity and baptized his country. This constituted the first step towards an alliance between the two states, which led to the Union of Lublin in 1569, resulting in the creation of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth (Frost, 2013).

This political change exerted a considerable influence on the use of languages as the 17th century represented a turning point in the country's linguistic situation. Not only did Polish replace Ruthenian as the official language of the country, but it also became the language of the nobility, whereas ordinary people kept speaking Lithuanian. In the 18th century Polish even replaced Latin as the language of education at Vilnius University. A significant change occurred in the next century. From 1795 to 1918 Lithuania formed part of the territory of Russia, and had to adopt Russian as its official language (Smetonienė, 2008). At that time the tsarist government pursued a strong policy of russification, especially after the insurrections in the middle of the 19th century. Consequently, the use of Lithuanian became forbidden. After the end of the First World War and the regain of independence by many countries in Central Europe, a new delineation of borders resulted in the annexation of the East of Lithuania, including Vilnius, to the Polish territory. After the fall of the USSR and the regain of independence lost between 1940 and 1990, Lithuania adopted a policy granting some autonomy to minorities. The 1992 constitution delegalized discrimination on the basis of origin, rendering minorities responsible for their own culture and education. Then, the 1995 framework convention for the protection of national minorities, whereby minorities were to develop their culture, preserve their language, religion, and traditions, was enforced in 2000. Nowadays, the Lithuanian government guarantees the right to study in

a minority language, provides financial help to media operating in minority languages, as well as supports cultural projects of national minorities. One of the significant national minorities occupying the territory of Lithuania is undoubtedly the Polish one. As a result of the aforementioned historical events, Eastern Lithuania became a region where Polish was the only official language, which explains the current linguistic situation. Indeed, a considerable number of Polish-speaking families still live in this part of the country.

Therefore, the present article aims to overview the linguistic situation of the Polish minority in Eastern Lithuania. It will describe two aspects of the situation, namely the knowledge and use of languages by Poles inhabiting Lithuania, and the situation of Polish schools in the country. The second line of investigation will be supported by examples of Lithuanian loanwords in the Polish language used in Eastern Lithuanian, as well as foreign loanwords in the language of the Polish youth in Vilnius. The presentation of loanwords will illustrate important characteristics of Polish spoken in that area, resulting from linguistic contact with the two other main languages of the territory, namely Russian and Lithuanian.

1. The linguistic situation of the Polish minority in Lithuania

According to the most recent census, i.e., that of 2011, the Polish minority represents 6.6% of the total population of Lithuania, that is approximately 3,000,000 people. Since a part of Lithuania constituted a region of Poland until the Second World War, this population lives mostly in the east of the country, especially in the region of Vilnius. This situation explains the remarkable number of Polish dialects spoken there, which are listed on the website[1] managed by Vilnius university. Most of the Polish dialects are spoken around Vilnius (e.g., Bražuolė, Paluknys), and near Belarus, (e.g., Šalčininkėliai). Some of them are also spoken near Poland (e.g., Druskininkai), near Latvia around Zarasai (e.g., Romancai, Imbradas), or even in central Lithuania (e.g., Panevėžys, Kėdainiai). Hence, the richness of linguistic varieties requires a description of the linguistic situation of the Polish minority in this part of the country.

The present discussion will be based on Ramonienė and Geben's (2011) study, which will help shed light on the situation. The authors used two surveys, the first conducted in 2002 in South-Eastern Lithuania, with 33.1% (206) Polish respondents out of the total of 622, and the second conducted in Vilnius in 2008, in which 18% (163) of the 900 respondents were Polish. The latter sample is rather representative of the population of Vilnius. According to the 2007 census in the city, 18.9% of the population declared to be (http://www.lenkutarmes.flf.vu.lt) Polish. Thus, the following subsections will outline the results of these surveys in the following order: the native language(s) of the respondents, their linguistic knowledge, their use of the languages, and their situation concerning the language of education, which will be compared to the most recent figures.

1.1. Respondents' native language(s)

From the 163 Polish respondents of the 2002 survey in the East of the country, 82% declared to speak Polish as their native language. Most of them lived near Šalčininkiai. In turn, among the 206 Polish respondents of the 2007 survey in Vilnius, Polish was at least one of the native languages of 84.5% (n = 137) of the respondents. 177 respondents (72.2%) declared to have Polish as their unique native language, while 14 (8.6%) also mentioned a second native language, either Russian (9 respondents) or Lithuanian (5 respondents). Only 6 of them (3.7%) reported to have three native languages: Polish, Russian, and Lithuanian. Despite the fact that they declared to be of Polish nationality, 15.3% (n = 24) of the respondents did not have Polish as their native language, with 20 of them speaking only Russian, and 4 – Lithuanian.

Ramonienė and Geben (2011) interpreted such findings in the light of assimilation during the Soviet era, when Russian supplanted Polish. Furthermore, they drew attention to a decline in the use of the Polish language in mixed families, with Lithuanian being used as the main language of communication in such cases.

A comparison of the two surveys highlights the fact that, at least between 2002 and 2007, the Polish language did not decline, even though the Polish speakers of Vilnius lived in a much more multilingual environment. Another noteworthy finding pertains to the fact that, despite the status of the Lithuanian language as the only official language of the country, Polish families frequently taught their children Polish, and, to a certain extent, Russian. Section 2.2 will elaborate on these conclusions.

1.2. Linguistic knowledge

The 2002 survey revealed that Lithuanian was not an indispensable language in smaller cities in the east of the country. Therefore, 11% of the respondents had no knowledge at all of the official language of their country of residence. However, most of them had a very good knowledge of Russian, a holdover from the Soviet times. In this part of Lithuania, the knowledge of Lithuanian within the Polish population depended on the age of the speaker – the respondents who could speak it best were aged between 20 and 39. Only 57% of the respondents to this survey declared that they could write in Lithuanian, once again depending on their age. 88.5% of the people aged 16 to 19 and 73.5% of the people aged 20 to 29 could write in Lithuanian, while that only pertained to 27.8% of the people above 60 years of age.

The situation was somewhat different in the capital city, where Polish appeared to be a necessary language. According to the 2007 survey, Polish inhabitants of Vilnius had a rather high level of not only spoken, but also written Polish, Russian, and Lithuanian. It is noticeable that only 4% of the respondents could not understand Polish. In general, the respondents had a better knowledge of the Polish language than of the Lithuanian one. Their knowledge of English was rather low (64% could not speak it), but this is explicable by the age of the people, who grew up at the times when English was not taught on a large scale. What also constitutes a remarkable finding is the fact that Russian was generally the best-known language among the respondents of this survey. Finally, almost all Polish residents (98-99%) understood Lithuanian.

Once again, a difference is noticeable between the linguistic situation of the Polish people living in Vilnius and the inhabitants of smaller cities. While the knowledge of the Lithuanian language is mandatory for many interactions in Vilnius, some towns in the eastern part of the country are mostly populated by Polish speakers. In such contexts there appears to be no need to learn the official language. Given that the majority of interactions are either in Polish or in Russian, these languages act as lingua francas between Polish and non-Polish speakers.

1.3. The use of language

The present sub-section will present the use of languages of the respondents of both surveys. To use Ramonienė and Geben's (2011) words, the use of languages in the 'public sphere' will be analyzed first, followed by a description of their use in the 'private sphere'.

As the previous data suggest, the use of the Lithuanian language in smaller towns was in the minority. While 68% of the respondents used it at work, 69% communicated in Russian and 74% spoke Polish. In contrast, Lithuanian was the main language used in Vilnius in the public sphere, i.e outside the family, as 98% of the interactions at work and 92% in official contexts were in Lithuanian. As far as media is concerned, the Polish minority living in Lithuania mostly

read and listened to media in Russian, regardless of the survey. This highlights the importance of the Russian language. It is however noticeable that, irrespective of the survey, they watched television mostly in Lithuanian.

In the private sphere, the Polish language was commonly used among the respondents with their siblings, parents, and grandparents, but Russian and Lithuanian with their children and grandchildren. This provides evidence for a relatively high degree of assimilation of the Polish speaking people. For instance, in Eastern Lithuania around 13% used Lithuanian with siblings, 30% with children and 40% with grandchildren, while around 25% of the inhabitants of Vilnius used Lithuanian with siblings, as opposed to around 45% with children and grandchildren.

The juxtaposition of these figures shows that, even if the same phenomena occur in the capital city and in smaller towns, the use of the Lithuanian language is spreading much faster among Polish families living in Vilnius. The considerably higher necessity to use Lithuanian in the capital than in other parts of the country probably promotes a faster assimilation of younger generations. Furthermore, the fact that almost all Polish-speaking people in Vilnius know Lithuanian may also favor the mixing of population, which is impossible in Eastern Lithuania. Hence, this situation favors the creation of mixed families, who tend to use Lithuanian as their own lingua franca.

1.4. The language of education

The Lithuanian constitution of 1992 allows minorities to be responsible for their own culture and education, rendering possible the existence of formal education in minority languages. Between 1995 and 2001, Lithuania witnessed the opening of 19 Polish schools and the closure of 20 Russian ones. However, in the school year 2007-2008 there were still more pupils in Russian schools (4.2% of the country's pupils) than in Polish ones (3.4%).

According to the 2007 survey in Vilnius, among the 93 Polish respondents having children, 46% enrolled them at Polish schools, 33% in Lithuanian, 29% in Russian, and 3% in English ones. A remarkable evolution can be observed in the number of Polish pupils in Russian schools, since the 2002 survey in small municipalities shows that only 3% of the Polish respondents intended to enroll their children in Russian schools. Even though the different places in which the two surveys were conducted may have affected the results, such a significant difference between 2002 and 2007 could probably be explained by a willingness of a part of parents for their children to know more languages.

According to a more recent analysis (Bakonis et al., 2018), there are still more pupils in Russian schools (20,412 children) than in Polish ones (15,312 children). Paradoxically, the Polish minority in Lithuania is more important than the Russian one: 157,717 Polish people vs. 127,805 Russian people. However, although there are more Russian *ikimokyklinio ugdymai* 'schools for children aged 3 to 6' than Polish ones (12 in Russian and 7 in Polish), there are much more Polish *bendro ugdymai* 'schools for children aged 10-11 to 18' than Russian ones (49 in Polish and 27 in Russian). Furthermore, Polish schools are better financed. While Russian schools receive €1,456 per pupil at the beginning of each school year, Lithuanian ones receive €1,399 and Polish ones €1,702. Furthermore, schools in other minority languages (Belarusian, Yiddish, Hebrew, etc.) are the more and more heavily financed: in 2014 they received €1,370 per pupil, in 2016 – €1,529, and in 2018 – €1,702, just like Polish schools.

Finally, the pupils' general level at school depends on their language of education. Although children studying in Lithuanian and Russian schools have similar levels, pupils in the latter have a slightly higher level in mathematics. However, pupils studying in Polish schools tend

to be less good than other pupils. This can cause inequalities, as the entrance examination to Lithuanian universities is only in Lithuanian. This could pose problems for the ones who studied in their minority language, especially Polish minority pupils who have more difficulties at school (Bakonis et al. 2018). Nonetheless, some programs, for instance Montvydaitė's 2019 edict, are financed to reduce such inequalities in regions with a strong concentration of minorities.

2. Foreign loanwords

When a linguistic community is surrounded by another language (or, in this case, several other languages), it frequently starts borrowing words. Polish dialects spoken in Lithuania are not an exception, as they are anything but resistant to the influx of loanwords from other languages spoken in the country. Thus, the main goal of this section is to determine the categories of foreign words which entered the Polish lexicon on the Lithuanian territory. Firstly, it will present Lithuanian loanwords in Polish, followed by Russian and English ones.

The discussion of Lithuanian borrowings will be based on Rutkovska's (2007) study. She made a distinction between four classes of Lithuanisms in Polish dialects spoken close to the border of Lithuania, Poland, and Belarus. Each class is divided into several groups depending on the semantic fields to which the words belong.

The first class of borrowings consists of words which probably entered the Polish language in the 15th-18th centuries, during a period of intense contacts between Poland and Lithuania. At that time the Grand Duche of Lithuania reached its maximal extension, with Poland and Lithuania forming one country. Therefore, the Lithuanian language also had some influence on areas where other Slavic languages were spoken, as similar loanwords can be found in other Slavic languages, such as Belarusian, Russian, and Ukrainian. Table 1 presents the six groups of this category.

Table 1
The first class of Lithuanian loanwords

Group	Example
Physiographic names	*dyrsa* 'bromus', from lt, *dirsė* 'bromus' *dyrwan* 'abandoned, uncultivated, damaged soil', lt. *dirvonas* 'soil'
Name of people depending on their activity, tools	*bitnikować* 'to be a beekeeper', lt. *bitininkas* 'beekeeper' *sklut* 'ax', lt. *skliutas* 'ax'
Meat and bread	*skiłańdź* 'smoked meat stuffed in a pig's stomach', lt. *skilandis* 'matured sausage'
Tools designed for farming or moving	*szłaje* 'working sledge for firewood transport', lt *šlajos* 'working double sledge'
Buildings	*świren* 'hut where grain is poured, larger barn', lt. *svirnas* 'barn'
Human appearance	*kliszawy* 'crooked', lt. *klišas* 'cliché'

The second class of loanwords, grouped into five semantic fields, mainly entered the Polish language during the 19th century and at the beginning of the 20th century. They might have been borrowed via northern dialects of the Belarusian language. Table 2 provides some examples of borrowings from the second class.

Table 2
The second class of Lithuanian loanwords

Group	Examples
Human appearance and behavior	*kurstać* 'to encourage to do something', lt. *kurstyti* 'incite' *verkšlenti* 'to whine', lt. *šnervės* 'nostrils'
Food	*burložka* 'tasteless soup' lt. *burliūga* 'liquid dirt'
Plants and trees	*atożeła* 'young twig that has grown from a tree trunk or root, sprouts, shoots', lt. *atažala* 'twig'
Agriculture and farming	*gil* 'flying insect, cockroach', lt. *gylys* 'botfly'
Folklore and traditions	*wircinka* 'necklace sold at Kaziukas fair', lt. *virtinė* 'something hooked on a rope'

The third class comprises loanwords which probably entered Polish at the beginning of the 20th century directly from Lithuanian, since their existence is not attested in other languages. This wave of borrowings was probably related to the annexion of Vilnius to Poland. As Lithuanian- and Polish-speaking people were in constant contact, Polish was the only language which borrowed Lithuanian lexical items at that time. Rutkovska (2007) divideed this class into three distinct groups, illustrated in Table 3.

Table 3
The third class of Lithuanian loanwords

Group	Examples
Cattle	*inksztyr* 'bovine parasite', lt. *inkštiras* 'bovine parasite'
Plants and atmospheric phenomena	*puśnia* 'pile of snow', lt. *pusnis* 'pile of snow'
Food	*szupienia* 'porridge made of cereals', lt. *šiupinys* 'porridge made of cereals, peas, beans, potatoes, meat, etc.'

Finally, the fourth class includes Lithuanian words that Polish-speaking people are currently borrowing and using, such as *aukletoja* 'educator' from lt. *auklėtoja* 'educator', or *plant* 'highway, road' from lt. *plentas* 'highway, road'. While the three abovementioned classes reveal the historical aspect of borrowing, this class highlights the still very active and productive nature of this process.

A similar research question was addressed by Oleńska (2008), who analyzed the language of the Polish youth living in Vilnius. She listed 1168 foreign loanwords she found, which include not only those borrowed from Lithuanian, but also from Russian and English. She distinguished 16 categories of loanwords, as shown in Table 4.

Table 4
Oleńska's 16 categories of loanwords in Polish

Category	Russian loanwords example	Lithuanian loanwords example	English loanwords example
Physical and physiological activities	*bałtać* 'to talk a lot, to say something boring', ru. *boltat'* 'to chat'	*k nykštukasam* 'take care of a physiological need', lt. *nykštukas* 'dwarf'	/
Clothes	*adziożki* 'clothes', ru. *odežda* 'clothes'	*kelnes* 'trousers', lt. *kelnės* 'trousers'	*sumercap* 'men's cap', en. summer cap
Physical traits	*abizjana* 'ape-like man', ru. *obez'jana* 'monkey'	*žalias* 'young, inexperienced', lt. *žalias* 'green'	*playboy* 'beautiful man', en. 'playboy
School and science	*psichuszka* 'about school', ru. *psixuška* 'psychiatric hospital'	*szulė* 'school', lt. *šulė* 'barrel'	*polish* 'Polish language', en. Polish
Parts of the body	*rot* 'an expressive mouth', ru. *rot* 'mouth'	*sznerwes* 'wide nose', lt. *šnervės* 'nostrils'	/
Mental traits	*nikakoj* 'sad, gloomy, melancholic', ru. *nikakoj* 'none'	*nebilys* 'taciturn', lt. *nebylys* 'silent, mute'	/
Computer science	*poisk* 'research on the internet', ru. *poisk* 'to search'	*pakrovėjas* 'charger', lt. *pakrovėjas* 'charger'	*email*, en. email
City life	*pojezd* 'train', ru. *poezd* 'train'	*kirstukas* 'priest', lt. *kirstukas* 'shrew'	*bike*, en. bike
Social life	*kafuszka* 'café', ru. *kafe* 'café'	*kavinė* 'café', lt. *kavinė* 'café'	*disco* 'school prom', en. disco
The human being	*cziudzik* 'someone little known or unknown', ru. *čudik* 'eccentric'	*bachuras* 'man; boy, with a positive connotation', lt. *bachuras* 'boy'	*bitch* 'woman/girl with a negative connotation'(often used as an insult), en. bitch
Attitude towards others	*obmanywać* 'cheat, lie, use by deceiving', ru. *obmanyvat'* 'to cheat, to fool'	*kišis* 'bribe', lt. *kyšis* 'bribe'	/
Love	*sasatsa* 'to kiss', ru. *sosat'sja* 'to suck'	*pasiglamžioti* 'to kiss', lt. *glamžyti* 'to wrinkle'	/
Friends	*drużba* 'friend', ru. *družba* 'friendship'	*labas* 'hello', lt. *labas* 'hello'	*the best* 'a very good friend', en. the best
Family	*bratan* 'brother', ru. *bratan* 'brother'	/	*sister*, en. sister
Mental processes	*nyć* 'to cry; to get upset', ru. *nyt'* 'to whine'	/	/
Cultural life	*sportzal* 'gym', ru. *sportzal* 'gym'	*krepšinis* 'basketball', lt. *krepšinis* 'basketball'	*cinema*, en. cinema
Number of loanwords	1026	54	58

Oleńska (2008) justified the massive proportion of Russian loanwords by the linguistic habits of the respondents. They were all Polish speakers, mostly studying in Polish schools and having Polish friends. Thus, this was a population strongly influenced by the Russian language, as described in Section 2 of the present paper. Despite the decline of Russian in the public sphere, it is still a common language among the Polish minority in Eastern Lithuania.

As for a possible Lithuanian influence on the Polish language, Oleńska (2008) listed 54 loanwords, justifying this small number of loanwords from the state's official language by relatively little exposure of the respondents to Lithuanian. They all spoke the language decently, but due to their predominantly Polish linguistic environment (friends, school), Polish youth had less contact with the Lithuanian language.

Furthermore, the author listed 58 anglicisms, almost as many as Lithuanian loanwords. Many of these loanwords are related to technology and science. Indeed, due to a lack of equivalents in their language, English terms were borrowed to denote scientific phenomena.

This justification of the use of foreign words by the lack of equivalents in the speakers' native language is also visible in Ruskovska's (2007) study, presenting predominantly borrowings related to nature or farming. As previously mentioned, the Polish language in Lithuania was historically the language of the nobility, while Lithuanian was the language of the common people. Hence, Lithuanian developed its lexicon related to farming more than Polish. Since the Russian language was used much more often in everyday life, there were more Russicisms related to family, friends, and social life.

In conclusion, these two studies show the situation of linguistic contacts between the Polish population with the speakers of other languages, and its impact on the Polish language spoken in and around Vilnius. When Polish and Lithuanian were in constant contact, namely before 1772 and the first partition of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, Lithuanian was the language of the peasantry, reflected in borrowings linked to the environment. As for Russian, Oleńska (2008) has shown that nowadays Polish speakers have much more contact with Russian than with Lithuanian. However, the amount of Russicisms can also be related to the fact that both Polish and Russian are Slavic languages. Therefore, their morphologies and lexicons are closely related, which might explain a greater facility of borrowing.

3. The reflection of the Polish minority in the Lithuanian language

The final section will briefly discuss words referring to the Polish people which can be found in the Lithuanian language. They were partially analyzed by Zav'jalova and Anglickienė (2005), who attempted to determine whether it was possible to link the close relation between Poland and Lithuania and the resistance against the process of polonization since the XIX century to a possible negative perception of Polish people nowadays. This analysis includes different sources (folklore, press articles, historical sources, etc.) allowing to draw conclusions with regard to language.

Although the most standard word to say 'the Polish' in Lithuanian is *lenkas*, derived from Old East Slavic *ljaxъ*, it fails to be the only term referring to the people. The first word Zav'jalova and Anglickienė (2005) analyze is *gudas*, whose origins remain unsure. This is an ethnonym used mainly to talk about the Belarusian people, but it can refer to the Polish people as well. As already mentioned, much more Polish (or at least "the non-assimilated Polish", i.e. Polish people who kept their language and traditions) and Belarusian people inhabit Eastern Lithuania, so the word *gudas* is naturally more frequently used in this part of the country. Remarkably, *gudas* is a very productive term, easily lending itself to suffixation. For instance,

gudija refers to a place full of *gudas*, *gudė* – a female *gudas*, and *gudynas* – a child *gudas*. It is also possible to create verbs on the basis of this noun: *gudauti*, *guduoti*, and *gudžiuoti* all mean 'to talk in the *gudas'* language, not to speak Lithuanian well, to speak in the local dialect' (Zav'jalova, Anglickienė, 2005).

Another word frequently used in Lithuanian is *šlėkta*, from Polish *szlachta*. Although this word originally had the same historical meaning as in Polish, referring to the nobility in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, in the course of time it acquired modern, more negative connotations. Just as *gudas*, it easily lends itself to word formation: *šlekėti* means 'to behave like a *šlėkta*', šlėktomanas – 'a person who defends a *šlėkta*', *šlėktelėti* – 'to imitate a *šlėkta*, to copy his attitude', whereas *šlėktomanas* – 'a person who respects and defends a *šlėkta*'.

The loanword *paliokas*, adapted either from Polish *Polak* or from Belarusian *paljak*, is also used in Lithuanian to refer to the Polish people. It also has negative connotations, as can be seen in an example from an online Lithuanian dictionary: *Nesusidudena su paliokais*, 'You don't get along with *paliokai*' (LKŽ IX: 265).

The last analyzed word is *mozuras*, derived from the name of the Polish region Masuria. In spite of its polysemous meaning, it always refers to the Polish people (with different nuances), and can also constitute the point of departure for the creation of other expressions: *sumožūrėti* – "to adopt the polish language, Polish habits" and *možūruoti* – "to speak with a Polish accent". On the basis of this analysis, the researchers have drawn the conclusion that all those terms, namely *lenkas*, *gudas*, *šlėkta*, *paliokas*, and *mozuras* have negative connotations. However, on no account does this imply that all Lithuanians have a negative perception of the Polish people. One must not forget that all those words are a reflection of the history of the Lithuanian nation. If words such as *sumožūrėti* or *šlėkta* exist in Lithuanian, it means that *szlachty* existed in Lithuania, and that adopting the Polish culture (i.e., the language and culture of the nobility) was once common.

Still, the Polish presence in Lithuania is negatively perceived to some extent owing to the country's history. The Lithuanian nobility of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth had to adopt the Polish language and culture. Following the regain of independence in 1918, an important part of the Lithuanian historical territory, including the country's largest city – Vilnius, was annexed to Poland. Nowadays, calling Vilnius by its Polish name 'Wilno' is perceived as something negative, bringing back painful memories from the early 20th century.

However, some words reflect the current situation of the country. The verbs *gudauti*, *guduoti*, and *gudžiuoti* can be used to refer to people who cannot speak Lithuanian well. This meaning makes sense nowadays. As described in the two first sections of this paper, the Polish minority in Lithuania tends to live in an environment where Lithuanian is not a common language and, therefore, speaks it less well than other inhabitants of the country. This example shows that Lithuanian speakers have a stereotype concerning the Polish people: 'if you speak like them, you speak bad Lithuanian'.

Conclusions

The situation of the Polish minority in Eastern Lithuania shows to what extent living in a multilingual environment, especially as a national minority, influences the way of using language. Firstly, given that an important part of the population in this part of the country is Polish, assimilation is very slow, or even impossible. Decades after the fall of the USSR many Polish people still speak Polish and Russian fluently, and know only a few words in Lithuanian, the official language of the country. Therefore, the Polish minority living in Eastern Lithuania

is largely influenced by Russian, which is an indicator of language contact in the area. As shown in Section 2, the older generation tends to speak Russian with the younger, making it fluent in both Polish and Russian. This strong Russian influence is reflected in the amount of foreign loanwords – over 90% of the loanwords in Oleńska's (2008) study among the Polish youth in Vilnius are Russicisms.

A new census will be published in a few months. A comparison of its results to the previous ones would be an occasion to determine how the Lithuanian demography has evolved this last decade in terms of the proportion of Polish people using their native language. Furthermore, new surveys on the linguistic behavior of the Polish minority would reveal if the situation is the same as ten years ago, and whether a progressive assimilation is possible. One can expect that this process is slowly accelerating, at least in Vilnius. Thirty years after the fall of the USSR, the Lithuanian youth tends to speak English rather than Russian, which could lead to a loss of the importance of this language. De facto, the Polish minority could feel more encouraged to learn and speak Lithuanian rather than Russian.

References

Bakonis, et al. (2018). *Lietuvos tautinių mažumų švietimo būklės analizė (Analysis of the state of education of Lithuanian national minorities)*. Nacionalinė Mokyklų Vertinimo Agentūra.

Cibulskaitė, G. (2012). Les minorités nationales en Lituanie: entre construction identitaire et intégration européenne (National minorities in Lithuania: between identity construction and european integration), doctoral thesis. Université Sorbonne Nouvelle – Paris 3, 19-120.

Frost, R. (2013). The Polish-Lithuanian Union, 1386-1795, *British Academy Review, 21*, 7-10.

Hogan-Brun, G., Ozolins, U., Ramonienė, M., Rannut, M. (2007). Language politics and practice in the Baltic States. In R.B. Kaplan, R.B. Baldauf Jr (eds.), *Current issues in language planning*, 8(4), (pp. 469-631).

Oleńska, M. (2008). *Ewolucja socjolektu młodzieży polskiego pochodzenia w Wilnie* (*Evolution of the sociolect of the youth of Polish origin in Vilnius*), master's thesis. Vilnius Pedagogical University.

Ramonienė, M. Geben, K. (2011). Osobennosti jazykovogo povedenija litovskix poljakov (Particularities of the linguistic behaviour of the Lithuanian-Polish people). *Диаспоры, 1*, 86-120.

Rutkovska, K. (2007). Lietuvių kalbos skoliniai Lietuvos lenkų tarmėse (Lithuanian borrowings in Polish dialects in Lithuania). *Acta Linguistica Lithuanica, 67*, 71-80.

Smetonienė, I. (2007). Le multilinguisme en Lituanie, hier et aujourd'hui (Multilingualism in Lithuania, yesterday and today). *Cahiers Lituaniens, 8*, 59-53.

Zav'jalova, M. Anglickienė, L. (2005). Stereotip poljaka glazami litovtsev (The stereotype of a Pole in the eyes of Lithuanians). *Etnolingwistyka, 17*, 145-186. Retrieved from: https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/content/population-demographicsituationlanguages-and-religions-44_en#:~:text=The%20official%20language%20of %20the,Belarusians.

http://www.lenkutarmes.flf.vu.lt.

http://www.lkz.lt/.

Zuzana HRDLIČKOVÁ
University of Economics in Bratislava

BUSINESS, ACADEMIC AND GENERAL ENGLISH IDIOMS AND THEIR NON-IDIOMATIC SYNONYMS

Abstract

Idiomatic language is frequently used in Business English and Academic English. When the term 'idiom' is used, learners often think of colourful expressions. However, the English language also includes less obviously colourful expressions. In Business English courses, learners use these expressions in speech and writing, often without noticing them. Apart from business terms, collocations and idioms are often included in vocabulary tests. It shows that when learners regularly acquire idiomatic vocabulary, they become more fluent and native-like in English business communication. The paper aims to discuss idioms found in newspaper and magazine articles, read by students within the KEGA Project. The rationale for the quantitative analysis is to build a corpus of currently used idioms. The rationale for the qualitative analysis is to test the hypothesis "Every idiom has a non-idiomatic synonym on the semantic level" (Strässler, 1982, p. 85). Based on the research results, implications for further research will be offered.

Introduction

Learners of English can see and hear idioms in all sorts of speaking and writing. They are particularly common in everyday conversation and in popular journalism. For example, they are often found in headlines, advertisements, horoscopes or problem pages, etc. However, idioms are also used in more formal contexts, such as lectures, academic essays and business reports. Accurate and fluent formal writing is important in advanced-level examinations, for instance, idiomatic expressions for structuring an argument or indicating relationships between ideas or events help learners organize their arguments and ideas in essays.

The paper presents the work of one group of undergraduates of the Faculty of International Relations of the University of Economics in Bratislava during one semester. Altogether 7 lecturers and 395 undergraduates participated in the KEGA Project. All of them were enrolled on courses *Business English for Advanced Students I, II* and *III*. Since the main aim of the project was to explore current idioms in use, the participants were asked to choose newspaper or magazine articles relating to field of their study and find, at least, two idioms in each one. While working with articles from *POLITICO* (PLT), *The Guardian* (GRD), *FORTUNE* (FRT), *Inc.* (INC) and *Forbes* (FBS), they found many idioms used in Business, Academic and General English.

The main aim of the paper is to find out what kind of idioms are frequently used in Business, Academic and General English. For the quantitative analysis, Fernando's (1996) classification was chosen. A theoretical part of the paper shows the examples of idioms used in General English (GenE) and Academic English (AcadE). The research presents a corpus of idioms used in Business English, but idioms used in Academic English are also indicated in it. The rationale for the qualitative analysis is to find their non-idiomatic equivalents. Some examples of idioms are used in sentences to show them in context.

1. Business English, Academic English and General English

'Business English' is a term more widely used among practitioners than theorists. It is used to describe courses run by language schools, colleges and universities all around the world. It is a part of English for Specific Purposes (ESP), which, in turn, is a case of a more general variety called Language for Special/Specific Purposes (LSP). According to Ellis and Johnson (1994) and Donna (2000), Business English is seen in the overall context of English for Specific Purposes, as it shares the important elements of needs analysis, syllabus design, and material selection and development that are common to all fields of work in ESP. It needs to be emphasized that ESP does not only include English for Business Purposes (EBP), but it also comprises English for Academic Purposes (EAP), English for Occupational Purposes (EOP), English for Management, Finance and Economics (EMFE), English for Academic Science and Technology (EAST) (Potęga, 2016).

English for Academic Purposes, or simply Academic English, is the language needed by university students. It includes, for example, discipline-specific vocabulary, grammar and punctuation, applications of rhetorical conventions and devices that are typical for a content area (essays, reports or discussions). Learning Academic English is probably one of the most reliable ways of attaining socio-economic success in society. Learners of English cannot function in school settings effectively without it. This variety of English entails the multiple, complex features required for success in higher education and career advancement. It involves mastery of a writing system and its particular academic conventions as well as proficiency in reading, speaking and listening. Unfortunately, Academic English has often been ignored or under-emphasized in higher education (Scarcella, 2003).

English as a Foreign Language (EFL) (or General English) is taught in high schools and while in General English classes students develop all four language skills, i.e. reading, writing, listening and speaking, in Business English courses, students need to develop specific Business English skills, e.g. negotiating, report-writing, understanding the news, participating in meeting, making presentations, etc. To improve these specific skills, students need to acquire a wide range of business vocabulary. While dealing with business vocabulary, attention is paid to Academic English vocabulary, as well. For instance, quantifying expressions are important in Academic English, as it is often necessary to comment on figures and trends, e.g. 'a great deal of', 'in excess of', etc. Certain chunks of language occur very frequently in spoken and written context, e.g. chunks expressing number, quantity, degree or chunks for generalising and specifying, e.g. 'with respect to', 'in terms of', 'as a whole', 'for the most part', 'with regard to', 'in addition to', etc. (McCarthy and O'Dell, 2016).

The research aims to investigate multi-word expressions that can be used in business and academic situations.

2. Idiomatic expressions in English

Idioms are a type of formulaic language consisting of "fixed expressions" that are learnt and understood as units rather than as individual words. It is useful to start the discussion with the most frequently mentioned features of idioms. Firstly, *compositeness* – idioms are commonly accepted as a type of "multiword expression" (e.g. 'the big picture', 'tête à tête', 'flesh and blood', 'see eye to eye (with sb/on sth)', 'on balance'), though a few scholars (Hockett, 1958; Katz, Postal, 1963) accept even single words as idioms (e.g. 'breadwinner'). Secondly, *institutionalization* – idioms are conventionalized expressions, conventionalization being the end result of initially *ad hoc*, and in this sense novel, expressions. Thirdly, *semantic opacity*

– the meaning of an idiom is not the sum of its constituents, i.e. an idiom is often non-literal. The widespread occurrence of these three features in common word combinations has resulted in many types of multiword expressions identified by some other term such as *slang*, *proverbs*, *allusions*, *similes*, *dead metaphors*, *social formulae* and *collocations* also being identified as idioms (Fernando 1996).

Bilá, Kačmárová, Kášová, Tomášiková, Vojtek and Koželová (2015) summarize the findings and approaches to the issue of "multiword expressions" in lexicological compendiums, textbooks and lexicographical works, as well as in selected scholarly works in English, German, Romance and Hispanic Studies, primarily based on the comparison with the Slovak language. They analyze approaches to the multiword expressions as compared to Slovak Studies (conceptual and terminological differences, dissimilar methodological approaches). In the English language, they identify the following multiword expressions: *collocations*, *phrasal verbs*, *idioms*, *speech formulae*, *situation-bound utterances*, *clichés*, *proverbs*, *propria*, *binomials* and *trinomials*.

Sonomura (1996) uses the term "phraseme". A phraseme as a hyper-class falls to three categories, namely *idioms*, *collocations* and *formulas*, which are further subdivided. Idioms consist of *euphemisms*, *frozen figurative forms* (i.e. hyperboles, metaphors, similes, proverbs, sayings), *full idioms*, *semi-idioms* and *tournures*). She distinguishes three types of collocations: unique, restricted and common. Finally, formulas are divided into *conventional implicatures*, *routines* and *conventional usages* (arbitrary and ungrammatical).

Makkai (1972), Weinreich (1969), Fraser (1970), and Strässler (1982) focus on lexically and grammatically regular idioms. Roberts (1944), Smith (1925), Jespersen (1924) and Fillmore *et al.* (1988) focus on the idiosyncrasies of English, many of which are lexically and grammatically irregular. Cowie *et al.* (1975, 1983, 1993) include both types of idioms. Based on three language functions identified by Halliday (1973, 1985), Fernando (1996) describes ideational idioms, interpersonal idioms and relational idioms.

According to O'Dell and McCarthy (2010), formulaic language consists of "fixed expressions" such as *greetings*, *good wishes*, *prepositional phrases*, *sayings*, *proverbs*, *quotations*, *similes*, *binomials*, *trinomials*, *compounds*, *phrasal verbs* and *collocations*. They define idioms as fixed combinations of words whose meaning is often difficult to guess from the meaning of each individual word. If the learner is not familiar with an idiom, it is difficult to know exactly what the sentence means. It has non-literal or idiomatic meaning. Some sample sentences with idioms used in context are as follows:

[1] *Go for the* ***low-hanging fruit****. Use existing third-party services to implement AI solutions where there are limited costs and clear returns – having a sales-focused chatbot is great for lead nurturing and very easy to implement on a website, for example*. (FBS, 2018, April 20). [GenE; the things that are the easiest to obtain or achieve]

[2] *We've all had jobs that have felt like a chore – jobs where you struggle to get out of bed to head into the office and just* ***go through the emotions***. (FRT, 2016, November 18). [AcadE; to do or say sth because you have to, not because you really want to]

3. Structural variety of idioms

Having primarily lexical idiomatic expressions in mind, many linguists suggest that they consist of various combinations of parts of speech, i.e. nouns, adjectives, verbs and adverbs. This classification appears as suitable for the analysis of idiomatic expressions: a) adjective + noun, b) verb + noun, c) noun + noun, d) adverb + verb, and e) noun + verb (Kavka, 2003). Fernando (1996) divides ideational idioms into nominals, adjectivals, adverbials, verbals.

Cowie, Mackin and McCaig (1993) identify an enormous structural variety of English idioms. Phrase patterns, subject-less clause patterns, and simple or complex sentence patterns represent a small sample of the great range of construction types. The spread is considerable, but the majority of them can be classified under two general headings – *phrase idioms* and *clause idioms*. Within these major groupings are several dominant sub-categories. The most common *clause* patterns spanned by idioms, for instance, are the following: a) verb + complement, b) verb + direct object, c) verb + direct object + complement, d) verb + indirect object + direct object, and e) verb + direct object + adjunct; while the most commonly occurring *phrase* patterns are these: a) noun phrase, b) adjective phrase, c) prepositional phrase, and d) adverbial phrase.

[3] *The Commission **takes aim at** single use plastics to reduce litter*. (PLT, 2018, April 27) [AcadE]

[4] *So often, there's **a kernel of truth** in the gossip. Don't panic, but don't ignore the gossip*. (FRT, 2017, May 30) [GenE]

[5] *They are **on the brink of** accepting, pending due diligence and the approval of the public bodies who contributed to the stadium's iconic redesign*. (GRD, 2018, April 26) [GenE]

Idioms are often based on everyday things and ideas, for instance, the human body.

[6] *And they need to do this whilst **standing head and shoulders above** competitors with a true standout campaign that is no one-hit-wonder, and which makes a real difference, securing consumer loyalty for life*. (FBS, 2012, December 14) [GenE]

[7] *Ask your contact to please **keep her ear to the ground** for any opportunities that may be suitable for you*. (FRT, 2017, May 30) [GenE]

[8] *Yet without sustained evidence that millions of people have had **a change of heart**, the case for completely reversing the decision is difficult to make at this moment in time*. (GRD, 2018, March 28) [AcadE; GenE]

4. Using idioms in written and spoken discourse

Many idioms are quite informal, so they should be used carefully. Learners need to be able to understand a lot of idioms if they want to read English fiction, newspapers or magazines, or understand TV shows, films and songs. English language dictionaries give examples of how idioms are used, and also give information on their use, e.g. whether they are used humorously, informally or in a more literary context.

[9] *Facebook founder submits **mea culpa** to Congress*. (PLT, 2018, September 4) [GenE; humorous]

[10] *Trump on Friday delivers his long-promised speech on how to lower drug costs, addressing an industry he has in the past accused of "**getting away with murder**"*. (PLT, 2018, September 5) [GenE; humorous; infml]

[11] *Even if these events do not **come to pass** and Iran's regime collapses under the sheer weight of U.S. pressure – a fantastical assumption, but one on which Trump has seemingly based his decision – the effects would be highly destabilizing*. (PLT, 2018, May 10) [AcadE; literary]

Idioms frequently change in English. Although many idioms last for a long time, some disappear very quickly. Therefore, some idioms that were popular sixty years ago may sound very old-fashioned and odd today. For instance, the following idioms are not frequently used nowadays. It is therefore important to be careful if learners of English learn idioms from, say, *Forbes*, *FORTUNE* or *Market Leader Business English Course Book* (Cotton, Falvey and Kent, 2011), as it may sound unnatural if they use them in their own speech or writing.

[12] ***What's good for the goose is good for the gander**. If borrowing money is smart when the rate of return is higher than the cost of the funds when the federal government does it, it is smart when ordinary Americans do it to obtain a college education.* (FBS, 2018, May 10) [GenE; *AmE, AustrE* old-fashioned; variant: **what's sauce for the goose (is sauce for the gander)** *BrE, AmE, AustrE* old-fashioned]

[13] *If I could get them to be our distributor, it'd really be **a feather in my cap**, it'd really raise my profile in Drew Corporation*. (Cotton, Falvey, Kent, 2011, p. 156) [GenE; old-fashioned]

People often use idioms to emphasize something, to comment on themselves, to agree with a previous speaker, to comment on people, to comment on a situation, to make an anecdote more interesting, to catch the reader's eye, to indicate membership of a particular group, and so forth (O'Dell and McCarthy, 2010).

To sum up, idioms have the potential to appear in different types of discourse. They can be used in formal, informal or literary contexts. Some of them have variants in British, American or Australian English. Even though some of them are old-fashioned, they are till used. However, this paper will only focus on up-to-date commonly used idioms in Business English.

5. Research methodology

During the summer semester, 20 undergraduates of the Faculty of International Relations of the University of Economics in Bratislava participated in the KEGA Project. Each of them was supposed to read 12 articles in order to identify, at least, two idioms in every article by using print or online dictionaries such as https://www.merriam-webster.com, https://idioms.thefreedictionary.com, https://dictionary.cambridge.org, etc. as we agree with Hakim, Abidin and Bahari (2020) that dictionary use increases students' vocabulary mastery, no matter whether electronic or printed one. For their individual work, they chose the following sources: *POLITICO*, *The Guardian*, *FORTUNE*, *Inc.* and *Forbes*.

The main aim of the quantitative analysis is to build a corpus of currently used idioms (some of them occur in more sources). The qualitative analysis tries to identify different types of idioms and to test the hypothesis "Every idiom has a non-idiomatic synonym on the semantic level" (Strässler, 1982, p. 85).

For the analysis, Fernando's (1996) classification of ideational idioms was chosen. She divides them into units smaller than the clause, i.e. *nominals*, *adjectivals*, *adverbials* and *verbals* that function as parts of clauses. Ideational idioms can also be *clauses* themselves.

To check the (in)correctness of participants' work, the primary publication and dictionaries were consulted: Gillet (2010) Cowie, Mackin and McCaig (1993), O'Dell and McCarthy (2010), Walter (2006), Wright, (2002), Parkinson and Noble (2005), Lea, Bull, Webb and Duncan (2014).

The idioms are explained in the following way: a) the register – formal vs. informal English (informal (*infml*) – normally used only in contexts such as conversations or letters between friends; formal (*fml*) – normally used only in writing such as official documents), b) varieties of English – *BrE*, *AmE*, *AustrE*, c) an idiom is also used in Academic English (*also* AE), d) examples of idioms used in immediate context, e) a core synonym (in bold) (in some cases two core synonyms), a near synonym (in some cases more near synonyms are used), an idiom (bold italic type), if possible – an antonym and the origin of an idiom (Latin, French).

6. Research findings

From the following tables, it is evident that the most frequently used idioms are *verbals* and *adverbials*. No clauses themselves (i.e. proverbs, sayings, catchphrases, etc.) were found in Business English. The corpus consists of 182 idioms.

Table 1
POLITICO – Business English Idioms

POLITICO – Business English Idioms	**No.**
Nominals: the big picture *infml* (*also* AE), deep pockets, the letter of the law, a level playing field (*also* AE) *rather infml*	4
Adjectivals: at risk (2x) (*also* AE), at stake (2x) (*also* AE), go-it-alone, ground-breaking, in place (*also* AE) (4x), in question (*also* AE), on-the-job, up for sth (*also* AE) *rather infml*	8
Adverbials: at your/sb's disposal (*also* AE), behind closed doors (*also* AE), below/under the radar (screen) (*also* AE),in advance (of sth) (3x) (*also* AE), in due course (*also* AE), in the hands of sb (*also* AE), in line with sth (*also* AE), in/over the long/medium/short/far/near term (3x), in/out of the picture *infml*, in principle (2x) (*also* AE), in/with reference to *fml* (*also* AE), in terms of sth, (3x) (*also* AE),on balance (*also* AE),on top of sth (2x) (*also* AE), on the table (4x) (*also* AE), on time, to the tune of sth	17
Verbals: be in the firing line *BrE*, bring/call/throw sth into question (*also* AE), come/enter into force (*also* AE), fall short of sth (3x) (*also* AE), get sb/sth back on track, get your act together *infml*, get (sth) off the ground (3x) (*also* AE), go/put sb out of business (*also* AE), go/turn sour, knock on/at sb's/the door *infml*, make headway, make it (*also* AE), make money (2x) (*also* AE), name and shame *BrE* (2x), open doors for sb, pave the way for sth, play a (key, major, vital, etc.) part/role (in sth) (5x), play by the rules (2x) (*also* AE) *rather infml*, put sth on hold (2x), raise/up the ante, *esp. AmE*, run short (of sth) (*also* AE), strike a balance (between), take advantage of sth/sb (3x) (*also* AE), take effect (2x) (*also* AE), take a hit, take part (in sth) (*also* AE), turn your back on sb/sth (*also* AE), turn sth on its head (*also* AE)	28
TOTAL:	**57**

[14] *"We **take** customs fraud very **seriously** and we continue to evolve our response as new threats emerge," Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs said in a statement, adding that it would "carefully examine the formal notice from the Commission and respond **in due course**."* (PLT, 2018, March 8)

[15] *EU ambassadors agreed in June to continue the exemption, as proposed by the Commission: The Parliament votes in plenary in September, **paving the way for** negotiations with the Council on the details*. (PLT, 2017, September 4)

- rich (adj) → **wealthy**, affluent, ***with deep pockets***; *antonym*: poor
- vulnerable (adj) → **in danger**, in peril, ***at risk***; *antonym*: well protected
- ***in place*** → **1 in position**, in situ, **2 ready**, set up
- ***in question*** → **at issue**, being discussed
- to hand → **readily available**, available, ***at one's disposal***
- behind the scenes → **secretly**, in secret, ***behind closed doors***; *antonym*: publicly; sub rosa (adv) *Latin*→ **in secret**, secretly, ***behind closed doors***
- ***in advance*** (of sth) → **beforehand**, before
- ***in due course*** → **at the appropriate time**, when the time is ripe; afterwards →**later**, later on, ***in due course***
- at sb's disposal → **for use by**, in reserve for, ***in the hands of***
- ***in line*** → **in agreement**, in accord; *antonym*: different
- informed (adj) → **knowledgeable**, enlightened; well briefed, ***in the picture***; *French* au courant, au fait; *antonym*: ill-informed
- ***in principle*** → **1 in theory**, theoretically; *French* en principe, **2 in general**, **on balance**, generally
- ***with reference to*** → **apropos**, with regard to
- ***in terms of*** → **with regard to**, as regards, with reference to
- ***on balance*** → **overall**, all in all
- ***on top of that*** → **as well**, in addition
- punctually (adv) → **promptly**, ***on time***, at the proper time
- vulnerable to (adj + prep) → **exposed to**; ***in the firing line***; *antonym*: immune to
- dispute (v) → **challenge**, contest, ***call into question***; *antonym*: accept
- take effect → ***come into force***, come into operation; *antonym*: lapse
- ***fall short*** → **fail to meet**, fail to reach; **be deficient**, be inadequate; *antonym*: measure up (to)
- start (v) → **establish**, set up, ***get sth off the ground***; *antonym*: end
- close (v) → **cease activity**, shut down; fail, ***go out of business***; *antonym*: open
- turn (v) → **go/become sour**, go off
- flourish (v) → **progress**, make progress, ***make headway***; *antonym*: decline
- prosper (v) → **thrive**, flourish; make it, ***make headway***, fly high; *antonym*: fail
- ***pave the way for*** → **prepare for**, prepare the way for; usher in → **herald**, mark the start of, ***pave the way for***; get off the ground
- ***take part in*** → **participate in**, engage in, ***play a part in***, ***play a role in***

- conform (v) **follow convention**, be conventional; *infml* ***play by the rules***; *antonym*: rebel
- in limbo **in abeyance**, unattended to; *infml* ***on hold***; *antonym*: in hand
- compromise (v) **meet each other halfway**, find the middle ground, ***strike a balance***
- ***take advantage of*** sth/sb **1 exploit**, abuse; *infml* take for a ride, **2 make use of**, utilize, make the most of
- be effective **have an effect**, ***take effect***; *antonym*: fail; ***take effect*** **1 come into force**, come into operation; *antonym*: lapse, **2 work**, act, be effective, produce results, be efficacious
- ***take part*** **participate**, join in, play a part, play a role; ***take part in*** **participate in**, engage in, play a part in, play a role in; engage in **participate in**, ***take part in***; share in, **play a part in**, **play a role in**
- ignore (v) **snub**, slight, ***turn one's back on***; *antonym*: acknowledge; ***turn one's back on*** **abandon**, give up

Table 2
The Guardian – Business English Idioms

THE GUARDIAN – Business English Idioms	**No.**
Nominals: the big three, four, etc., conflict of interest(s) (*also* AE)	2
Adjectivals: at risk (2x) (*also* AE), at stake (*also* AE), in the pipeline (*also* AE)	3
Adverbials: at all times (*also* AE),in advance (of sth) (*also* AE), in the hands of sb (*also* AE), in line with sth (2x) (*also* AE), in place (*also* AE), in/over the long run (*also* AE), in the long/short/medium term (*also* AE), in terms of sth (*also* AE), on balance (*also* AE), on/off the radar (screen), on the road (*also* AE), on the table (*also* AE), on top of sth (2x) (*also* AE), there is/was no question of (sth happening/sb doing sth), to the tune of sth, with respect to sth (*also* AE)	16
Verbals: be hit hard (by sth), be made redundant *BrE*, be on track (*also* AE), bring/get/keep sth under control (*also* AE), come into effect (*also* AE), come/enter into force (2x) (*also* AE), deal a (serious, severe, etc.) blow to sb/sth, down tools *BrE, AustrE*, foot the bill *infml*, get (sth) off the ground (*also* AE), get (sb) off the hook *infml*, the jury is (still) out on sth (*also* AE) *rather infml*, make your/a mark (on sth) (*also* AE), make up for lost time, name and shame *BrE*, pave the way for sth, pick/take up the slack *AmE, AustrE infml*, play a (key, major, vital, etc.) part/role (in sth), put sth/itself up for sale/auction, run out of time, shut up shop *BrE infml*, take advantage of sth/sb (*also* AE), take a back seat (to sth), take effect (*also* AE), take sb for a ride *infml*, take sth on board *BrE*, take its/their toll (on sb/sth) (*also* AE), tighten your belt, tighten/loosen the purse strings	29
TOTAL:	**50**

[16] *Customers can send the clearest message that they won't tolerate being* ***taken for a ride*** *by switching supplier to a cheaper tariff, with savings of up to £491 on offer," said Claire Osborne, energy expert at uSwitch.com*. (GRD, 2018, April 10)

[17] *The explanation for this is simple: the rising cost of imports triggered by the post-referendum fall in the value of the pound has meant prices have been rising faster than wages. Consumers have been* ***tightening their belts***. (GRD, 2018, April 27)

- ***in the pipeline*** → **on the way**, in preparation
- always (adv) → **every time**, each time, ***at all times***, all the time; *antonym*: never
- ***in the long run*** → **eventually**, in the end
- ***on the road*** → **on tour**, touring
- ***with respect to/in respect of*** → **concerning**, regarding, in/with regard to, with reference to; *French* vis-à-vis; *Latin* in re
- affect (v) → **upset**, trouble, ***hit hard***; *antonym*: be unaffected
- fire (v) *infml* → **dismiss**, discharge, ***make redundant***; give sb the elbow *infml* → **dismiss**, axe, ***make redundant***
- strike (v) → **take industrial action**, go on strike, ***down tools***
- ***foot the bill*** *infml* → **pay**, pay up
- succeed (v) → **triumph**, be victorious; *infml* make it, **make one's mark**; *antonym*: fail
- market (v) → **sell**, retail, ***put up for sale***
- take advantage of sth/sb → **exploit**, abuse; *infml* ***take for a ride***
- ***tighten one's belt*** → **economize**, cut back

Table 3
FORTUNE – Business English Idioms

FORTUNE – Business English Idioms	**No.**
Nominals: the breadwinner	1
Adjectivals: at risk (4x) (*also* AE), at stake (*also* AE), in place (*also* AE), in the works, under wraps *infml*, one-size-fits-all (*also* AE) *rather infml*	6
Adverbials: all the time, below/under the radar (screen), from scratch, in business, in effect (*also* AE), in lieu (of sth) *fml*, in/over the long/medium/short/far/near term, in/with reference to *fml* (*also* AE), in/with regard to sb/sth *fml* (*also* AE), on the table (*also* AE), on your feet	11
Verbals: be hit hard (by sth), be, get, keep, etc. in touch (with sb), be on track (to do sth) (*also* AE), come under fire (*also* AE), have/get/give sb a head start (in sth/on sb/over sb), keep/lose track of sth/sb (*also* AE), let sb go *infml*, play a (key, major, vital, etc.) part/role (in sth) (2x), play to your strengths, pull the plug on sth/sb *infml*, recharge your batteries, ride on (the) coattails of sb/sth, run out of time, take advantage of sth/sb (*also* AE), take a nosedive, take risks (2x) (*also* AE), turn a (small/modest/$10 million, etc.) profit *infml*	17
TOTAL:	**34**

[18] *Apple is notoriously secretive about its product development. In 2012, Chief Executive Officer Tim Cook pledged to double down on* ***keeping*** *the company's work* ***under wraps***. (FRT, 2018, April 14)

[19] *China fired back with tariffs of $3 billion against imports from the US, a promise to challenge US penalties at the World Trade Organization and some tough language threatening more painful countermeasures to come; global markets* ***took a nosedive***. (FRT, 2018, March 24)

- worker (n) **employee**, member of staff; ***breadwinner***
- in progress **under way**, **going on**, ongoing; awaiting completion; *AmE infml* ***in the works***
- ***under wraps*** *infml* **secret**, top secret; *Latin* sub rosa
- always (adv) **every time**, each time, at all times, ***all the time***; *antonym*: never
- valid (adj) **correct**, authentic; in force, ***in effect***; *antonym*: invalid
- in place of **instead of**, as an alternative for, ***in lieu of***
- regarding (prep) **concerning**, as regards, ***with regard to***, ***in regard to***, with respect to; *French* vis-à-vis; *Latin* in re
- communicate (v) **liaise**, ***be in touch***, be in contact; correspond with (v) **exchange letters**, communicate, ***keep in touch***; reach (v) ***get in touch with***, contact
- misplace (v) **lose**, mislay, ***lose track of***; *antonym*: find
- watch (v) **spy on**, keep watch on, ***keep track of***
- ***let*** *sb* ***go*** **make redundant**, dismiss; *antonym*: retain
- discontinue (v) **stop**, end; *infml* ***pull the plug on***; *antonym*: continue
- rest (v) **relax**, take a rest, ***recharge one's batteries***
- nosedive (v) *infml* **fall sharply**, ***take a nosedive***, plunge; *antonyms*: rise
- gamble (v) **take a chance**, ***take a risk***, take a leap in the dark

Table 4
Forbes – Business English Idioms

FORBES – Business English Idioms	**No.**
Nominals: conflict of interest(s) (2x) (*also* AE)	1
Adjectivals: in place (*also* AE), on hold (*also* AE), up for sth (*also* AE) *rather infml*	3
Adverbials: in (the) aggregate *fml* (*also* AE), in/over the long/short run (3x) (*also* AE), in/over the long/medium/short/far/near term (*also* AE), in your (own) backyard, in/with regard to sb/sth*fml* (*also*AE), in terms of sth (*also* AE), on the road (*also* AE), on the table (*also* AE), year after year (*also* AE)	9
Verbals: be/remain etc. in the red, be/get/run out of control (*also* AE), come out on top (*also* AE), dip a toe in/into the water, get your hands on sth/sb, give/lose ground (to sb/sth), go all out to do sth, level the playing field, make good on sth, make up for lost time, take advantage of sth/sb (*also* AE), turn sth on its head (*also* AE)	12
TOTAL:	**25**

[20] *Given the excellent return on investment from college educations, why is society acting like student loan debt is a problem? Instead, we should be glad so many people are acting in a way that will make the country better off* ***in the long run***. (FBS, 2018, May 10)

[21] *The three heavyweights* ***lose ground****. Much is written about the inevitable ascendancy of large global cities, but in terms of job growth none of the three largest in America – New York, Los Angeles and Chicago – are burning down the barn right now*. (FBS, 2018, May 7)

- insolvent (adj) **bankrupt**, unable to pay one's debts; *infml* ***in the red***; *antonym*: solvent
- ***get/lay one's hands on*** *infml* **obtain**, acquire
- retreat (v) **withdraw**, retire, ***give ground***; *antonym*: advance
- bend over backwards *infml* **try one's hardest**, try as hard as one can; *infml* ***go all out***

Table 5
Inc. – Business English Idioms

***Inc.* – Business English Idioms**	**No.**
Nominals: the big picture *esp. AmE infml* (*also* AE), wear and tear	2
Adjectivals: at risk (*also* AE), in place (*also* AE), up and running	3
Adverbials: all the time, by default (*also* AE), back on track (*also* AE) *rather infml*	3
Verbals: get (sth) off the ground (*also* AE), go/put sb out of business, let sb go *infml*, make (both) ends meet (*also* AE), (put sth) on the line *infml* (*also* AE), save (sb's) face (*also* AE), take advantage of sth/sb (*also* AE), take risks (*also* AE), take its/their toll (on sb/sth) (*also* AE)	9
TOTAL:	**17**

[22] *It only takes a few hours to get a store* ***up and running*** *and turn your company into a potentially global business*. (*Inc.*, 2017, July 14)

[23] *The report also points out that Dreamers start businesses at more than twice the rate of the general population,* ***in large part*** *because they are used to* ***making ends meet*** *without help from the government*. (*Inc.*, 2018, March 5)

- erosion (n) **wearing away**, abrasion, ***wear and tear***
- in force **effective**, in operation; *infml* ***up and running***
- exist (v) **survive**, subsist, ***make ends meet***
- risk (v) **endanger**, put at risk, ***put on the line***

7. Discussion

It can be stated that the hypothesis "Every idiom has a non-idiomatic synonym on the semantic level." (Strässler, 1982, p. 85) was confirmed. As far as idioms are considered, electronic dictionaries list plenty of non-idiomatic synonyms, e.g. 'a level playing field' – a fair situation, a state of equality, an equal opportunity; 'the big picture' – entire perspective, the situation as a whole, etc. However, we were not able to find the closest non-idiomatic equivalents. Therefore, we decided to use the printed version of the *Oxford Thesaurus of English* (2009) to identify, at least, one core synonym and one near synonym. We identified 104 core/near synonyms out of 182 idiomatic expressions (some of them occur in more newspaper or magazine sources), e.g. 'at risk', 'in advance (of sth)', 'in the hands of sb', 'in line with sth', 'in place', 'on balance', 'on top of sth', 'come/enter into force', 'get (sth) off the ground', 'pave the way for sth', 'play a (key, major, vital, etc.) part/role (in sth)', 'take effect', 'take advantage of sth/sb' occur in *The Guardian* as well as in *POLITICO*.

The following idioms occur more than once in every source. The list is worthy of notice because nearly of all them are used in Academic English, as well:

POLITICO: 'play a (key, major, vital, etc.) part/role (in sth)' (5x), 'in place' (4x), 'on the table' (4x), 'in/over the long/medium/short/far/near term' (3x), 'in terms of sth' (3x), 'fall short of sth' (3x), 'get (sth) off the ground' (3x), 'take advantage of sth/sb' (3x), 'make money' (2x), 'name and shame' (2x), 'play by the rules' (2x), 'put sth on hold' (2x), 'at risk' (2x), 'at stake' (2x), 'in principle' (2x), 'on top of sth' (2x), 'take effect' (2x);

FORTUNE: 'at risk' (4x), 'play a (key, major, vital, etc.) part/role (in sth)' (2x), 'take risks' (2x);

Forbes: 'in/over the long/short run' (3x), 'conflict of interest(s)' (2x); and

The Guardian: 'at risk' (2x), 'in line with sth' (2x), 'on top of sth' (2x), 'come/enter into force' (2x).

To sum up, this kind of written discourse is highly idiomatic. Apart from idioms used in Business English, sample sentences also contain idioms used in General English, e.g. 'make waves', 'razzle-dazzle', 'take sth seriously', etc.

Many idioms have different types of variants, e.g. 'be in the firing line' *BrE* | 'be on the firing line' *AmE*, 'down tools' *BrE, AustrE* (*about workers*), and 'down tools' | 'lay down tools' *BrE infml* also used in General English.

Using synonyms is an excellent way of learning Business English vocabulary, e.g. the verb 'close' is very important because it includes synonyms such as 'go bankrupt', 'go into liquidation' or *infml* 'go bust'. All of them are frequently used in Business English when talking about risks. An idiom 'in the pipeline' also includes the synonym 'imminent', which is also used in the context of risk. Finally, the word 'worker' is important because it includes synonyms such as 'working man', 'working woman', 'blue-collar worker', 'white-collar worker', and 'wage-earner'. However, learners need to be careful to choose the right words in different contexts.

Conclusions

The main aim of the paper was to find out what kind of idioms are frequently used in Business, Academic and General English. The quantitative analysis based on Fernando's (1996) classification revealed that the most frequently used idioms were *verbals* and *adverbials*. It can be stated that the newspaper and magazine articles under investigation were highly idiomatic. Many idioms were used in both Business and Academic English. By using electronic dictionaries, the tested hypothesis "Every idiom has a non-idiomatic synonym on the semantic level." (Strässler,

1982, p. 85) was confirmed. By means of printed versions of dictionaries, we were able to identify 104 core or near synonyms for 182 idioms.

Based on the research, it can be stated that English has a rich vocabulary. Lexis itself has been neglected in the study of language and this can be seen in the poor quality of written and spoken discourse made by university students. This paper hopes to serve well those who are interested in idiomatic language as well as those who are interested in teaching ESP and EAP. Learners of English at an advanced level of proficiency need to be able not only to understand idioms, but also to use them accurately and appropriately. They will also sound more natural and fluent if they can use idioms in everyday conversation or informal writing. Further research into business and academic vocabulary will be followed so that their discourse can be improved.

References

Bilá, M., Kačmárová, A., Kášová, M., Tomášiková, S., Vojtek, D., Koželová, A. (2015). Research on multiword expressions in the Germanic and Romance languages. Ološtiak, M. (ed.), *Multiword expressions in Slovak* (pp. 57-77). Prešov, Slovakia: Faculty of Arts of Prešov University.

Cotton, D., Falvey, D., Kent, S. (2011). *Market Leader Business English Course Book Upper Intermediate* (3rd ed.). Harlow, England: Pearson Education Limited.

Cowie, A.P., Mackin, R. (eds.). (1975). *Oxford Dictionary of Current Idiomatic English*, vol. 1. London, England: Oxford University Press.

Cowie, A.P., Mackin, R., McCaig, I.R. (eds.). (1983). *Oxford Dictionary of Current Idiomatic English*, vol. 2. Oxford, England: Oxford University Press.

Cowie, A.P., Mackin, R., McCaig, I.R. (1993). *Oxford Dictionary of English Idioms*. Oxford, England: Oxford University Press.

Donna, S. (2000). *Teach Business English*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.

Ellis, M., Johnson, C. (1994). *Teaching Business English*. Oxford, England: Oxford University Press.

Fernando, C. (1996). *Idioms and Idiomaticity*. Oxford, England: Oxford University Press.

Fillmore, C.J., Kay, P., O'Connor, M.C. (1988). Regularity and Idiomaticity in Grammatical Constructions: The Case of Letalone. *Language*, *64*, 501-538.

Fraser, B. (1970). Idioms within a Transformational Grammar. *Foundations of Language*, *6*(1), 22-42.

Gillet, A. (2010). *Speak Business English Like an American: Learn the Idioms & Expressions You Need to Succeed on the Job!* Ann Arbor, Michigan: Language Success Press.

Hakim, N., Abidin, M., Bahari, A. (2020). *Dictionary Use to Increase Students' Vocabulary Mastery: Electronic Dictionary or Printed One?* In Proceedings of the 1st Bandung English Language Teaching International Conference (BELTIC 2018), 1, 150-159.

Halliday, M.A.K. (1973). *Explorations in the Functions of Language*. London, England: Edward Arnold.

Halliday, M.A.K. (1985). *An Introduction to Functional Grammar*. London, England: Edward Arnold.

Hockett, C.F. (1958). *A Course in Modern Linguistics*. New York, New York: The Macmillan Company.

Jespersen, O. (1924). *The Philosophy of Grammar*. London, England: George Allen & Unwin.

Katz, J.J., Postal, P. (1963). The semantic interpretation of idioms and sentences containing them. *Quarterly Progress Report*, *70*, 275-282.

Kavka, J.S. (2003). *A Book on Idiomatology*. Slovakia: University of Žilina.

Makkai, A. (1972). *Idioms Structure in English*. The Hague, The Netherlands: Mouton.

Lea, D., Bull, V., Webb, S., Duncan, R. (eds.). (2014). *Oxford Learner's Dictionary of Academic English*. Oxford, England: Oxford University Press.

McCarthy, M., O'Dell, F. (2016). *Academic Vocabulary in Use* (2nd ed.). Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.

O'Dell, F., McCarthy, M. (2010). *English Idioms in Use Advanced*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.

Parkinson, D., Noble, J. (eds.). (2005). *Oxford Business English Dictionary for Learners of English*. Oxford, England: Oxford University Press.
Potęga, P. (2016). A Linguistic Account of Business English. *Zeszyty Naukowe Uniwersytetu Rzeszowskiego. Seria Filologiczna. Zeszyt 93/2016. Studia Anglica Resoviensia, 13*, 78-88. Rzeszów, Poland: University of Rzeszów.
Roberts, M.H. (1944). *The Science of Idiom: A Method of Inquiry into the Cognitive Design of Language*. Publication of the Modern Language Association of America, 69, 291-306.
Scarcella, R. (2003). Academic English: A Conceptual Framework. Irvine: University of California.
Smith, L.P. (1925). *Words and Idioms*. London, England: Constable & Co. Ltd.
Strässler, J. (1982). Idioms in English: A pragmatic analysis. Tübingen, Germany: Narr.
Sonomura, M.O.(1996). *Idiomaticity in the Basic Writing of American English*. New York: Peter Lang Publishing, Inc.
Waite, M. (ed.). (2009).*Oxford Thesaurus of English*. Oxford, England: Oxford University Press.
Walter, E. (ed.). (2006). *Cambridge Idioms Dictionary* (2nd ed.). Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.
Weinreich, U. (1969). Problems in the analysis of idioms. Puhvel, J. (ed.), *The Substance and Structure of Language* (pp. 23-81). Berkeley, California: University of California Press.
Wright, J. (2002). *Idioms Organiser*. Boston, Massachusetts: Thomson Heinle.

Online newspaper and magazine articles

Alcaro, R., Tocci, N. (2018, May 10). How Europe can save the Iran deal. *POLITICO*. Retrieved from: https://www.politico.eu/.
Anon. (2017, July 14). New Technologies Allow You to Do Business (and Compete) From Anywhere. *Inc.* Retrieved from: https://www.inc.com/.
Anon. (2018, March 28). The Guardian view on Brexit: now is the time to change course. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from: https://www.theguardian.com/.
Anon. (2018, April 14). Apple Warns Employees to Stop Leaking Information to Media. *FORTUNE*. Retrieved from: https://fortune.com/.
Anon. (2018, April 20). Seven Artificial Intelligence Advances Expected This Year. *Forbes*. Retrieved from: https://www.forbes.com/.
Buyck, C. (2017, September, 4). 6 things to watch this autumn in transport. *POLITICO*. Retrieved from: https://www.politico.eu/.
Chandler, C. (2018, March 24). Trump's Risky Game of Chicken with China. *FORTUNE*. Retrieved from: https://fortune.com/.
Dorfman, J. (2018, May 10). Student Loan Debt Hits Record High And That's Good. *Forbes*. Retrieved from: https://www.forbes.com/.
Elliott, L. (2018, April 27). Is Philip Hammond right to be so Tiggerish over the economy? *The Guardian*. Retrieved from: https://www.theguardian.com/.
Hendel, J., Gold, A. (2018, September 4). Zuckerberg testimony: 'We didn't do enough'. *POLITICO*. Retrieved from: https://www.politico.com/.
Henry, Z. (2018, March 5). 800,000 Workers, $460 Billion in Economic Output, Dozens of Entrepreneurs: What the U.S. Loses if DACA Goes Away. *Inc*. Retrieved from: https://www.inc.com/.
Hirst, N. (2018, March 21). Vestager approves Bayer's takeover of Monsanto. *POLITICO*. Retrieved from: https://www.politico.eu/.
Jefferson, B. (2016, November 18). Easy Ways to Make Work More Fun. *FORTUNE*. Retrieved from: https://fortune.com/.
Karlin-Smith, S., Wheaton, S. (2018, September 5). Trump's 'America First' agenda on drug pricing could backfire around the world. *POLITICO*. Retrieved from: https://www.politico.eu/.
Kelner, M. (2018, April 26). FA holds talks to sell Wembley to Fulham owner Khan in £900m deal. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from: https://www.theguardian.com/.

Kotkin, J. (2018, May 7). The Best Cities For Jobs 2018: Dallas And Austin Lead The Surging South. *Forbes*. Retrieved from: https://www.forbes.com/.

Paravicini, G., Marks, S. (2018, March 8). Brussels demands UK pay €2.7 billion in lost customs duties. *POLITICO*. Retrieved from: https://www.politico.eu/.

Tamma, P., Hervey, G. (2018, April 27). Brussels plans to ban balloon sticks. *POLITICO*. Retrieved from: https://www.politico.eu/.

Vaughan, A. (2018, April 10). Customers face above-inflation price hike as British Gas raises bills by 5.5%. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from: https://www.theguardian.com/.

Monika ZIĘBA-PLEBANKIEWICZ
Państwowa Wyższa Szkoła Zawodowa w Nowym Sączu

SOUND SYMBOLISM AND BRAND NAMING

Abstract

Sound symbolism is a powerful force in language the importance of which is growing in brand naming. While traditional naming techniques, such as choosing names of the founders, are still used, sound symbolism may become a means of achieving uniqueness and greater memorability on the global market. Previous studies of the phenomenon are presented, and brand names deemed as the most successful in 2020 according to Interbrand are analysed and categorized, in terms of the structure of the initial syllable.

Introduction

The process of globalization gave rise to a growing exchange of products, services, technologies, and sociocultural values, which often requires modifications of communication. This necessarily has an impact on language as the means of communication. On the one hand, local languages and cultures become dominated by today's lingua franca, namely English, which results, for example, with a great number of loanwords. On the other hand, this increased impact causes reaction in the form of the process of localization, in which communities rediscover their uniqueness. Due to such mutual influence of globalization and localization languages and cultures may develop remarkably.

This unique linguistic development may be seen in the creativity with which brand names are invented. Numerous techniques of creating a catchy brand name can be listed, some responding to the needs of globalization when choosing English words as building blocks, some opt for localization to distinguish itself on the crowded market, yet in bothcertain universal tendencies can be noticed, namely, a universal preference for particular sounds.

The aim of this article is to investigate the positive sound symbolic effects in global brand names, to identify the sounds that add to the brand success and to point to the iconic meanings that are perceived almost universally.

1. Literature review

One of the basic assumptions about language is the claim about its arbitrariness, that is, that there is no direct relationship between sounds and meanings of words. The notion was popularised by Ferdinand de Saussure's course in general linguistics in (1916), where the principle of the arbitrariness of the link between signifier and signified within the linguistic sign was discussed. While it is widely agreed on that all languages form their words according to their rules of phonology which are completely conventional, there areinstances of iconicity in each. The phenomenon, also called "sound symbolism", isdefined as a linguistic expression which imitates or directly suggests meaning (Finegan, 2007) or a hypothesized systematic relationship between sound and meaning (Hinton, Nichols, Ohala, 1994), for example there is a common perception of association between the phoneme /i/ (as in English *keep*) and a small size.

Saussure's notion of the arbitrariness of the sign stems from the debates in the Antiquity. Plato's dialogue *Cratylus*, (around 400 BC) includes a debate whether language is given by nature or convention. On the one hand, the pronunciation of words might be"naturally" linked

with their meanings, yet on the other, since words are created by people and learned from earlier generations, they must form a conventional system. The debate remains unsolved, as the characters cannot find examples that are convincing enough; for example, the sound [o] naturally represents roundness as in the Greek word for "round", yet it is always possible to find words which contain [o] but have a completely opposite meaning.

The notions of natural connection and conventionality of the sound and meaning in *Cratylus* clearly belonged to the world outside language. For de Saussure, they were not physical, since the linguistic sign was "not a link between a thing and a name, but between a concept and a sound pattern" (Saussure, 1959[1916], p. 66); the linguistic sign was thusa psychological entity. Therefore, the link between the two elements of the sign is equally abstract and conventional, as exemplified by the word "tree" in which there is no (iconic) clue whatsoever about the appearance of the physical object the word denotes.The link between signifier and signified is therefore always motivated: it is the sign maker that selects a signifier to express what they mean, which becomes a "convention". Even though Saussure recognized the existence of onomatopoetic words which were seemingly exceptions to the principle of the arbitrariness of the sign, he did not consider them as "organic elements of a linguistic system" (Saussure, 1959[1916], p. 69f).

Saussure's position on the issue and the rejection of onomatopoeia as a counterargument to arbitrariness mirroredthe opinions of 19th- and 20th-century linguists. They focused on methods of comparative reconstruction and the study of sound changes, which aimed at the reconstruction of the origin of human language; moreover, their studies were mostly based on Indo-European languages. Onomatopoeia was not likely to provide any information about Indo-European roots, and so it was judged as useless to linguistics. Saussure himself believed that linguistics should aim at describing and tracing the history of the known languages (Saussure, 1959 [1916]), which resulted in a much one-sided view of arbitrariness and sound symbolism. Recently, however, a growing amount of cross-linguistic research proves that sound symbolism is more significant than recently thought, especially that non-Indo-European languages reveal more instances of sound symbolism than Indo-European ones, for example, in native languages in North America, Latin America, Asia, Australia, and Africa, (Hinton et al., 1994), as well as in Basque (Ibarretxe-Antuñano, 2006), Tamil (Yoshida, 2012) or Japanese and Korean (Ivanova, 2006; Parault, Parkinson 2008; Akita, 2013; Kantartzis et al., 2011).

Yet, for the most part of the 20th century and even today, the opinions of de Saussure have remained strong; for example, Yule (2020: 16) claimed, "There are some words in language with sounds that seem to 'echo' the sounds of objects or activities and hence seem to have a less arbitrary connection. English examples are *cuckoo, crash, slurp, squelch* or *whirr*. However, these onomatopoeic words are relatively rare in human language." Sound symbolism was treated more favourably by, for instance, Hinton et al. (1994) or Nuckolls (1999). Ohala (1994) argues that certain uses of intonation are iconicand universal. These authors, just as Magnus (2010) andAhlner & Zlatev (2010), saw arbitrariness and sound symbolism as direct conventionalist/ naturalist oppositions. However, Joseph (2015) claimed that iconicity depended on the interpretation of the language user. Arbitrariness exists in the link, or a mental trace, between the sound pattern (signifier) and the concept (signified), both of which are purely abstract. They become real and concrete only when they form a conjoined linguistic sign. From this perspective, just as the abstract signifier and signified cannot be seen as opposites, so is arbitrariness no longer merelyantithetical to iconicity.

2. Sound symbolic phenomena

The most often cited non-arbitrary associations between meaningless speech sounds and meanings of concepts involve the correlation between high front vowels with smaller and faster dimensions, and the vowels /a, o/ with larger and slower dimensions. Early studies (e.g., Köhler, 1929; Sapir, 1929) involved pseudowords linked to abstract visual shapes, namely a round shape was typically matched to a "round" sounding pseudoword, while a sharp figure to a "sharp" sounding one. Therefore, sound symbolism was consistently used to interpret meanings of unfamiliar words. Köhler called this tendency a "maluma–takete" paradigm, which indicates that there exists an abstract resemblance between a meaningless symbol (that is, a pseudoword) and a given shape. The claim for the existence of iconic links between speech sounds and meanings was confirmed by numerous studies. For example, Shinohara, Kawahara (2010) research involving English, Chinese, Japanese and Korean speakers revealed a positive correlation betweenhigh and front vowels and voiceless consonants and small size.

Sound symbolic effects have also been shown to occur in real languages. For example, Bolinger (1950) found that nearly half of all English words that begin with /gl/ have a visual connotation (as in*glance, glitter, gleam,* or *glow*). Levickij (2013) demonstrated that while in Slavic languages words denoting small items often have /a/, Russian and Ukrainian speakers, when asked to match artificial words with sizes, tended to match /a/ with big and /i/ with small sizes. Shinohara & Kawahara (2010) found a similar tendency for Korean speakers, suggesting that sound symbolism was active only at times. Feist (2013) claimed that sound symbolism may be activated for emotional expression, such as when the speaker lengthens a sound to emphasize meaning, or for compensating for missing information, such as when they need to interpret unknown or artificial words.

An explanation for the tendency to associate the sound /i/ with smallnessand /a/ with bigger sizes may lie in the physical aspects of speech. Speakers may relate the acoustic, articulatory, and kinaesthetic properties of speech sounds with size. The articulation of /i/ involves movement of the tongue to a high position, making the mouth cavity smaller, while the pronunciation of /a/ requires moving the tongue to a low position which enlarges the mouth cavity. These positions influence sound frequencies of /i/ and /a/, and thus listeners and speakers link high frequencies with smallness and low frequencies with large sizes. Ohala (1994) noticed that since small animals and objects (for example, the larynx) make high frequency sounds, whereas big ones low frequency sounds. He called this phenomenon "frequency code", which lies at the roots of a number of symbolic phenomena: "sounds made by a confident aggressor […] are typically rough and have a low F0" (Ohala, 1994, p. 329). Therefore, back vowels and fricatives give an impression of large size and danger, as opposed to high-frequency vowels /i/ and /e/ which are perceived as 'small' and thus 'harmless' and 'good'. This is an apt explanation for phonetic-acousticcorrespondences and small versus large sizes, yet it does not account for the sharp versus round associations.

The importance of sound-symbolism is emphasized in many studies into language development and learning. For instance, Ramachandran, Hubbard (2001) claimed that the iconic mapping betweenspatialcharacteristics and acoustic effects (that is, between visual appearance and vocalizations) are the basis for the emergence of protolanguages. Massaro, Perlman (2017) proved that it is easier to learn iconic words, which is why iconicity prevails in early language acquisition. Brand et al. (2018) stated that since the form of the word gives clues about its meaning, it seems to dominate in early language acquisition and is replaced by arbitrariness during later vocabulary development. Perniss & Vigliocco (2014) described a bootstrapping

effect of iconicity on language learning due to its role in establishing displacement and referentiality. Therefore, iconicity is as fundamental property of language as arbitrariness.

3. Sound symbolism and brand names

A good brand name is vital for the success of a product, so selecting one is on of the most important decisions. It should be distinctive, memorable, easy to pronounce, and relatively simple; it should create favourable images and increase preference for the product it names (Kotler, Armstrong, 2019). It should also be meaningful, that is, it shouldexpress the relevant information about the features of the product (Klink, Wu, 2014). A brand name poorly chosen can prove detrimental, as in the case of Ford Edsel, whose name is often given as one of the reasons for the car's failure (Klink, 2000). The task is even more challenging in the globalized market.

Companies employ several strategies to create a brand name. Some design names that directly express information about the product, such as *DieHard* car batteries, *Toys R Us, General Motors*, or *LinkedIn*. Others may use lexical strategies that involve wordplay to increase their memorability, as in *Dunkin' Donuts, Tumblr* or *Bynamesakke*. Sound symbolism is one of the strategies that employs the influence of linguistic structure onpeople's perceptions, as described, for instance by Klink (2000, 2001) who described the impression of efficacyconveyed by the sound /z/ in *Prozac*. Yorkston, Menon (2004) and Lowrey, Shrum (2007), in experiments involving artificial words that help to avoid semantic connotations, demonstrated that certain phonemes in brand names represented attributes that consumers desire. The iconic representation influenced consumers' interpretation of brand names and their evaluation of products. For example, participants associated names with back vowels to be with such concepts as thicker (ketchup), darker (beer), and creamier (ice cream), in contrast to names with front vowel sounds (Yorkston, Menon, 2004). Lowrey, Shrum (2007) focused on preference for certain sounds in brand names; namely, front vowels were preferred over back vowels in names of products which were cold, clean, and crisp, but back vowels were preferred over front vowels when the product attributes were smooth, mellow, and rich. The effect held for actual words too, as Lowrey & Shrum demonstrated that brand names with front vowel sounds, which tend to be associated with such attributes as faster, smaller, and lighter, were preferred over names with back vowel sounds when the product was a two-seater convertible. Just the opposite was the case when the product was an SUV. Shrum et al. (2012) elaborated on the preference for words in which phonetic symbolism matched the product attributes by focusing on international brand naming. The effect was investigated for multiple languages in bilingual contexts to see whether it would differ in the case of second-language proficiency. The findings confirmed earlier results, irrespectively of the language background of the participants.

Pathak et al. (2020) and Pathak, Calvert (2021) proved that sound symbolism may influence the perception of taste of food products. In particular, the phonetics' manipulations of vowels (that is, front vs. back) and consonants (voiceless vs. voiced) can have a significant impact on associations with food product attributes such as taste, and that people expect products with brand names containing long vowels to taste sweeter than those including short vowel sounds. Sound symbolic effect was also found by Motoki et al. (2020) who showed that phonemes of higher frequencies (that is, /f, s, i, e/ vs. /b, d, g, o, u/) are perceived healthier, as opposed to phonemes of lower frequencies.

Nelson, Simmons (2007) described the Name Letter Effect; namely, the influence of the person's name, and in particular, the initial letters of their names, on their life choices, even if this had a negative impact on them. Pathak et al. (2019) disagreed that it was the letter that mattered. They noticed the importance of the initial sound of a name, since, for example, aphasia patients are often able to recall only the first sound of names that they otherwise cannot retrieve. Consequently, the initial sound of a brand name can become a vital means of expressing meanings. They found that sounds /æ/, /iː/, /dʒ/, /j/ and /z/, as in *PayPal, Visa, Neutrogena*, *Yamaha*, and *Zara*, were the most frequent, which suggested stronger preference for these sounds. On the other hand, Pogacar et al. (2018) stated that people implicitly and explicitly prefer such sounds as /s/, /m/, /l/ and /e/, and therefore they are more common among top brand names. Yet they admit that while this preference can be attributed to sound symbolism, due to the associations of high frequency sounds with submissiveness and, consequently, with politeness and cooperation, there might be a different explanation.

Klink, Wu (2013) investigated the problem of embedding sound symbolism in brand names, concluding that the best position to communicate brand meaning is the first syllable, vowels are better communicators than consonants, but combinations of vowels and consonants are the most effective.

The preference for certain sounds might as well be caused by the relative ease of articulation. Sound symbolism is observed in brand names because subconsciously people choose these sounds that are commonly likeable. Pathak et al. (2019) suggest that in the globalized world, the universal iconicity of initial sounds can prove advantageous in the creation of international brands which can thus convey information about the product to every market.

4. Sound symbolism of international brands

A general rule of designing a brand name states that effective names should be distinctive, recognizable, easy to pronounce and meaningful. Since sound symbolism may be universally recognized, it could prove helpful for creating a name that would remain meaningful on international markets, where the semantics of the brand name may disappear in translation. In Western Europe, marketers have recognized the problem, therefore phonetic symbolism is widely used in advertising and marketing. Companies perform careful studies to create product names and advertising slogans. Polish brands, however, still largely rely on the semantics of the label or the name of the founder (see such eponymous brands as *Ziaja, Inglot, Wittchen*, *Ochnik*, *Dr Irena Eris, Kler*, *Winiary*, or *Muszynianka,* to name just a few) or borrowing from foreign languages to enhance the brand's prestige (as in the case of such names as *Yes, Solaris, Home&You*, *Sante* or *Sphinx*). Nevertheless, in some Polish brand names sound symbolism can be noticed.

The following presents brands that achieved success of the global market, regardless of the country of their origin, to emphasize the universal nature of sound symbolism. Since it has been well established that word–initial syllables influence patterns of sound symbolism, the brands chosen begin with sounds and sound combinations evoking positive connotations, as well as those that can be associated with meanings related to the product they name, such as mobility (fast or slow), softness or hardness, and size (big or small).

4.1. The effect of consonants

As described in numerous studies, initial plosive consonants sound hard and less welcoming, but brand names beginning with them tend to be more successful, because clients respond positively towards them. Plosives, especially hard ones, sound powerful which can lead to higher recognition in consumer minds. Especially the [b] consonant is considered strong and dominant.

Therefore, names beginning with [b] may suggest a brand that is big, aggressive and possibly dangerous. Examples include such companies as *Boeing, Burger King, Coca-Cola, Kodak, Panasonic, Pepsi, Persil, Pizza Hut, Tesla*, and *Toyota*, or products, such as *Prozac* or *PlayStation.* Moreover, consonants [b, d, p] evoke the perception of reliability, a characteristic that can be ascribed to such globally known brands *as BMW, Budweiser, Burberry, Disney, Pampers* and *Prada*, which are all listed as top brands of the year 2020, according to Interbrand.

It could be claimed that *Disney* is a brand based on the founder's name and thus not relevant to sound symbolism, yet here its success could be enhanced by the way the name sounds. Not every name ensures that the brand survives competition and Ford Edsel, a brand that was particularly hard to pronounce, is an example of a combination of faulty decisions that led to its failure. *Kodak* is a brand that lost the competition with digital photography, but until the 90s it was undoubtedly one of the best brands on the photography market.

Combining plosives with other consonants can bring more meanings to the name. As Magnus (2010) noted, the consonant /r/ adds the meaning of movement to the word, so the Polish producer of bicycles rightly chose *Kross* as the name for their brand. Consonants /gl/ evoke the image of light and glimmering, hence the brands *Glamour* (a women's magazine) and *Glamorous* (a fashion brand). The image of light is also brought forth by the combination /fl/, namely light that is moving in a flash. The brand *Flickr* was designed to host images and videos, which is aptly reflected in its name.

The fricative sound /v/ tends to be associated with vigour and energy, as reflected by the name *Viagra* and *Volvo*. Although the latter is created on the basis of a Latin word ('I roll', conjugated from *volvere*), the iconic meaning of the initial consonant is perhaps more readily perceived be the customers who are not likely to be familiar with Latin.

Soft consonants /m,n,l,h/ are perceived as warm and welcoming, smoother and mellower, thereforethe initial sound in *Netflix* (a blend of *Internet* and *flix*, meaning 'movies') can encourage the customer to relax on the sofa with a laptop. The consonant /h/ often associated with 'home', begins the brand name *Hestra* (a Swedish producer of gloves), *Happy Socks, Herschel Supply Co.* (a Canadian company selling hipster retro backpacks and accessories), *Hobo* (a producer of leather bags), or *Hush Puppies* (an American brand of casual footwear), which all suggest dependable comfort.

4.2. The effect of vowels

Vowels, just as hard consonant sounds, can lead to higher recognition in consumer minds, because they can raise emotions in the receiver almost unconsciously. Low and back vowels, especially /o/ and /u/, are perceived as darker and heavier than high and front ones. They give the impression of being big, powerful, and aggressive, which is especially enhanced when they are combined with plosive consonants. The original name of the *Google* search engine was *BackRub*, but it was quickly changed to one that would indicate the vast number of data it processed. The current name derives from the number googol and joins the initial hard consonant with the vowel /u:/ which depicts the broad nature of the search engine. Other brands which achieved a global success correlating with the type of the vowel include, for example, *Adobe* (pronounced /əˈdoʊbi/ by English speakers, who would respond to the sounds in the stressed syllable), *Audi, Goldman Sachs, Costco, Orlen, Porsche, Samsung, Tokai COBEX* (a producer of graphite material), *Uber* (in English pronounced /u: bə/), *Zara* and *Zoom*.

Front vowels evoke the opposite feelings to those implied by back ones, so brand names containing them, especially /i/ and /e/, convey images of smallness, fastness, and lightness in weight. For example, the name *Twitter* highlights the limited messages and character count allowed by the channel, just as *Mini* implies the size of cars the brand offers. Fastness is brought forward by the vowel in *Visa*, while the initial /i/ in the name *Intel* emphasizes the high speed of the microprocessors the company produces. The meanings of weakness and fragility are conveyed not only by front vowels but also by fricatives. Therefore, the name of the Polish producer of glass Christmas ornaments, *Vitbis*, was rightly chosen.

4.3. The effect of onomatopoeia

Brands choose onomatopoeia when it is possible to find a word that clearly communicates the meaning of the product or brand personality. For example, *Twitter*, apart from the meanings conveyed by the phonemes, reflects bird singing on the one hand and the sound of tapping of keyboard on the other. A Polish producer of soft drinks, *Frugo*, chose a brand name that imitates the flapping of bird's wings, combined with the meaning of movement evoked by the consonant /r/. The initial consonant in *Kodak* recalled the sound of a camera shutter clicking, which resonated with its image-focused personality. Other examples include *TikTok*, *Zoom* and *7-Zip* software.

4.4. The effect of sound repetition

Repetition of phonemes or whole syllables in a brand name creates a pleasant rhythmic effect which helps the customer remember it. The meanings communicated by particular sounds are strengthened when repeated and, as a result, are more engaging, moving and memorable. Sound repetition may involve alliteration, that is, starting words with the same sound, especially a consonant, or assonance, namely repeating vowels in neighbouring words. Brand names that used this technique include, for example, *Coca-Cola*, *PayPal*, *Rolls Royce* or *Toyota*, the latter with alliteration imbedded inside the word. Alliteration in *Blackberry* was further enhanced in the marketing campaign in 2012 with the slogan "BE BOLD".

Assonance can be found in the name *YouTube*, in which the repeated /u:/ reminds of the sound people make when they are excited at finding something new. In this way the character of the channel is emphasized by its name. Assonance creates a memorable rhyming effect, as in *StubHub* (an American ticket exchange and resale company) and *Snapchat*. In *Häagen Dazs* (an American ice cream brand) repetitive [a] sounds convey an idea of refreshment and indulgence. This effect is achieved also because the name consists of nonsense words that only look as if they were Dutch. The name of the social networking service *TikTok* uses a common pattern of reduplication, in which a syllable is repeated with a modification of the second vowel, where the first vowel is always high front and the second one is low back.

Conclusions

On the global market consumers are swamped with various brands. It is hard for them to remember everyone they encounter, so companies resort to various techniques to catch their attention and make their product stay in their minds. Although it is more challenging to achieve this on a foreign market where the denotation of the brand name will not be as transparent as at home, even on the domestic market it may turn out that brand names based solely on the semantic meaning are forgettable. It is therefore a good idea to make use of sound symbolism when designing a brand name because this is an influential force in language, going beyond the literal interpretations of words.

Sound symbolism can emphasize the brand characteristics, for example, front vowels are more frequently used in names of electronic products, because of their associations with higher speed. On the other hand, a product that a company would like to market as posh would most probably contain an initial /p/ consonant, thus addressing the preferences of a global consumer. By playing with sounds, the company can connect with the client on a deeper level and enhance its brand identification and memorability. The target audience can be attracted or discouraged both consciously and subconsciously, as a lot of decisions are made based on emotions and experiences. Sound symbolism may evoke positive feelings through communicating favourable message about the brand if the right sounds are chosen.

Since many sound symbolic effects seem to be universal, the phenomenon can have a unification impact on the consumer base of a global organization. Cultural differences are an important element of marketing, and the iconic character of sounds may help in avoiding problems.

References

Ahlner, F., Zlatev, J. (2010). Cross-modal iconicity: A cognitive semiotic approach to sound symbolism. In: *Sign Systems Studies, 38*(1/4), 298-348.

Akita, K. (2013). The lexical iconicity hierarchy and its grammatical correlates. In: L. Elleström, O. Fischer, Ch. Ljungberg, *Iconic Investigations. Iconicity in Language and Literature* 12 (pp. 331-349). Amsterdam.

Brand, J., Monaghan, P., Walker, P. (2018). The changing role of sound-symbolism for small versus large vocabularies. *Cognitive Science, 42*, 578-590.

Interbrand. (2020).

Elsen, H. (2017). The Two Meanings of Sound Symbolism. *Open Linguistics, 3*(1), 491-499.

Erben Johansson, N., Anikin, A., Carling, G., Holmer, A. (2020). The typology of sound symbolism: Defining macro-concepts via their semantic and phonetic features. *Linguistic Typology, 24*(2), 253-310.

Feist, J. (2013). Sound symbolism in English. *Journal of Pragmatics, 45*(1), 104-118.

Finegan, E. (2007). *Language: Its Structure and Use*. Cengage Learning.

Hinton, L., Nichols, J., Ohala, J.J. (eds.). (1994). *Sound symbolism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Ibarretxe-Antuñano, I. (2006). *Sound Symbolism and Motion in Basque*. München.

Ivanova, G. (2006). Sound-symbolic approach to Japanese mimetic words. *Toronto Working Papers in Linguistics, 26*, 103-114.

Joseph, J.E. (2015). Iconicity in Saussure's Linguistic Work, and why it does not contradict the arbitrariness of the sign. *Historiographia Linguistica, 42*(1), 85-105.

Kantartzis, K., Imai, M., Kita, S. (2011). Japanese sound symbolism facilitates word learning in Englishspeaking children. *Cognitive Science, 35.3*, 575-586.

Klink, R.R. (2000). Creating Brand Names With Meaning: The Use of Sound Symbolism. *Marketing Letters, 11*, 5-20.

Klink, R.R. (2001). Creating Meaningful New Brand Names: A Study of Semantics and Sound Symbolism. *Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice, 9*(2), 27-34.

Klink, R.R., Lan, W. (2013). The role of position, type, and combination of sound symbolism imbeds in brand names. *Marketing Letters: A Journal of Research in Marketing, 25*(1), 13-24.

Kotler, P., Armstrong, G. (2019). *Principles of Marketing* (18th ed.). New York: Pearson Education Limited.

Köhler, W. (1929). *Gestalt Psychology*. New York: Liveright.

Levickij, V.V. (2013). Phonetic symbolism in natural languages. *Glottotheory, 4*(1), 72-91.

Lowrey, T.M., Shrum L.J. (2007). Phonetic Symbolism and Brand Name Preference. *Journal of Consumer Research, 34*, 406-414.

Magnus, M. (2010). *Gods in the Word: Archetypes in the Consonants*. Thomas Jefferson University Press.
Massaro, D.W., Perlman, M. (2017). Quantifying iconicity's contribution during language acquisition: Implications for vocabulary learning. *Frontiers in Communication, 2*(4).
Motoki, K., Park, J., Pathak, A., Spence, Ch. (2020). Constructing healthy food names: On the sound symbolism of healthy food. *Food Quality and Preference, 90*, 104-157.
Nelson, L.D., Simmons, J.P. (2007). Moniker Maladies: When Names Sabotage Success. *Psychological Science, 18*(12), 1106-1112.
Nuckolls, J.B. (1999). The case for sound symbolism. *Annual Review of Anthropology, 28*, 255-282.
Ohala, J.J. (1994). The Frequency Code Underlies the Sound Symbolic Use of Voice Pitch. In: L. Hinton, J. Nicols, J.J. Ohala (eds.), *Sound Symbolism*. Cambridge University Press.
Parault, S.J., Parkinson, M. (2008). Sound symbolic word learning in the middle grades. *Contemporary Educational Psychology, 33.4*, 647-671.
Pathak, A., Velasco, C., Spence, Ch. (2019). The sound of branding: An analysis of the initial phonemes of popular brand names. *Journal of Brand Management, 27*, 339-354.
Pathak, A., Calvert, G.A., Lim, L.K.S. (2020). Harsh voices, sound branding: How voiced consonants in a brand's name can alter its perceived attributes. *Psychology & Marketing, 37*(6), 837-847.
Pathak, A., Calvert, G.A. (2021). SoooSweeet! Presence of Long Vowels in Brand Names Lead to Expectations of Sweetness. *Behavioral Sciences,* 11, 12.
Pogacar, R., Kouril, M., Carpenter, T.P., Kellaris, J.J. (2018). Implicit and explicit preferences for brand name sounds. *Marketing Letters, 29*, 241-259.
Perniss, P., Vigliocco, G. (2014). The bridge of iconicity: From a world of experience to the experience of language. *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society, B 369*(1651).
Ramachandran, V.S., Hubbard, E.M. (2001). Synaesthesia-a window into perception, thought and language. *Journal of Consciousness Studies, 8*, 3-34.
Sapir, E. (1929). A study in phonetic symbolism. *Journal of Experimental Psychology, 12*, 225-239.
Saussure, F. de. (1959[1916]). *Course in General Linguistics*. New York: The Philosophical Library.
Shinohara, K., Kawahara, S. (2010). A cross-linguistic study of sound symbolism: The image of size. *Proceedings of the Berkeley Linguistic Society, 36*, 396-410.
Shrum, L.J., Lowrey, T.M., Luna D., Lerman D.B., Liu, M. (2012). Sound symbolism effects across languages: Implications for global brand names. *International Journal of Research in Marketing, 29*, 275-279.
Yorkston, E., Menon, G. (2004). A Sound Idea: Phonetic Effects of Brand Names on Consumer Judgments. *Journal of Consumer Research, 31*, 43-51.
Yoshida, H. (2012). A cross-linguistic study of sound symbolism in children's verb learning. *Journal of Cognition and Development, 13.2*, 232-265.
Yule, G. (2020). *The study of language*. Seventh edition. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

PART 2.
AT THE CROSSROADS OF CULTURES

Katarzyna JASIEWICZ
Państwowa Wyższa Szkoła Zawodowa w Nowym Sączu

"THE MEMORY IS A LIVING THING": REIMAGINING THE FUGITIVE SLAVE EXPERIENCE IN THE NEO-SLAVE NARRATIVE IN POST-MILLENNIAL AMERICAN FICTION

Abstract

The paper focuses on the genre of the neo-slave narrative in the twenty-first century North American fiction. The genre originated in the 1960s in response to earlier slave narratives, which, written by white authors, often involved misrepresentation of the past and appropriated the experience of black people. The neo-slave narrative was an attempt to reclaim their identity and enable them to tell their own stories from their own points of view, which gave rise to a new discourse on slavery.

The purpose of the paper is to examine the ways in which the experiences of runaway slaves are rendered in postmillennial neo-slave narratives and how the latter continue the tradition of revisionist writing established by the neo-slave narrative of the 1960s. In order to explore the connections and differences between the works representing the genre in the 20th and 21st century the following novels have been selected for analysis: *Song Yet Sung* (2008) and *Good Lord Bird* (2013) by James McBride, *The Underground Railroad* (2016) by Colson Whitehead and *Sing, Unburied, Sing* (2017) by Jesmyn Ward.

Introduction

The neo-slave narrative genre has always been inextricably linked with burning socio-political issues. The emergence of the genre was triggered by social changes and political processes in the 1960s. The Civil Rights and Black Power movements enforced legislation which banned racial segregation and discrimination in public places. They prepared the ground for a new approach towards history, associated with the New Left researchers; this approach assumed the need to see history from the "bottom up", changing not only the subject of study but also devising new methodologies to analyse the past (Rushdy, 1999, p. 4). Emphasis was placed on the points of view of the previously underprivileged and the subdued, which involved the necessity to revise the perspective so far taken for granted. American slavery started to be examined in the light of slaves' own experience and slaves' testimonies acquired new value and appreciation.

However, the first novel to be written "from the slave's point of view" was the product of a white Southern author and its publication immediately sparked off a debate about cultural appropriation (Rushdy, 1999, p. 4). William Styron's *The Confessions of Nat Turner* (1967) is a reimagining of the slave revolt in Virginia in 1831 as depicted by its leader in a historical confession to his white attorney Thomas Ruffin Gray, made as Turner awaited trial in a Virginia prison. Gray's biographical record of Turner's life is the most authoritative document available, yet its historical reliability has been frequently undermined (Bell, 2012, p. 284). The historical accuracy of Styron's novel has also been questioned by numerous historians; a year after the novel's publication a collection of essays by black writers was issued. *William Styron's Nat Turner: Ten Black Writers Respond*, edited by John H. Clarke, is a critical study of Styron's novel, where its contributors analyse how Styron distorts facts from Turner's life in order to create myths and racial stereotypes about the slave revolt leader. Bernard Bell outlines the

criticism of Styron's novel by describing its manipulation of facts to create the image of Turner and slave revolts as "demonically violent, lustful and criminal" (Bell, 2012, p. 283). Styron's Turner is presented as a stereotypical infantilised black slave, obsessed with lust for white women, implausible and dehumanised, even if his actual deeds make him defy this stereotype. Nevertheless, Styron's novel was immensely praised by the white literary establishment; it received Pulitzer Prize and critical acclaim. White academic critics defended the novel, discrediting its critics. What is more, initially some African American authors and journalists like Alex Haley praised the novel, seeing it as a modern parable. However, the predominant perception of the novel was bound to change, with the rise of Black Power movement and growing understanding of the phenomenon of cultural appropriation (https://www.vanityfair.com/culture/2016/08/the-literary-battle-for-nat-turners-legacy).

The debate concerning the novel extended over the second half of the 20th century and on to the present. The issue of cultural appropriation is still a hotly discussed one. William Styron's daughter Alexandra, a writer herself, voiced her own opinion on it in an article published in *The Atlantic*, where she describes the initial admiration of the literary world for her father's novel, and the outrage and scathing criticism it sparked subsequently (Styron, 2020). She admits, though, that William Styron's privileged social position prevented him from acknowledging his failure and made him pursue another impersonation feat, i.e., *Sophie's Choice*, where he takes on the voice of a female Holocaust survivor. The boundary between artistic freedom and unlegitimised appropriation of other people's stories has been a matter of concern ever since.

The lesson learnt by William Styron made other white writers wary of the attempt to impersonate the voice of a black slave. Instead, African American authors started to explore the territory of fugitive slave experience. After Margaret Walker's *Jubilee*, which is often mentioned as the first neo-slave narrative (Beaulieu, 2002), there has been *The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman* (1971) by Ernest Gaines, which emphasizes the links between slavery and the 1960s by portraying a character who lives in both eras. Ashraf H.A. Rushdy in his study of neo-slave narrative emphasizes four novels which established the foundations for the neo-slave narrative genre in the 1970s and 1980s: *Flight to Canada* by Ishmael Reed, *Dessa Rose by* Sherley Anne Williams, *Oxherding Tale*, and *Middle Passage* (Rushdy, 1999, p. 5). Each of them revises the discourse and point of view assumed in *The Confessions of Nat Turner*. Ishmael Reed's novel satirizes the conventional slave narratives and comments on the cultural debates of the 1960s. *Dessa Rose*, though incorporating features of traditional slave narrative, makes a subversive response to Styron's act of cultural appropriation by the black author assuming the voice of a white woman. The two novels by Charles Johnson focus on how proscriptive concepts of racial subjectivity are formed, with *Middle Passage* highlighting the determination of racial identity by economic forces, and *Oxherding Tale* analysing the formation of personal identity by social forces (Rushdy, 1999, p. 168).

Ashraf H.A. Rushdy defines neo-slave narratives as "contemporary novels that assume the form, adopt the conventions, and take on the first-person voice of the antebellum slave narrative" (Rushdy, 1999, p. 3). Lonetta Oliver argues that the genre should not be limited to the first-person form narratives, as there are more ways of recreating and describing slaves' experiences (Oliver, 2014, p. 17). She also claims that there are nine features of a text which indicate that it can be classified as a neo-slave narrative. The presence of even one of these features in a text which re-analyses slavery makes it possible to define the text as neo-slave narrative.

The first of these features is the assumed perspective of "characters who do not speak (or write) in standard English". The second factor is intertextuality; neo-slave narratives often refer to classical works of literature, invoking their characters or conflicts, or examining their omissions. The third feature is undermining „Eurocentric and imperialistic notions of intelligence that work to justify American and/or international slavery" (Oliver, 2014, p. 18): neo-slaves narratives challenge biased historical records or scientific theories which are the products of belief in white superiority. The fourth factor involves the accounts of the trans-Atlantic slave trade from the perspective of the slaves themselves; previous accounts in the traditional slave narratives were typically written from the point of view of white intermediaries. Another feature in this classification is the truthful image of various interpersonal relationships, including alternative sexual relationships, covered in the neo-slave narrative; in the traditional slave narratives these were often considered taboo subjects, too controversial to be described, and consequently omitted. The next two features refer to the representation of government and economic systems which benefit from slavery and the slaves' scepticism towards organised religion, respectively. Individualised rather than uniform perception of liberty and freedom is another feature of the neo-slave narrative; characters in these novels often describe freedom with reference to particular conditions that slavery involves. Last but not least, neo-slave narratives often highlight citizenship rights for the formerly enslaved, focusing on voting rights, educational and ownership opportunities for the newly freed people (Oliver, 2014, p. 20).

The post-millennial novels which will be the subject of analysis in many ways respond to the tradition of the neo-slave narrative of the second half of the 20th century. These twenty--first century representations of slavery contain many characteristics of the neo-slave narrative genre, such as the conventions of the slave narrative, intertextuality, relativity of freedom, exposing the corrupt system behind the institution of slavery and the brutality it involved. What is most significant, however, is the purpose of reclaiming history and revisiting the past that contemporary neo-slave narratives share; it used to be the primary purpose of the Civil-Rights era neo-slave narratives. They attempted to embrace the full reality of slavery as presented by black characters themselves: in the time of African Americans' rising awareness of their own history and present-day situation it was natural for the neo-slave narrative to flourish. The contemporary, post-millennial neo-slave narrative is an offshoot of this tradition: it also revisits the past, at the same time exploring the present. The experience of black people in the USA of the first decades of the 21st century is marked by systemic racism, police violence and unequal opportunities. The Black Lives Matter movement, which began in 2013, following the killings of several African Americans, is the testimony of still existing burning racial issues within American society. In this respect parallels may be traced between the Civil Rights period and the present-day racially torn America. Both periods involved a heated debate about racism and violent events related to it. In literary terms, these issues were taken up the neo-slave narrative in the second half of the 20th century. Likewise, the contemporary neo-slave narrative is a reflection of recent problems in the USA; while exploring the past, these novels make powerful comments on the present as well. The following analysis of selected post-millennial novels is aimed at researching the legacy of the neo-slave narrative, with its revisionist attitude, and examining the comments the authors of these novels make on the contemporary USA.

1. Dreaming of tomorrow

"I said I would tell you of tomorrow. I didn't say tomorrow wasn't gonna hurt" (McBride, 2008, p. 289).

Song Yet Sung, a novel by James McBride, published in 2008, is set in 1850 Maryland, and involves the escape of Liz Spocott, a beautiful slave who has a gift for dreaming and foretelling the future, through the labyrinth of the swampy Eastern Shore. The inspiration for the novel was McBride's visit to the birthplace of Harriet Tubman, the slave woman who managed to escape from a Maryland plantation to become the most famous 'conductor' of the Underground Railroad, credited with helping over 300 slaves to escape north. In the Author's Note McBride writes about the mystical qualities of Tubman and the special character of the land which she came from, emphasizing "the web of relationships that existed there during slavery" and the fact that Tubman's area of the eastern shore "was a draw for runaways coming from all areas of the South" (McBride, 2008, p. 367). However, he clarifies that the novel is not about Tubman's life, but a book that her life inspired.

Definitely, the inspiration can be seen in the character of Liz; just like Tubman she is a dreamer and can see the future. Both women's mystical skills might be the result of a severe head wound which they both received, headaches and excessive sleepiness being its other by-products. Another similarity both women share is mobilising the black community to cooperate and seek freedom; Liz's foresight makes her a leader in the black community of Maryland. As she moves between slave catchers, watermen and plantation owners, she is helped by a network of African Americans, both slaves and freed blacks, who depend on "the Code" for communication – encrypted signals and signs, such as quilt decorations or blacksmith's pattern of hammering. As the author himself admits: "Some historians contend that no black codes were used in the Underground Railroad, but fortunately, the musings of scholars never stopped writers from drawing plot, content, and character from disputed history to power the muscle of their imaginations" (Mc Bride, 2008, p. 368). The Code symbolizes the resilience, unity and solidarity of African Americans, the qualities they were often denied in the traditional slave narratives, where they typically depended on the help of white people for survival.

Song Yet Sung draws from the tradition of the neo-slave narrative in many ways: it takes the perspective of the slaves themselves, even though the story is told through the lens of a third--person narrator. The focus is on Liz and her experiences, but the point of view of other black characters is also included: Amber, a young slave, the blacksmith transmitting encoded messages, Clarence, a black slave who decides to remain enslaved to help smuggle others to freedom, they all contribute to the story's complexity. However, the story also involves the perspectives of white characters, such as Patty Cannon and Denwood Long, corrupt slavecatchers, or widowed landowner Kathleen Sullivan, who is acutely aware of the reality of slavery. What is more, the novel does not shy away from controversial issues coexisting with slavery and typically omitted in traditional slave narratives, such as sexual abuse of slaves: it is when Liz is threatened with rape that she decides to attack one of the slave catchers' accomplices and runs away.

The multiple points of view and relativity of the concepts of slavery and freedom are reminiscent of the neo-slave narrative genre. Liz escapes from a life of bondage and abuse, yet, due to her gift of foresight, is critical of the kind of freedom that the North may seem to offer. She dreams of "young black men in great cities who shot one another from horseless carriages" and her vision of the future anticipates the problems that the 14th Amendment will not eradicate (McBride, 2008, p. 87). Being free from bondage might mean being entangled

in other kinds of imprisonment like violence, consumerism or systemic racism. Liz's disturbing visions of the future suggest that slavery has many faces and the repercussions of trans-Atlantic slave trade imprint African Americans for many generations. However, the vision of slavery is not limited to black characters only: Liz notices that Miss Kathleen, the white plantation owner, is also imprisoned in the conviction of her own superiority: "She's a slave like us… [s]lave to an idea... that they're better than you" (Mc Bride, 2008, p. 159). Another perception of bondage is offered in the story of Amber, Miss Kathleen's black slave, who feels responsible for his owner and puts off his own escape because he is worried about her wellbeing. Thus, the multiplicity of visions on the freedom/slavery dichotomy does justice to the complexity of this phenomenon.

Despite drawing on the neo-slave narrative tradition *Song Yet Sung* also introduces a novel attitude towards the issue of slavery. Whereas in the traditional slave and neo-slave narratives the focus was on individual protagonist's struggle for freedom, in McBride's novel the emphasis is shifted to a portrayal of community formation, which took place among slaves in the South and among the free blacks in the North, with a view to showing the significance of slavery to the discourse of African American citizenship (Barron, 2013, p. 67). Instead of describing the individual experience of slavery, McBride highlights the network of black people who are involved in the workings of 'the gospel train'. As mentioned above, they communicate by means of the mysterious Code, risking their own safety for the higher purpose of helping some of their compatriots flee to freedom. Their system of communication is a way of opposing the power of white people: despite the oppression and heavy surveillance the slaves are capable of organising themselves and developing a community. Without the communal help, the successful escape of some slaves to the North would never be possible. Unlike the neo-slave narratives of the second half of the 20th century, *Song Yet Sung* highlights the system of cooperation and resistance against white supremacy, which not only gives agency to southern slaves but also portrays them as a community strong enough to become a nation.

Through the use of flashforwards involved in Liz's dream visions analogies are drawn between the antebellum reality of slavery, the Civil Rights Movement and the contemporary racial issues in the present-day USA (Barron, 2013, p. 68). Some of them include the March on Washington and Martin Luther King's famous speech. The black boy who is liberated from bondage and taken north at the end of the story will become the ancestor of the famous activist. In this way a connection is made between the community-building experience of the slaves' secret communication and their descendants' full awareness of citizenship one hundred years later. The glorious days of these ground-breaking events are tainted with a bitter note, begging a question of the true legacy of this era, as an old man asks Liz: "If that preacher you seen in your dreams was hollering 'bout being free. . . well, then, he wasn't free, now, was he? How long that gonna take?" (McBride, 2008, pp. 288-289). Liz's other dreams paint a murky image of African Americans' life in contemporary America, highlighting violence, gangsterism and consumerism, which destroy the unity and strength that the Civil Rights Movement helped express: "She dreamed of… fat black children who smoked odd-smelling cigars and walked around with pistols in their pockets and murder in their eyes… Colored children eating themselves to death… preaching murder through song and whatnot" (McBride, 2008, p. 286). Through these images McBride makes a powerful comment on the failure of community power that blacks had so successfully developed; the 21st-century USA does not offer the freedom and equality that Martin Luther King talked about. The repercussions of slavery, oppression, systemic racism, paired with gangster culture, emptiness and thoughtless consumerism have thwarted the hopes

and prospects of the Civil Rights Movement. The political statement made by McBride exceeds the scope of the neo-slave narrative and adds a new dimension to the genre, stressing the significance of community power for the development of true citizenship.

2. In search of identity

> "Truth is, lying come natural to all Negroes during slave time, for no man or woman in bondage ever prospered stating their true thoughts to the boss. Much of colored life was an act, and the Negroes that sawed wood and said nothing lived the longest"
> (McBride, 2013, p. 28)

The Good Lord Bird, another novel by James McBride, published in 2013, is not at all an obvious continuation of the neo-slave narrative tradition. Even though it is the story of a slave boy who – somewhat accidentally – joins the anti-slavery forces of John Brown, to become eventually involved in the historic raid on Harpers Ferry, a few conventions of the genre have been relinquished. Firstly, the tone of the story is unusual in the context of the neo-slave narrative genre – Henry Shackleford's account of his adventures is deliberately satirical and amusing. By Brown's mistake the boy is considered to be a girl and referred to as Henrietta by the white man's army. The theme of mistaken identity is clearly indebted to Mark Twain's *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* and triggers numerous humorous situations and comments on Henry's part. Secondly, it is not a story about a slave's voluntary escape and attempt at freedom: Onion, as Henry comes to be called, has his doubts about becoming a part of John Brown's army. His master used to feed him well, whereas life with Brown means frequent hunger and exhaustion. The boy even makes a decision to abandon the group and try his luck, before being reunited with Brown again. Thus, it is an unorthodox take on the neo-slave narrative genre, which typically did expose the corruption and hypocrisy of the system which benefited from slavery but did not undermine the significance and heroism of key abolitionist figures. *The Good Lord Bird* is very critical of white people's perception of black slaves in general and does not spare anyone, even the legendary leaders of the abolitionist movement.

At the same time the novel does fulfill many of the assumed criteria of the neo-slave narrative. It successfully adopts the perspective of a black boy who does not speak standard English. Furthermore, as mentioned above, it is an intertextual work, definitely inspired by Mark Twain's canonical novel. In making Henry pass for a girl McBride refers to the much--disputed world of Huck Finn and Jim. Revealing one's own true identity may result in trouble, especially if you are a black person. Lying to others and taking up a fake identity is often a safer option. This is what underprivileged people are trained to do. “Much of colored life was an act,” Henry notices. “And the Negroes that did what they were told and kept they mouth shut lived the longest” (McBride, 2013). This idea of pretence and false identity underlies the novel; slavery did in fact involve fulfilling other people's expectations and stifling one's own true nature. Henry's performed identity symbolizes the denial of one's true self that marked the fate of most slaves, on the one hand, and the inability of white people, even abolitionists, to see the humanity of the slaves they wanted to liberate.

Another way in which the novel draws on the legacy of the neo-slave narrative is the honesty in presenting the cruelty and abuse that slavery involved. The Pikesville Hotel in the slave state of Missouri, where Henry arrives in the second part of the story, offers a bleak image of the slaves' misery. The most attractive female slaves work in a brothel there, whereas other slaves live in appalling conditions in a pen, suffering from starvation, excessive work and violence.

There is no solidarity between black people there; the coloured brothel workers consider themselves superior to the inhabitants of the pen and when one of them finds out about a planned insurrection, she informs the local judge, and nine black slaves are executed as a result. Henry comments on the permanent lack of trust among slaves in the following way: „Colored turned tables on one another all the time, in them days, just like white folks. What difference does it make? One treachery ain't no bigger than the other. The white man put his treachery on paper. N*****s put theirs in their mouth" (McBride, 2013, p. 172).

Relativity in the perception of bondage and freedom is another point made in the novel. Henry is sceptical of his own liberation and notices the challenges that life with John Brown's army brings. The comfortable existence which the boy leads at the Pikesville hotel makes him complacent and not very much disturbed by the miserable fate of slaves living nearby, including his friend Bob. Being free also means taking on the performed identity and not being able to reveal his true nature.

Furthermore, the novel also resembles the neo-slave narrative in its suspicion of organised religion. Zealous Catholic faith of John Brown, motivating all his actions, is presented in a satirical way. In the heat of battle and time of rest, he keeps on delivering long speeches referring to the Bible and intoning discursive prayers, which leaves Onion and other men puzzled. With his worn-out clothes, toes sticking out of his shoes, he is a pious monomaniac, consumed with the idea of abolishing slavery and convinced that he is serving God's purpose in his mission. At the same time, he fails to notice the true identity of his good-luck charm, as he refers to Onion. Clearly, there is a discrepancy between the scale of his long-term vision and the down-to-earth details of everyday life. However, Brown is a zealot who actually takes action, preceded by months of painstaking planning, as opposed to other religious abolitionists. When he realizes that he will not get the support he hoped for in Tabor, Iowa, he says: „Talk, talk, talk… All the Christian can do is talk... Your basic slave needs freedom, not talk. The Negro has listened to talk of moral suasion for two hundred years" (McBride, 2013, p. 208).

Despite the references to the neo-slave narrative genre, *The Good Lord Bird* also introduces contemporary issues and perceptions. The portrayal of John Brown, one of the most contested figures in American history, is made unobvious: on the one hand, it is an amusing and exaggerated character that Henry sometimes makes fun of. On the other hand, it is a determined man with a bold vision, enthusiasm and willpower who genuinely cares for his family and friends. His consideration and idealism make him the most humane character in the story. Even though doomed to failure, he dies with the unflinching belief that his struggle was not for vain. He sees his death as necessary so that other people might awaken to the brutality of slavery and start fighting it together; the idea of collective effort which is triggered by individual sacrifice is encapsulated in the metaphor of the bird featured in the title of the novel, a woodpecker which gnaws at an ill tree so that it might fall and feed other trees. The solemn ending of the story pays tribute to the greatness and significance of John Brown.

However, there are other historical figures presented in the novel whose greatness comes to be undermined. One of them is Frederick Douglass, the prominent leader of the abolitionist movement, activist and orator. In the novel he is presented as a privileged and powerful man, living with two women: his wife Anna, who is black, and a white mistress, Ottilie. Instead of providing the help to John Brown that he had offered, he goes back on his word and abandons him, which might be a reason for the failure of the Harpers Ferry attack. Douglass is described as „a man of parlor talk, of silk shirts and fine hats, linen suits and ties. He was a man of words and speeches" (McBride, 2013, p. 331). Despite his position and power, he withdraws from

Brown's initiative and disappoints him bitterly. Similarly, dozens of white abolitionists and free black men vow their support to the cause but actually few of them decide to keep their word. A comment on racial issues in the contemporary USA may be traced here: the activists of the Black Lives Matter also cannot count on massive support among their white allies. Talking about a problem is not enough, McBride argues with the example of Douglass and other privileged people who decide to stay out of trouble; it is only with truly determined visionaries, totally devoted to the cause of freedom, like John Brown, that history is made. Even despite his failure, a severe blow at the institution of slavery is struck, and many awaken to the necessity of putting an end to it.

The Good Lord Bird, despite its intertextuality and references to the formula of the neo-slave narrative remains a very contemporary novel. It boldly explores the themes of identity and gender by following a boy who takes on the disguise of a girl, which is both a source of humour and insight about gender roles. Henry bitterly comes to realize the limitations that being a girl in a patriarchal world involves. The political dimension of the novel makes it up to date, as well: the contrast between the calculated and careful Frederick Douglass, who is trying to gain the support of white establishment in the North, and the radical John Brown, who is tired of waiting and wants to take action, reverberates in the contemporary USA as well. This contrast calls to mind politicians' numerous speeches and appeals to end systemic racism and the anger and frustration of hundreds of people who take part in BLM marches following deaths of black people at the hands of the police. Finally, the novel's central theme of racism and white superiority is, sadly, very relevant: the gap between the black and the white is huge. Racial violence is common. Even white abolitionists perceive black slaves in a simplified, patronising way, and black people try to adjust their behaviour to white men's stereotypical perception of them. John Brown's false perception of Onion's true nature is the best evidence of it. Slavery in the novel and racial discrimination in present-day America impose a low-key, performed identity on blacks, a disguise of submission which they take on to protect themselves from racial hatred.

3. The past is present

„If you want to see what this nation is all about… you have to ride the rails. Look outside as you speed through, and you'll find the true face of America"
(Whitehead, 2017, p. 83)

The celebrated novel *The Underground Railroad* by Colson Whitehead fits the paradigm of the neo-slave narrative in its various aspects. It is a story of an escape of a slave named Cora from a cotton plantation in Georgia. The beginning of the story is rather conventional and brings to mind the classic slave narratives, with its description of the atrocities Cora has to put up with in her miserable slave existence. Then, however, her fate changes when she is approached by Ceasar, a slave from Virginia, who informs her of the prospect of escape by means of the Underground Railroad. She takes her chance and joins Ceasar in the attempt to run away to the North. In this post-modernist picaresque novel, the Underground Railroad phrase is no metaphor; it takes the physical form of a subterranean network of railroads, with fugitive slaves embarking ramshackle trains. Station agents help the slaves on the run reach the underground tunnels risking their own lives. As Cora travels from the South to the North in a desperate search of freedom, she also travels through time, being confronted with various symptoms of racism that actually have been part of America's past and present. The use of the time-travel technique in the neo-slave narrative dates back to Octavia Butler's *Kindred* (1979), a novel exploring both

the dehumanising system of slavery and its disturbing repercussions in the 20th century USA. *The Underground Railroad* also focuses on the numerous ways in which the aftereffects of slavery can still be felt, embracing the postmillennial perspective as well.

Other features of the neo-slave narrative genre present in the novel include the point of view of a black person who does not speak standard English – even though it is not first-person narrative, but Cora's thoughts are mediated by a third-person narrator, the slaves' utterances have the form of simplified American Southern English, with traces of Ebonics. The intertextual layer of the novel involves Cora's and her mother Mabel's fragmented testimonies on their escapes, which mirrors not only the slave accounts gathered and retold by William Still but also the ground-breaking *Beloved* by Toni Morrison. The feature of undermining imperialistic discourse on slavery is present in the novel, too; Cora frequently notices the injustice of this system and the cruelty and corruption underlying the philosophies of white supremacy and manifest destiny. The hypocrisy of the central assumptions of the Declaration of Independence is emphasized: "The whites came to this land for a fresh start and to escape the tyranny of their masters, just as the freemen had fled theirs. But the ideals they held up for themselves, they denied others… The land she tilled and worked had been Indian land. She knew the white men bragged about the efficiency of the massacres, where they killed women and babies, and strangled their futures in the crib. Stolen bodies working stolen land. It was an engine that did not stop, its hungry boiler fed with blood" (Whitehead, 2017, p. 139). The economic aspect of slavery is made clear as well: "The ruthless engine of cotton required its fuel of African bodies. Crisscrossing the ocean, ships brought bodies to work the land and to breed more bodies. The pistons of this engine moved without relent. More slaves led to more cotton, which led to more money to buy more land to farm more cotton" (Whitehead, 2017, p. 193). Furthermore, the issue of slaves' sexual abuse is openly discussed in the novel: while still on the Georgia plantation Cora lives at the Hob, the cabin for exiled women, who became mentally unstable after being raped and brutalized on many occasions. The subject of educational and ownership opportunities for the newly freed people is taken up when Cora arrives at John Valentine's farm, a utopian community in Indiana. It is a place of refuge where both free blacks and runaway slaves are admitted and given work and accommodation. A library "with the biggest collection of negro literature this side of Chicago" is there, offering to the black people an opportunity for education and self--development; as one character puts it: "Master said the only thing more dangerous than a n***** with a gun… was a n***** with a book" (Whitehead, 2017, p. 326). The farm meets its dreadful end just after Elijah Lander, a biracial abolitionist delivers a powerful speech about the need for solidarity; then a white mob attacks the farm, razing it to the ground and killing its leaders. Thus, Cora's dream about a peaceful life in the free state of Indiana is shattered and she realizes that she has to get back on the Underground Railroad in order to survive.

Even though the novel is a creative expansion of the neo-slave narrative and the motif of the Underground Railroad, it is also an acute analysis of racism in the contemporary USA. The journey through America highlights phenomena and situations which have limited the opportunities of black people and perpetuated discrimination against them in the 20th- and 21st-century USA. One of these phenomena is the birth control procedures that free black women are subjected to against their will, which Cora discovers as she arrives in South Carolina. It becomes apparent that it is one of the ways in which white people exercise their privilege and supervise the lives of blacks. The real-life eugenics programmes initiated in the early 20th century involved coerced sterilisation of the poor, the disabled, the mentally ill, prisoners and people of colour. Most enforced sterilisations were performed in California: from 1909 to 1979

approximately 20,000 sterilisations took place in state institutions, which accounts for one-third of the total number performed in the 32 states where such action was legal (https://www.news.ucsb.edu/2015/015287/politics-female-biology-and-reproduction, access: 18.07.2021). As latest data shows, coerced sterilisation is not just a phenomenon of the past: in September 2020 a whistleblower revealed that mass hysterectomies were performed on immigrant women at an immigration detention centre in Georgia (https://www.wbez.org/stories/whistleblower-alleges-medical-neglect-questionable-hysterectomies-of-ice-detainees/e5b12292-62d4-4df7-b12e-cc650e3f07d7, access: 18.07.2021).

Another infamous historical phenomenon reflected in the novel is the Tuskegee experiment. It was an unethical study, conducted between 1932 and 1972 by the U.S. Public Health Service, which involved observation of the development of untreated syphilis in hundreds of rural African American men in Alabama. The participants of the study were deceived that they were being treated for 'bad blood' and were never informed of their actual condition and the fact that they did not receive any cure for their disease, even after penicilin was discovered. The last participant of the study died in 2004. In 1977 President Bill Clinton issued a formal apology for the study, calling it shameful. In the novel when Cora and Caesar decide to stay in South Carolina they are warned by Sam, a station agent, that their present reality is not as safe as it seems; the patrons of a local bar are unwitting participants of a syphilis study, not receiving any treatment for the disease. As Sam reveals, it is not the only place where black people are exploited as subjects of cruel experimentation. In fact, the repercussions of the Tuskegee study are felt in the contemporary USA; according to data (https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#vaccination-demographic, access: 16.08.2021) black Americans are more reluctant to sign up for Covid-19 vaccines, due to their mistrust towards free vaccination programmes, deeply rooted in history (https://www.npr.org/2021/02/16/967011614/in-tuskegee-painful-history-shadows-efforts-to-vaccinate-african-americans, access: 16.08.2021).

The vision of alternate history offered in Whitehead's novel raises the issue of historical truth and its interpretations, which has been crucial for the formation of the neo-slave narrative. In South Carolina Cora works in a Living History section of the Museum of Natural Wonders; her job is to enact scenes from American history, including pre-captivity life of black people in Africa, life on the slave ship and typical day on the plantation. Cora soon realizes that the vision of history offered by the museum is not accurate and does not do justice to the cruelty and horror of slavery, however, it is established by whites and cannot be negotiated. The truth on offer there "was a changing display in a shop window, manipulated by hands when you weren't looking, alluring and ever out of reach" (Whitehead, 2017, p. 139). The appropriation of culture and experience of black people by the whites was best exemplified by the early slave narratives, a tradition that was countered with the advent of the neo-slave narrative, the genre revived by Whitehead's novel.

4. Acknowledging and retelling the past

"The memory is a living thing – it too is in transit. But during its moment, all that is remembered joins, and lives – the old and the young, the past and the present, the living and the dead"
(Eudora Welty, quoted in Ward, 2017)

The echoes of the neo-slave narrative in *Sing, Unburied, Sing* (2017), a novel by Jesmyn Ward, are not as direct as in the above-mentioned books, however, the novel, inspired by Toni Morrison's *Beloved*, is an important voice in this tradition. The novel is narrated by a young black woman Leonie and her 13-year-old son Jojo as they embark on a trip to pick up Jojo's white father from the notorious Parchman Farm prison, modelled on a plantation. The story slowly unravels how the black family are burdened by the past of racism, injustice and hidden traumas: Leonie is haunted by the ghost of her brother Given, who had been killed by a white racist 15 years earlier, a crime which was negligently classified as a 'hunting accident'. Leonie's father River is struggling with a trauma of a deed he committed when he served time in Parchman. A third narrator of the story is a ghost boy named Richie, who was incarcerated himself and died in tragic circumstances. He longs to have his story told by filling in blank spots and to find out why he died.

The character of Richie is the strongest link with *Beloved*; in Morrison's novel the ghost of Sethe's deceased daughter haunts her to remind her of her deed, whereas Richie insists on his story being told to mark his existence. Singing, or talking about the past, passing on the disturbing heritage of history is a significant part of one's identity. Leonie comes to understand that burying one's past results in dissociation and fragmentation of the self; only by realizing and embracing past traumas can one be at peace.

Apart from intertextuality, Ward's novel alludes to the tradition of the neo-slave narrative by drawing numerous parallels between slavery and racial discrimination in the contemporary USA. The reality of the Parchman prison resembles slaves' life on a plantation, both involving extremely hard work in the fields all day, violence and brutality. Richie's escape from the prison is told as if it was a slave's escape: once Richie's companion, a mentally unstable violent prisoner called Blue, attacks a white woman, he is caught, tortured and brutally killed by a white mob in retaliation. To save innocent Richie from the same fate River kills him, an act which will haunt him forever, and which is a parallel incident to Sethe's infanticide in *Beloved*. Ward's story suggests that even though slavery has been abolished, the lives of black people are still conditioned and controlled by the criminal justice system. They are not free, living in racist reality and permanent fear that they can be easily incarcerated and disposed of. Another feature of the neo-slave narrative present in the novel is the fair image of the African slave trade; River tells Jojo the story of his ancestor who lived in Africa before being captured and taken overseas. He emphasizes the sense of fear the Africans shared, hearing stories of their neighbours being kidnapped and sold, and then the horrible conditions and cruelty that were part of slaves' reality: "She learned that bad things happened on that ship, all the way until it docked. That her skin grew around the chains. That her mouth shaped to the muzzle. That she was made into an animal under the hot, bright sky, the same sky the rest of her family was under, somewhere far aways, in another world" (Ward, 2017, p. 69).

Another feature of the neo-slave narrative present in the novel is the individualised perception of freedom; the three narrators bring their own perspectives of contemporary life in America into focus. Leonie is struggling with a sense of racial inferiority and tragic past of her family, abusing drugs and desperately clinging on to her white partner. Jojo's perspective is that of an

adolescent coming of age and slowly realizing the limitations and oppression that will be his share for ever. Richie wants to have his story retold properly so that he can be released from the suspended state between life and death into a more peaceful dimension. What they have in common is their conviction that racism deprives them of fair life and citizenship. This conviction dawns on Jojo when their car is stopped by the police for a routine check, and he is handcuffed and held at gunpoint. Leonie is fully aware of her position: she knows that if she quarrelled with her white best friend and someone called the police, it would be her, a black girl, that would be blamed and imprisoned (Ward, 2017, p. 36). The discrimination against black people in the criminal justice system is best seen in the case of Richie: a poor black boy, sentenced to tough prison for stealing food for his siblings, escapes horrific lynching by his friend's mercy killing. River will never be able to liberate himself from the anguish of this deed and from the tragedy of his son's premature death, spending his life in a country where his rights are not protected, and his family members discriminated against. Each of these characters' lives would be different if they were white. Despite the fact that the times of slavery have passed, the oppression of black people is a fact. Their stories of hidden traumas, dating back to trans-Atlantic slave trade, slavery, dehumanization, segregation and police brutality need to be heard, it is argued in the story. Otherwise, they become silenced and forgotten and haunt the next generations with their unsettling grief, like Richie's story, stifled for decades, yet emerging in the end.

Sing, Unburied, Sing is an up-to-date dissection of racial issues in the contemporary USA. By drawing on the tradition of the neo-slave narrative, it provides the voice to those who are often overlooked by the white majority. The protagonists, representatives of present black America, are descendants of African slaves brought against their will to the New World over 400 years ago. Just like the heroine of *Beloved*, they are trying to put their past behind themselves and bury its secrets, yet the past tragedies and injustices keep resurfacing and demand acknowledging them. The novel emphasizes that remembering and embracing one's history is crucial for a nation's sense of identity. Richie's and River's stories are difficult and painful, but they constitute significant testimonies: their escapes from Parchman mirror slave escapes from plantations and are evidence of black people's resistance. In the era of Black Lives Matter and ongoing discussion about systemic racism and police brutality such evidence is particularly significant. Jesmyn Ward, just like Toni Morrison in the 1980s, gives voice to the underprivileged, allowing them to tell their own stories by themselves, unmediated; even though the stories are fragmented, disturbing and unpleasant, they are their own. Moreover, they bring to light the connection between slavery and present-day oppression of blacks, in its complexity, by providing multiple points of view.

Conclusions

On the whole, the neo-slave narrative genre, which flourished in the 1970s and 1980s, has been successfully revived in the second decade of the 21st century. Both eras involve growing public awareness of African Americans' history, present-day limitations and acts of injustice. In the Civil Rights era, it gave rise to novels revisiting the legacy of slavery and the ways in which it used to be presented in literature, with an attempt to give new value to slave's own testimonies. The issue of cultural appropriation launched a debate of legitimacy and impersonation in literature. Black authors took over to re-establish the voice of a black narrator in novels exploring slaves' experiences and the repercussions of slavery in the contemporary USA. The postmillennial, contemporary America also struggles with burning racial issues: public protests against systemic racism and police violence led to the emergence of the Black Lives Matter

movement, whose activists highlight the problems of white supremacy and black subjugation as long-term consequences of slavery. In response, the tradition of the neo-slave narrative has been restored, whose aim, just as 50 years ago, is revisiting the past and reclaiming the present.

The analysed novels refer to the legacy of the neo-slave narrative in various ways: by assuming the perspective of black slaves or underprivileged blacks in present-day America, by alluding to classical works of literature in order to show connections between the past and the present (as in *Sing, Unburied, Sing*), by bringing to light unethical practices resulting from belief in racist theories (as in *The Underground Railroad*), by providing the accounts of the trans-Atlantic slave trade from the perspective of slaves themselves, by showing economic factors underpinning slavery, slaves' scepticism of organised religion and the tendency of white people to perceive African Americans in simplified terms (as in *Good Lord Bird*). Individualised perception of freedom and bondage is another feature of these novels, referring to the tradition of the neo-slave narrative. At the same time, however, these novels are very much grounded in the present; even though they relate to the antebellum reality of slave escapes, the contemporary America is in focus. Thus, in *Sing, Unburied, Sing* the criminal justice system is presented as modern-day slavery and shameful facts from US history like enforced sterilisation or the Tuskegee study have their reflection in the present in *The Underground Railroad*.

The revisionist purpose underlying the neo-slave narrative can be discerned in the post-millennial novels as well. In *Song Yet Sung* the emphasis is on the communal effort of black slaves and free blacks involved in the 'gospel train' to help some slaves flee to freedom. Thus, the system of black resistance against white supremacy is strongly marked, distantly corresponding to the Black Lives Matter activism. The novel also draws connections between the reality of slavery, the Civil Rights era and the contemporary USA, commenting on how the prospects of the socio-political changes of the 1960s failed. *The Good Lord Bird* sheds critical light on white abolitionists, who often treated slaves instrumentally, failing to see their humanity, and brings up the issue of gender roles in the context of slavery. *The Underground Railroad* raises the issue of relativity of historical truth and its appropriation by whites. In *Sing, Unburied, Sing* the modern-day systemic racism is presented as a result of earlier eras of segregation and slavery, the latter being a legacy that is still stifled and not acknowledged. The scope of these post-millennial novels shows that a renewed discussion on racial issues in America is needed and the formula of the neo-slave narrative in the hands of talented authors offers tools and references to make it possible.

References

Barron, A. (2013). *From slave ship to citizenship: re-imagined communities and the counterculture of modernity in the historical novel of slavery*. University of Florida.

Beaulieu, E. (2002). Neo-slave narrative. In: J.M. Flora, L.H. MacKethan (eds.), *The Companion to Southern Literature*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press.

Bell, B. (2012). *Bearing Witness to African American Literature: Validating and Valorizing Its Authority, Authenticity, and Agency*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press.

Maus, D.C. (2020). Three-Fifths of a Black Life Matters Too: Four Neo-Slave Novels from the Year Postracial Definitively Stopped Being a Thing. In: B. Ashe, I. Saal (eds.), *Slavery and the Post--Black Imagination* (pp. 43-64). Seattle: University of Washington Press.

McBride, J. (2013). *The Good Lord Bird*. New York: Riverhead Books.

McBride, J. (2006). *Song Yet Sung*. New York: Riverhead Books.

Oliver, L. (2015). *Revision and the neo-slave narrative as a genre*. ProQuest LLC.

Rushdy, A. (1999). *Neo-Slave Narratives: Studies in the Social Logic of a Literary Form*. New York: Oxford UP.
Styron, A. (2020). The First Novelist Accused of Cultural Appropriation. *The Atlantic* March 9, 2020. Retrieved from: https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2020/03/other-peoples-stories/607606/.
Ward, J. (2017). *Sing, Unburied, Sing*. London: Bloomsbury.
Whitehead, C. (2016). *The Underground Railroad*. London: Fleet.

https://www.smithsonianmag.com/arts-culture/good-lord-bird-paints-different-portrait-abolitionist-john-brown-180975983/.
https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2020/11/02/the-mischievous-irreverence-of-the-good-lord-bird.
http://www.washingtonindependentreviewofbooks.com/index.php/bookreview/the-good-lord-bird.
https://www.news.ucsb.edu/2015/015287/politics-female-biology-and-reproduction.
https://www.wbez.org/stories/whistleblower-alleges-medical-neglect-questionable-hysterectomies-of- ice-detainees/e5b12292-62d4-4df7-b12e-cc650e3f07d7.
https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#vaccination-demographic.
https://www.npr.org/2021/02/16/967011614/in-tuskegee-painful-history-shadows-efforts-to-vaccinate-african-americans.

Paulina NAPIERAŁA
Uniwersytet Jagielloński

BLACK LIBERATION THEOLOGY AND JAMES CONE'S PROTEST AGAINST THE HEGEMONY OF 'WHITE THEOLOGY'

Abstract

The aim of this text is to introduce major themes of Black Liberation Theology, which as many researchers admit, has offered a unique perspective of empowerment to black Christians. The main focus of the essay is on the writings of James H. Cone, known as the founding father of the contemporary systematic Black Liberation Theology, and especially on his particular theological and cultural protest against the hegemony of 'white theology.' Since Cone's ideas have often been considered controversial, it is important to thoroughly analyze specific arguments that he used to support his claims and to discuss the cultural and political context in which his theological thought was born. The last part of the essay will present the opinions of some of Cone's critics, his dialog with them as well as the implications of his theological thought and protest.

Introduction

Black Liberation Theology emerged not only as an expression of black consciousness in the late civil rights era, but also as a protest against the role 'white theology' had (not) played in the racially divided US. Being concerned with racism as well as with the historical identity of African Americans, Black Liberation Theology seemed to have offered a unique perspective to black Christians. According to James H. Cone:

> Black Theology is that theology which arises out of the need to articulate the significance of black presence in a hostile white world. It is black people reflecting religiously on the black experience, attempting to redefine the relevance of the Christian Gospel for their lives (1970a, p. 53)[1].

The theme of liberation has been present among black Christians and black churches[2] since slaves were converted (Corbett, Mitchell-Corbett, 1999, p. 309)[3]. Black Liberation Theology, however, was developed much later – most notably by James H. Cone (1938-2018). And while the earlier focus on liberation was based on traditional theology, Black Liberation Theology

[1] There is a debate among scholars whether to capitalize the term *Black*/*black*. For example, the authors of *Black Church Studies. An Introduction*, capitalize it as "a means of moving beyond skin color towards a notion of shared history, cultural heritage, and group identity" (Floyd-Thomas et al., 2007, p. xxvi). In this essay, however, I follow James H. Cone's choice (present in most of his works) not to capitalize either the term *black* or *white*.

[2] That is Protestant churches that minister to predominantly Black congregations. It is important to distinguish the terms: 'Black Church' and 'black churches.' The term 'Black Church' evolved from the phrase 'the Negro Church,' which was also the title of the pioneering sociological study by W.E.B. Du Bois (1903). It is usually used to denote "the collective reality of black Christianity across denomination lines" (Pinn, 2002, p. ix). It is also "a kind of sociological and theological shorthand reference to the pluralism of black Christian churches in the United States" (Lincoln, Mamiya, 1990, p. 1). According to a narrow definition, it refers only to seven historically Black Protestant denominations. The term 'black churches,' on the other hand, is used to describe local black Protestant churches within a particular denomination (Pinn, 2002, p. ix.). Some of them might belong to historically Black denominations and others to predominantly white denominations.

[3] Although at first 'white religion' (understood mostly as Protestant Christianity) was culturally distant to the enslaved Africans, they soon developed their own kind of Christianity, based in a large part on Evangelicalism – an emotional religious movement that focused more on individual spiritual experience than on hierarchies of the formal churches. More in: Marsden, 1990, p. 67. Evangelical worship corresponded with African spirituality. Most Africans before being brought to the colonies practiced indigenous (tribal) religions, some adhered to Islam, and some to syncretic Catholicism. And although not all of them accepted Protestant Christianity, with time Evangelicalism did become the dominant religion among them. More in: (Rabouteau, 2001; Lincoln, Mamiya, 1990).

has a different approach. It is a Christian theology developed systematically from a black perspective. The controlling theme of this specific theology is the idea that Jesus is the liberator of the poor and the oppressed (Corbett et al., 1999, p. 309) and that God is either metaphorically (Cone, 1969) or literally black (Cleage, 1968). For Black Liberation theologians it generally means that God is on the side of the oppressed (who most often happen to be black) and opposes their oppressors. He wants justice and equality in this word, which black people can bring about. Therefore, although Black Liberation Theology might have some otherworldly themes and dimensions, its crucial focus is on liberation now, in this world. Instead of discussing freedom in the afterlife, it points to liberation as (very earthly) sociopolitical and economic justice (Corbett, 1999, p. 309).

While the roots of Black Liberation Theology can be found in the message of the pre-Civil War black churches as well as in the works of such black clergymen as Henry McNeal Turner (Cone, 2018, p. 42)[4], it was James H. Cone who powerfully introduced the topic of Black Theology into the 'white' American academic world. He did it by publishing his famous first books: *Black Theology and Black Power* (1969) and *A Black Theology of Liberation* (1970). And although there have been many Black Liberation theologians, including Albert Cleage Jr., James Deotis Roberts, Gayraud Wilmore, it was Cone who became most publicly known for his theology as well as for his strong, often controversial, statements.

He has been famous not only for arguing that liberation is as the major theme of Christianity and that Jesus was the liberator of the oppressed but also for stressing that people come to know Christ through oppression. According to him, since the oppressed in the US have been black, it is logical that "Christ is black! – that is, identified with the black struggle for justice and dignity" (2018, p.16)[5]. In his view, any theology that does not stand for the liberation of the oppressed (often black), is simply wrong or even anti-Christian. This reasoning led him to negative conclusions concerning 'white theology,' especially the American one. Cone stated, "because American theology has ignored the black poor, and the poor generally, it is not Christian theology" (2018, p. 71). Therefore, he decided to dismantle 'white theology' or at least oppose its hegemony by confronting it with a specific contextual theology reflecting the reality of black experience in America.

Since James H. Cone is known as the founding father of the contemporary systematic Black Liberation Theology, I will focus on his writings and his particular theological and cultural protest against the hegemony of 'white theology.' The main aim of this essay is to analyze specific arguments that James Cone used to support his claims against 'white theology' and 'white' churches[6]. It will also be important to present the cultural and political context in which Cone's theological

[4] Henry McNeal Turner was a bishop of the African Methodist Episcopal Church (AME), the first separate African American denomination. He urged blacks to respect themselves and imagine God in their own image – just as whites did. He was the first one to say "God is a Negro" in 1898 (Rabouteau, 2001, p. 76).

[5] In his writings it is also stressed that Jesus was a Jew born in Palestine, in the hot climate of the Middle East. Therefore, his images as a blue-eyed blond European are wrong (Cone, 2018, p. 16). According to Cone, it matters greatly that Christ took on a dark skin of an oppressed minority. He concludes, "*Christ is black, baby*, with all the features which are so detestable to white society" (Cone, 1969, p. 68). So as he argues, while God is metaphorically black, Jesus was also physically dark-skinned.

[6] At this point it is important to explain that, as Joseph W. Caldwell stresses, Cone uses terms *black* and *white* quite freely and with very little nuance. One of the reasons behind it is that most of Cone's work was completed prior to the advent of modern concepts of the construction of race, critical race theory, or clear understandings of intersectionality. He generally addressed North American and European audience and despite being familiar with global context, "he did not distinguish between White North Americans and Europeans and those of European ancestry in global contexts outside the West who might identify more readily with their countries of birth than their countries of ancestry" (Caldwell, 2020, p. 26). And although Cone himself stressed that "The vagueness of the terms 'black' and 'white' is intentional, and I think necessary" (Cone qtd. in Caldwell, 2020, p. 26), when he used the term 'white' (in reference to theologians, churches, preachers or Christians), he usually meant those who are both geographically located in North America and Europe and who are of European ancestry. 'White theology' in this context can be understood as theology developed mainly by theologians of European descent and applied by the WASPs.

thought and cultural protest were born[7]. In the last part of the essay I will present the opinions of some of his critics as well as the implications of his theological and cultural protest, including the results of the dialogue between Cone and his critics.

1. James H. Cone and the context of Black Liberation Theology

James Cone was born in 1938 in Fordyce, Arkansas and grew up in Bearden, Arkansas. He and his family attended Macedonia African Methodist Episcopal Church. He received a B.A. degree from a historically black Philander Smith College in Arkansas (1958) and a Bachelor of Divinity from Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary (1961). He earned his M.A. (1963) and Ph.D. (1965) degrees at Northwestern University. Later he commented on his educational experiences at white institutions in several of his books[8], describing how difficult it was for a black person to get used to a white academic environment. He also recalled that he had to contain his emotions in class during the discussions on the Civil Rights Movement (CRM). After graduating, Cone taught theology and religion at Philander Smith College and at Adrian College (Michigan). Before working on his first books on Black Liberation Theology, he had not enjoyed academic writing. The passion for the topic, however, made him a successful author and he was employed at Union Theological Seminary in New York City (1970). He was awarded the distinguished Charles A. Briggs Chair in systematic theology in 1977.

As a student and a young theologian he witnessed the successes and failures of the CRM. He was not an activist, but he felt a need to contribute to the civil rights struggle. He wondered what he could do as a theologian. The impulse to act was growing in him, especially as he observed the disagreements within the CRM and the emergence of the Black Power movement. Cone admired Martin Luther King Jr., but he also closely analyzed the problems King faced in the late 1960s and failures of some of the CRM's nonviolent actions. He understood the discontent of those within the Black community who thought that King's methods were not enough. He was sympathetic to the Black Power advocates who argued that King often accepted partial solutions and that there were few concrete benefits to this strategy. Just like them, he feared that King's appeal to oppressors only through love and moral arguments actually meant more Black bodies beaten by white officials and mobs (Pinn, 2002, p. 22-23).

Cone listened attentively to the arguments of younger activists from groups such as Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) and CORE who were disillusioned not only with King's strategy but also with the religiously motivated activism and churches' attitudes (Pinn, 2002, p. 14). He respected the leader of SNCC, Stokely Carmichael who was inspired by Malcolm X's arguments on black nationalism, racial pride, autonomy and self-determination. Although Cone did not fully support the idea of black nationalism, he did welcome, the development of the Black Power as ideology. For him it was a rejection of black self-hate and a more radical approach to social transformation. As a "turn from illusionary cooperation with whites, whose liberalism could only promote limited systemic change" (Pinn, 2002, p. 15) and as an attempt to pursue freedom "by any means necessary," it seemed to him to have offered a possibility of a real change. What worried Cone, however, was that Carmichael expressed a suspicion towards Christianity – as a culturally legitimized religious system used against Black self-determination.

[7] The focus will be placed on the North American context, but it is important to note that Black Liberation Theology emerged at a similar time as the wave of liberation movements in Latin America. James Cone stressed that at the time of writing his first book, he was unaware of that. Later, however, he did engage in a dialog with Liberation theologians from other countries. Nevertheless, it is worth emphasizing that while sharing certain characteristics with Liberation Theology in general, Black Liberation Theology has its own uniqueness.

[8] Including *My Soul Looks Back* (1982) and *Said I Wasn't Gonna Tell Nobody* (2018).

The Black Power representatives generally saw Christianity as 'white man's religion' and accused churches of having supported passivity among black Christians in the past. Although Cone agreed that some churches did promote otherworldly themes and passivity, he did not think, however, that it was a true Christian message. He stressed that Christianity was not a 'white man's religion,' but rather that white men claimed it for themselves and distorted its teachings. Black churches that accepted this "pie-in-the-sky" version, were indeed passive. But Cone did not feel that in order to reject passivity and lack of militancy, the Black Power movement had to reject Christianity (or rather its true form).

Unlike Martin Luther King Jr. and many representatives of Christian churches (black and white) that dismissed the Black Power ideology as dangerous and contrary to the previous calls for tolerance and brotherhood, Cone saw Black Power not only as an expression of Black consciousness and dignity but also as a movement carrying the Christian message of liberation (1970a, p. 49). He was not entirely alone in this thinking. There were also some Black ministers who were willing to try to reconcile the Christian principles of King's movement with Malcolm X-inspired demands for Black Power (Pinn, 2002, p. 15). They wanted to prove that Christianity did not require churches and their members to be passive and that it was not contrary to the goal of self-determination. In order to work on a compromise between the two approaches, they created the National Committee of Negro Churchmen (NCNC) in 1967. The cooperation between the Black Power movement and the clergy was difficult, however – due to the Black Power leaders' continued suspicious attitude toward the 'white man's religion' (Cone, 2018, p. 12).

Nevertheless, James H. Cone never gave up his own attempts to reconcile the concept of Black Power with Christian theology. As he later explained, he was also trying to find a third way between King's and Malcolm's approaches because, in his view, neither integrationism nor nationalism could achieve the desired goal of freedom. The impulse to write *Black Theology and Black Power*, according to his own words, came after the Detroit riots of 1967 and King's assassination in 1968. He finally understood what role he could play in the CRM as a theologian. Later he recalled that "rereading Malcolm X for a deeper understanding of Black Power, as the response to black self-hate" played a great role in transforming him "from a Negro theologian to a black theologian, angry and ready to do battle with white theologians" (Cone, 2018, p. 8) for the sake of civil rights. And although *Black Theology and Black Power* (1969) was written mainly "as an attack on racism in white churches and an attack on self-loathing in black churches" (Cone, 2018, p. 61), Cone's goal was also to construct "a theology that would be black like Malcolm and Christian like Martin" (Cone, 2018, p 60).

He was convinced that "Black people needed a *theological* revolution that could stand alongside Black Power and the black arts movement" (Cone, 2018, p. 19). In the Preface to 1989 and 1997 edition of *Black Theology and Black Power*, he wrote: "I wanted to speak on behalf of the voiceless *black masses* in the name of Jesus, whose Gospel I believed had been greatly distorted by the preaching theology of white churches" (Cone, 1997, p. 1). His deep conviction of the need of "a revolution in thinking about the Christian gospel" (2018, p. 19) as well as his focus on liberation as the major theme of the Bible led him to the conclusion that, in fact, "Black Power is the gospel of Jesus in America today!" (2018, p. 9). According to Cone, while Black Power movement was attempting to liberate black people, Black Theology was placing "the actions of black people toward liberation in the Christian perspective, showing that Christ himself is participating in the black struggle for freedom" (1970a, p. 54). As he explained in his second book, *A Black Theology of Liberation*:

> Christianity is essentially a religion of liberation. The function of theology is that of analyzing the meaning of that liberation for the oppressed community so they can know that their struggle for political, social, and economic justice is consistent with the gospel of Jesus Christ. […] Any theology that is indifferent to the theme of liberation is not Christian theology. In a society where [people] are oppressed because they are *black*, Christian theology must become *Black Theology*, a theology that is unreservedly identified with the goals of the oppressed community and seeking to interpret the divine character of their struggle for liberation (qtd. in Cone, 2018, p. 83).

Importantly, Cone's effort to create an apologetic for a uniquely black theology was not only his answer to black nationalism (that rejected Christianity) and to King's peaceful, loving integrationist approach based on traditional theology and Social Gospel, but also to the prevailing myth of a universal theology. Interestingly, he argued that the pre-Civil War black preachers were intuitively opposing this myth by interpreting the divine context of black struggle against slavery as similar to the "exodus of ancient Israel from Egypt" (2018, p. 81). The post-Civil War 'Black Church,' however, lost its zeal for freedom and equality and a black minister became "a most devoted Uncle Tom," and the transmitter of white wishes (Cone, 1971, p. 346). As Cone stressed later, he was particularly "fed up with conservative black churches preaching an otherworldly gospel as if Jesus had nothing to say about how white supremacy had created a world that was killing black people" (2018, p. 9).

For him Martin Luther King was one of the few exceptions, embodying a return to the "spirit of pre-Civil War Black preachers with emphasis on freedom and quality" (Cone, 1971, p. 348). As much as Cone appreciated King's involvement, however, he felt that "the only thing missing in the Negro freedom struggle was the accent on blackness and the right of black people to assert dignity without compromise" (2018, p. 15). Therefore, he made a call for Black Power as a mode of Christian conduct that ran contrary to King's perspective (Pinn, 2002, pp. 22-23) and rejected the idea that Black Christians should "turn the other cheek," especially when confronted with violence designed to maintain the status quo. Disappointed with these black churches that stayed politically inactive during the CRM era, as well as with those that were active but strongly rejected Black Power as contradictory to Christian theology, Cone suggested that instead of adhering to the distorted interpretation of the Bible, they should return to their pre-Civil War wisdom.

He thought that the main duty of a Christian was to fight against white supremacy – "America's original sin" (2018, p. 18). Thus, he decided to fight all its manifestations in white society, white church and especially in 'white theology,' which either supported racism or did nothing to oppose it. As he put it,

> I knew that Black Power advocates, like Stokely Carmichael, and militant black ministers, like Albert Cleage, had no interest in debating white religious scholars or well-schooled white ministers. But I did! It was time for me to join my black brothers and sisters in the fight for justice using what I'd learned in graduate school. It was time to turn the white man's theology against him and make it speak for the liberation of black people (2018, p. 9).

He began his struggle against the hegemony of 'white theology' by publishing his first books, including *Black Theology and Black Power* (1969), *A Black Theology of Liberation* (1970), *The Spirituals and the Blues* (1972) or *God of the Oppressed* (1975) and continued it throughout the 20th and the early 21st century, culminating with *The Cross and the Lynching Tree* (2011) and his posthumously published book, *Said I Wasn't Gonna Tell Nobody: The Making of a Black Theologian* (2018). In his works he stated very clearly that his aim was to dismantle or deconstruct the dominant 'white theology'. In 1969 he shocked his white audience and fellow academics by identifying the white church with the contemporary meaning of Antichrist (1969, p. 73). Later he added that any theology which is not engaged in liberating black people from white supremacy "is not a Christian theology but a theology of the Antichrist" (2018, p. 18).

2. Cone's arguments against white churches and 'white theology'

Before discussing the deficiencies Cone saw in the historical practice and ethics of white churches as well as in 'white theology,' it is important to explain how he understood the term 'Antichrist,' for the use of which he was often criticized. In his first book he explained that an 'Antichrist' might be manifested by any institution that "is the enemy of Christ". He equated the term loosely with the biblical concept of "the principalities and powers" (1969, p. 73). As Caldwell notes, the term has a distinctly non-eschatological meaning for Cone. He understood 'Antichrist' rather as "the powers of evil that worked against Christ in this world" (2020, p. 28)[9]. If Christ is black (ontologically), then the white church's racism identifies it as an "enemy of Christ" (Caldwell 2020, p. 28). For Cone, racism was "a complete denial of the Incarnation" (1969, p. 73) and thus of Christianity. He argued that since "[i]t was the white 'Christian' church which took the lead in establishing slavery as an institution and segregation as a pattern in society by sanctioning all-white congregations" (1969, p. 73), it was logical to label it as 'Antichrist.' What is even more important, however, is that in most of his writings, Cone strongly stressed that the real 'Antichrist' was actually white supremacy. It was through adopting this concept (or not challenging it), that other institutions were becoming antichristian. As he reasoned,

> White supremacy is the Antichrist in America because it has killed and crippled tens of millions of black bodies and minds in the modern world. It has also committed genocide against the indigenous people of this land. If that isn't demonic, I don't know what is. White supremacy is America's original sin. It is found in every aspect of American life, especially churches, seminaries, and theology (2018, p. 53-54).

For Cone white supremacy also expressed a Christological heresy, a basic denial of what the Church must say about the person and nature of Christ[10]. Even more importantly, Cone stressed that white supremacy had detrimental effects not only the oppressed black community but also on the white supremacists. Therefore, he continued to speak especially to white audiences, criticizing their institutions, in the hope of transforming white society. As he provocatively put it, "I was also writing to white people, especially white churches and their theologians. I had to tell them that their white Christianity was *not* the gospel of Jesus. White supremacy, in fact, is the Antichrist" (2018, p. 22).

[9] Caldwell also stresses that Cone's understanding of the term was similar to the perspective of the early Anabaptists (2020, p. 28).
[10] More about it in: *The Glorious, Complicated Legacy of James H. Cone* (Burdette, 2018).

He wanted to show that racist practices of American churches and the instrumental use of 'white theology' were negative for the whole American society. He started with the critique of the white church. In order to do that, he first defined what he understood as the 'real Church:'

> the people of God, whose primary task is that of being Christ to the world by proclaiming the message of the gospel (*kerygma*), by rendering services of liberation (*diakonia*), and by being itself a manifestation of the nature of the new society (*koinonia*) (1969, p. 71).

He concluded that "the empirical, institutionalized white church has failed on all counts" (1969, p. 71). First of all, it did not preach the major message of the gospel – the message of liberation and freedom to the oppressed. As Cone stressed, the biblical passages on liberation were often omitted or abstractly interpreted by white preachers. Therefore, according to him, the major failure of the white church in the first area was related to its continued silence on the question of racism. In some cases, however, it was also related to churches' periodic preaching that actually supported white supremacy (1969, p. 71-74)[11]. Secondly, in Cone's view, the white church failed to render services to the poor (1969, p. 71). For him, the white church was irrelevant on issues of social justice and lacked involvement in ministries directed to the poor, especially those that would attack racism at its sources. He wanted to see any efforts to place the white church in solidarity with the oppressed Black community, but could not (1969, p. 67-71). Finally, it seemed to Cone that "the white church is not God's redemptive agent but, rather, an agent of the old society" (1969, p. 71). Therefore, in his view, it also failed in fellowship. The church should not only find solidarity with the oppressed but also maintain the holiness of its fellowship. Thus, it should ask who "does not live according to the Spirit of Christ?" (1969, p. 67) And yet, as Cone stressed, racists were never eliminated from white congregations (1969, p. 72). In his opinion, the white church simply failed to exercise "moral leadership and moral example" (beyond the passing of a few resolutions). Instead, it sponsored institutions (including schools and universities) that were either racist or segregationist (1969, p. 72)[12].

In *Black Theology and Black Power* Cone especially strongly criticizes the latent nature of racism within white churches as well as their attempts to present certain immoralities as moral (72). He enumerates the examples of racist practices accepted by the church throughout (mainly American) history. He points to white churchmen who wrote books in defense of slavery. He also recalls that many of the preachers and missionaries owned slaves. He stresses that even in abolitionist churches in the North opposing slavery did not necessarily mean that the church accepted black people as equal with whites. He thinks it is worth remembering that the discrimination and separation of blacks and whites in northern churches was actually the reason why Richard Allen established the first separate black denomination AME[13]. Cone also complains that many white churches turned a blind eye when their members were members of the Ku Klux Klan. Even later, during the civil rights era, as Cone notes, many churches preferred gradualism and status quo arguments to supporting Martin Luther King, Jr. He also points out to the fact that those who joined the movement did so belatedly, and mostly after the emergence of the Black Power Movement (which made King's strategy look rather moderate) (1969, p. 75-80).

---

[11] More research on this topic was presented in *The Color of Compromise: The Truth about the American Church's Complicity in Racism* (Tisby, 2019) and in *White Too Long: The Legacy of White Supremacy in American Christianity* (Jones, 2020).

[12] More about the schools, especially about southern Baptist seminaries (Jones, 2020).

[13] More about the history of AME (Raboteau, 2001, p. 23-24, 33, 36-38). Cone notes, however, that there was more concern for slavery among Quakers, at least formally (1969, p. 77).

What especially concerned Cone when he was writing his *Black Theology and Black Power* was that at that time many white churches were condemning the violence of rioters in Detroit and Los Angeles – without any sustained criticism of the violence whites had perpetrated against Blacks during slavery, Jim Crow and the long reign of lynching laws in the South. It was also difficult for him to understand why they had nothing to say about the abject poverty and ghetto culture that housing discrimination and city policies imposed on Blacks in the North[14]. Therefore, he implied that the "continued pattern of support for the rule of law, calls for gradualism, or direct participation in racist acts has become so ingrained in the DNA of the White Church that it fails to recognize it for what it is: a form of anti-Christ-like behavior" (Caldwell, 2020, p. 30). Cone wanted to make white churches recognize that they were participating in "the perpetuation of white supremacy". In his view, they needed to radically reorient "their style in the world toward blacks" and join the advocates of Black Power in their "unambiguous identification with the oppressed" (1969, p. 81).

What was even more important to Cone than the failure of the white churches to oppose 'white supremacy', was the failure of white theology to remind them of such a duty. He strongly stressed, "[a]s with the Church as a whole, theology remains conspicuously silent regarding the place of the black man in American society" (1969, p. 83). He also explained:

> When the Church fails to live up to its appointed mission, it means that theology is partly responsible. Therefore, it is impossible to criticize the Church and its lack of relevancy without criticizing theology for its failure to perform its function. Theology functions within the Church. Its task is to make sure that the "church" is the Church (1969, p. 83).

Cone's most important reason for believing that 'white theology' reflected white supremacy was that white theologians remained silent in their writing on issues of race. As he argued:

> In the history of modern American theology, there are few dissenters on black slavery and the current black oppression among the teachers and writers of theology. And those who do speak are usually unclear. Too often their comments are but a replica of the current cultural ethos, drawing frequently from nontheological disciplines for the right word on race relations. More often, however, theologians simply ignore the problem of color in America (…)" (1969, p. 83).

When he started teaching at Union Theological Seminary in New York, he often repeated this claim. He was especially interested in finding white theologians who would explicitly condemn lynching, but he came to a conclusion that "[w]hite theologians didn't say anything about lynching," "I tried to find a white theologian who addressed it in a sustained way. No one did it" (Blake, 2012). Cone was particularly disappointed with the fact that Reinhold Niebuhr never spoke out against lynching – despite the fact that he occasionally spoke about race and, unlike some other scholars from Union Seminary (e.g. its President John Benett), expressed a positive opinion about the ideas discussed by Cone in *Black Theology and Black Power* (Cone, 2018, p. 51-53). Cone stressed, however, that "neither Niebuhr nor any other famous white pastor at the time spoke out against the most brutal manifestation of white racism in the 20th century America: lynching" (Blake, 2012). He also suggested that apart from not saying anything about lynching and segregation, Niebuhr also had turned down King's request

[14] More about these issues (Tisby, 2019).

to sign a petition calling on the president to protect black children integrating Southern schools (Blake, 2012)[15]. According to Cone, "Niebuhr's decision not to speak out against lynching encouraged other white theologians and ministers to follow suit, because Niebuhr was considered the nation's greatest theologian" (Blake, 2012). Ultimately, the issue of silence on the question of race was, in Cone's view, the most egregious error found in white theological discourse (Caldwell, 2020, p. 30). He was vocal about it in an attempt to demonstrate that even by passive acceptance of white supremacy, white theologians were also responsible for its endurance it in the American society.

According to Joseph Caldwell, Cone understood their silence as a result of at least four realities. Firstly, he knew that white theologians could practice their profession without having to deal with race either in their work or their lives. Secondly, dealing with race might have stirred up uncomfortable feelings of guilt in white theologians, therefore they avoided it. Thirdly, Cone believed that many white theologians would not engage race because they were uncomfortable dealing with "Black Rage." Finally, most white theologians were, in his opinion, not ready for the radical "redistribution of wealth and power" that an honest theological engagement with racism would have demanded (qtd. in Caldwell, 2020, p. 30)[16].

Another reason for Cone's criticism toward 'white theology' was what he saw as a its tendency to lean toward philosophical abstraction and away from concrete contemporary issues (Caldwell, 2020, p. 31). As he wrote:

> It is much easier to deal with the textual problems associated with some biblical book or to deal "objectively" with a religious phenomenon than it is to ask about the task of theology in the current disintegration of society. It would seem that it is time for theology to make a radical break with its identity with the world by seeking to bring to the problem of color the revolutionary implications of the gospel of Christ. It is time for theology to leave its ivory tower and join the real issues, which deal with dehumanization of blacks in America. It is time for theologians to relate their work to life-and death issues, and in so doing to execute its function of bringing the Church to a recognition of its task in the world (1969, p. 83).

Moreover, he saw 'white theology's' insistence on universal theology, and objections to a particular theology of oppressed black people, as symptomatic of the racist afflictions of white theologians. He actually thought that despite stressing the significance of universal theology, white theologians often abandoned theology's historic commitment to objectivity in order to use theological and doctrinal rhetoric in defense of racist acts. Although it was contradictory to their claims of objectivity and universality, white theologians seemed to not have noticed this contradiction. At the same time they were very careful to avoid "lack of objectivity" in the case of taking side of the oppressed.

According to Cone, instead of focusing only on abstractions and attempts to create an "objective" and "universal" theology, theologians should focus more on earthly issues. As he explained:

[15] This claim was later contested by some scholars, which will be discussed below.
[16] Caldwell based his analysis largely on (Cone, 2004, p. 139-152).

> The Church[17] cannot remain aloof from the world because Christ is in the world. Theology, then, if it is to serve the need of the Church must become 'worldly theology.' This means that it must make sure that the Church is in the world and that its word and deed are harmonious with Jesus Christ. It must make sure that the Church's language about God is relevant to every new generation and its problems. It is for this reason that the definitive theological treatise can never be written. Every generation has its own problems, as does every nation. Theology is not, then, an intellectual exercise but a worldly risk (1969, p. 84).

By saying so, he was in fact advocating a contextual theology based on the Paul Tillich's academic framework, which stressed that theology is not universal, but tied to specific historical contexts. Cone directly referred to Tillich, when he continued his argumentation:

> American theology has failed to take that worldly risk. It has largely ignored its domestic problems on race. It has not called the Church to be involved in confronting this society with the meaning of the Kingdom in the light of Christ. Even though it says, with Tillich, that theology 'is supposed to satisfy two basic needs: the statement of the truth of the Christian message and the interpretation of this truth for every new generation' (1969, p. 84).

One of the reasons why American theologians wrote and taught out of context and "as if they did not need to address the radical contradiction that racism created for Christian theology" was, according to Cone, the fact that they were "too closely tied to the American structure". As he put it, "The lack of a relevant risky theological statement suggests that theologians, like others, are unable to free themselves from the structures of this society" (1969, p. 85)[18]. He concluded that "[i]t is impossible to respond creatively and prophetically to the life-situational problems of society without identifying with the problems of the disinherited and unwanted in society" (1969, p. 85).

Cone argued that it was different in Europe. He gave the example of Karl Barth's theology that "was born in response to the political and economic crisis of Germany" (1969, p. 86). In his early works he strongly identified with Barth's Christocentric neo-orthodoxy that shifted away from liberal theology's trust in humanity: "from trust in man to complete trust in God alone" (1969, p. 86). For Cone, the political implication of Barth's theology was clear: "Hitler is Antichrist" (1969, p. 87). The close links of theologians to the structures that he saw in America, however, made him conclude – "As long as theology is identified with the system, it is impossible to criticize it by bringing the judgment of God's righteousness upon it" (1969, p. 87).

A much as Cone appreciated some of the European theologians and drew from their frameworks in the early phase of his scholarship, he also became greatly disappointed, for example with Tillich, who did not talk about racism in the United States the way he opposed Nazism in Germany. The reason for that, as Cone was explained, was because of Tillich's fear that "his American audience would reject him" (2018, p. 74). Therefore, despite respecting Barth's or Tillich's scholarship (as well as Niebuhr's), in the end he found them irrelevant (2018, p. 74). Cone also criticized those white theologians who did deal with race but only occasionally.

[17] When Cone capitalize the term Church, he refers to what he defined as 'the real Church.'

[18] Importantly, Cone was not the only scholar to make this claim. As Caldwell stresses, similar claims can be found in the writings of Nathan Hatch, Mark A. Noll, Simon Maimela and Walter Brueggemann. More about it in: (Caldwell, 2020, p. 30).

He thought that their inconsistency was actually perpetuating racist systems. He particularly focused on such inconsistency in the work of those theologians who called for gradualism. In his opinion, theologians who addressed the question of race in such a compromised way were rather expressing paternalistic pity (Caldwell, 2020, p. 31)[19].

Cone was also very clear that 'white theology' was beholden to white supremacy because it had failed to engage with black theologians, the Black Church, and black culture in the writing of theology (Caldwell, 2020, p. 31). In his last book, he recalled "I soon discovered that *most* white theologians couldn't talk about theology and race in a way that showed a real knowledge and respect for black people" (Cone, 2018, p. 78). Therefore, in *Black Power and Black Liberation* he complained: "Most seminaries still have no courses in black church history and their faculties and administrators are largely white. This alone gives support to the racist assumption that blacks are unimportant" (1969, p. 86).

He continued to complain about it also in his later works, including *Theology's Great Sin. Silence in the Face of White Supremacy*, where he stressed that "[t]here are almost no references to Black scholars or other people of color in any of the writings of major white theologians". He again pointed to Reinhold Niebuhr, who "did occasionally talk about race" but who did not cite any black intellectuals in his discussion (Cone qtd. in Caldwell, 2020, p. 31). As Caldwell stresses, Cone did not ask white theologians to always agree with black theologians, but he did insist on a consideration of black intellectuals in the discussion (2020, p. 31). Instead he felt that white theologians, who with time became interested in the oppressed, pointed their critique rather at questions of class and economics and away from race. Therefore, they tended to prefer conversations with Latin American Liberation theologians to an engagement with Black Theology. As a result, they often missed the racist elements of their theological traditions (Cone qtd. in Caldwell, 2020, p. 31).

Overall, James Cone's assessment pointed especially to two most critical failures of 'white theology'. First, the failure to realize and rid itself of the embedded racism that had emerged from both its past silence and its past explicit defense of racist practices in white churches and society. Secondly, the failure to generate an "anti-racist" theology that would stand as a sharp corrective of its past errors (Caldwell, 2020, p. 32). "The appalling silence on racism" amongst white theologians led Cone to the conclusion that "[w]hite American theologians have ignored the gospel of God's liberation of black people from white supremacy. They have been more concerned about the latest theological fad coming out of Europe than about black bodies hanging from lynching trees" (Cone, 2018, p.71). He also stressed that "[t]he development of a hard-hitting antiracist theology by white religion scholars is long overdue" (Cone qtd. in Caldwell, 2020, p. 32).

3. Criticism toward James Cone's Black Liberation Theology and his dialogue with the critics

James Cone's Black Liberation Theology was a controversial concept which attracted a number of critical comments and analyses. Some critiques of Cone's theological positions have focused on the need to rely more heavily on black sources reflecting black experience, some on Cone's uncompromising attitude, lack of emphasis on reconciliation, his endorsement of Black Power as well as on his opinions on the role of violence in black struggle. Others also concerned his ideas of God and theodicy, and later even the male-centered language and lack of inclusion of the experiences of black women (and other minorities) in his sources.

[19] Cone listed James Herzog as "a prominent exception" to the rule. In general, however, his critique of white theologians hardened over time (Caldwell, 2020, p. 31).

Among some of the most famous critics of Cone's work was Charles H. Long, a historian of religion and the founding members of the Society for the Study of Black Religion. Long continued to criticize Cone's concept of Black Theology throughout the 1970s and much of the 1980s, contending that theology in general was a western invention alien to black experience. However, as Cone stresses in his last book, Long eventually offered some positive acknowledgements of his work. In *Significations* (1986), he wrote that Cone's first book was a signal of a new mode of theological writing and that more of Cone's programmatic intent was to be found in his later books, especially *The Spirituals and the Blues* as well as in his teaching and in his relations with liberation theologians throughout the world (Cone, 2018, p. 88).

In 1971, however, in his essay titled *Perspectives for a Study of Afro-American Religion in the United States*, where Long argued that "the study of black religion suffered from a paucity of methodological perspectives as only two approaches – social scientific methods and theological apologetics – had been used", he categorized James Cone's work as an example of the latter (Sanders, 2018, p. 30). He also proposed a different methodology – rooted in the historical interpretation of three "symbolic images": African as historical reality and religious image, the involuntary presence of the black community in America, and the experience and symbol of God in the religious experience of Blacks. In a statement that was a critical reference to Cone's use of existentialism in *Black Theology and Black Power*, Long stated, "a purely existential analysis cannot do justice to this religious experience" (Long qtd. in Sanders, 2018, p. 30-31). He thought that in an attempt to constructing a theological interpretation of Black Power, Cone described existential absurdity as "the absolute contradiction between what is and what ought to be" in black life (qtd. in Sanders, 2018, p. 30-31).

In fact, Long was suspicious of the very discipline of theology (seeing it as inherently white) and he implied it was inconsistent to protest against the hegemony of white theology while using its own white categories. He was also critical of the over-ecclesial nature of Black Liberation Theology. This criticism resonated with other scholars of African American religious experience. As Michelle A. Gonzalez stresses, the viewpoint that Black Theology is too tied to black churches was later expressed by scholars, like Anthony Pinn (humanist theologian) and Victor Anderson (philosopher of religion) (2014, p. 56)[20]. Another aspect of Long's criticism concerned the originality of Cone's key insights. He stressed that seeing Jesus and God as black was in fact not original to Cone. He did admit, however, that what was original to Cone's writings was their location within systematic theology (Gonzalez, 2014, p. 61).

Another important critic of James Cone work was his brother, Cecil Cone, who was also a theologian. Cecil's critique of his brother's work focused on the proper starting point of Black Theology. For James Cone, liberation was its central theme, but according to Cecil Cone's book *The Identity Crisis in Black Theology*, the proper starting point of Black Theology was supposed to be "the black religion it purports to represent" (qtd. in Sanders, 2018, p. 32). Cecil Cone argued that black religion was comprised of African Traditional Religion, the environment of slavery, and the Bible. He based his ideas on the research by Melville Herskovits, W.E.B. Du Bois, and John Mbiti. Therefore, "Cecil Cone charged his brother with neglecting a fuller account of black religion in the name of Black Power (which, Cecil argued, provides important but incomplete insights to black theology) and an analysis of liberation that is too

[20] Pinn argues that a much broader range of religions than black Christianity constitutes African American experience. More about it in: (Gonzalez, 2014, p. 56-59). Victor Anderson in his book *Beyond Ontological Blackness* criticizes Black Theology's reliance on ontological blackness. He thinks that this approach to black identity that wrongly "adheres to idealistic, monolithic notions of black identity at the expense of the rich, complex collection ofblack subjectivities that actually compose black life." Instead, he proposes a postmodern understanding of blackness. More about it in: (Sanders, 2018, p. 8-11).

dependent on the work white theologians" (Sanders, 2018, p. 33). As a result, he challenged his brother to "make up his mind concerning his confessional commitment: is it to the black religious experience or to the Black Power motif of liberation with a side-long glance at the black religious experience?" (qtd. in Sanders, 2018, p. 33). According to him, James Cone could not see the "fullness of blackness–as revealed in black religion" because of "an unnecessary obsession with the very theological systems he sought liberation from" (Sanders, 2018, p. 34).

Gayraud Wilmore, a historian, ethicist, educator, and theologian, known for his role in the Civil Rights Movement as well as his scholarship on the history of the African-American religious experience and for his contributions to Black Theology, joined Cecil Cone in this argumentation. Together they criticized the perceived Eurocentrism of James Cone's scholarship, which as they felt relied too heavily on European theologians, particularly Karl Barth. They were stressing the need for Black Theology to draw more heavily from African American sources (Gonzalez, 2014, p. 61)[21], especially if it should a counterbalance to the hegemony of 'white theology'.

A landmark critique not only of Cone's ideas but also of the whole Black Theology Movement was presented by a black theologian, William R. Jones. He was especially interested in theodicy, therefore, in his book *Is God a White Racist? A Preamble to Black Theology*, he decided to consider the question of the Black Church's treatment of evil and the nature of suffering. His basic question was: "if a benevolent God has dominion over human history, why do certain ethnicities suffer disproportionately? In result, he challenged the assumption that God is on the side of the oppressed given their continued suffering. Instead, he proposed a "humanocentric theism," deemphasizing God's work in theodicy and placing accountability in human hands. He stressed that the question of "divine racism" had been ignored by black liberation theologians, especially by James Cone (Gonzalez, 2014, p. 61-62).

The most important and common topic discussed among the critics of Cone's approach, was, however, the one broadly commented by another black theologian – J. Deotis Roberts – who was himself supportive and sympathetic to the concept of Black Theology. In his 1971 book, *Liberation and Reconciliation: a Black Theology*, Roberts argued that "[l]iberation and reconciliation are the two main poles of Black Theology" and that they are "are not antithetical" (Roberts, 2005, p. 8). Therefore, while he agreed with James Cone regarding the liberating nature of Jesus Christ, he nevertheless believed that Cone was wrong about separating the work of black liberation from that of interracial reconciliation. He wrote: "Black Theology is a theology of liberation. We believe that the Christian faith is avowedly revolutionary, and therefore, it may speak to this need with great force." He added, however: "Reconciliation is also crucial. Since 'black nationalism' is a fantasy more akin to rhetoric than to reality, there is a common sense reason why reconciliation must be a postrevolutionary goal" (2005, p. 8). And although (similarly to Cone) he stressed that "there is a theological basis for this reconciliation 'between equals'" (2005, p. 8), he also explained that:

> beyond liberation we chart the guidelines for a true Christian reconciliation. If we are warned that reconciliation is too futuristic for consideration at this time, we reply to our critics that in the nature of our faith we must always seek reconciliation (2005, p. 9).

[21] More about Wilmore's critique in: (Gonzalez, 2014, p. 65).

And while Cone stressed that black liberation had to begin with black self-love and that it should arrive before reconciliation, "Roberts argued that both liberation and reconciliation were divine processes in which humans, through the grace of Christian discipleship, were welcomed to participate" (Sanders, 2018, p. 29).

Deotis Roberts was not the only scholar who thought that since Cone had said it was too late for 'white theology' to make amendments, he was ambiguous about reconciliation. In fact, since 1969 Cone has been quite often criticized for minimizing the role of forgiveness or reconciliation in his theology – by both white and black critics. Some researchers, however, think that these critics have failed to understand him. They stress that "the gesture of confrontation, of speaking those truths which none want to say and even fewer want to hear, is the gesture that means I forgive you. Enter into a new future with me". They also point to the fact that Cone emphasized that white supremacy was detrimental to the whites as well as blacks. Therefore, they think that "[t]he work of black theology, in its most radical form, is a work intended to liberate white people from their oppression, which they cannot see and do not understand" (Burdette, 2018). Moreover, they remind contemporary students of Black Liberation Theology that for Cone it was a third way between black nationalism and King's loving integrationism in several contexts. Also in that it "may be understood as an attempt at a more radical interpretation of Jesus' command to love one's enemies" While common image of King's call to love one's enemy might be seen as denying that one has an enemy at all (and implying that there is rather a misunderstanding) and while the early words of Malcolm X might suggest that the idea of loving one's enemy is ludicrous, and therefore blacks need to love and care for one another (while hatred for whites is allowed), Cone, in their view, has proposed a different solution. He "insisted on seeing white culture as a real enemy – as Antichrist, as he called it early on – and to love white people anyway, not denying their status as enemies, nor abandoning them to enmity" (Burdette, 2018).

This interpretation has not been convincing to many of Cone's white critics. In the Preface to the 1986 edition of *A Black Theology of Liberation*, Cone recalled how white theologians, e.g. Andrew M. Greeley referred to Black Theology as a "Nazi mentality," as a "theology filled with hatred for white people and the assumption of the moral superiority of black over white" (2010, p. xvii). He also recounted that they often saw him as angry, hostile and arrogant while his theology as "emotional" and "anti-intellectual" (2010, p. xviii). He knew that "the passion" with which he wrote "alienated most whites (and some blacks too)". But he felt that he "had no other alternative" if he wanted to speak "forcefully and truthfully about the reality of black suffering and of God's empowerment of blacks to resist it" (2010, p. xvi). The fact that he stressed in the same Preface that: "Oppressors never like to hear the truth in a sociopolitical context defined by their lies" (2010, p. xvi) and that he "deeply felt that the time had come to expose white theology for what it was: a racist, theological justification of the status quo" (2010, p. xviii) did not help him convince a large part of his white audience that he was not excluding the possibility of the final reconciliation. Neither did his earlier statement that "simply to say that Jesus did not use violence is no evidence relevant to the condition of black people as they decide on what to do about white oppression" (1969, p. 140). And although he stressed that "violence is not black people's primary response to white supremacy," the conclusion to this sentence was: "but self-defense is important to black dignity" (Cone, 2018, p. 47), which scared a lot of Americans and brought him even more criticism.

Therefore, he was often accused not only of a lack of stress on reconciliation, but also of black racism as well as of promoting violence. In response to these accusations, he often repeated that whites "misunderstand violence." In his view, white theologians used Jesus' non-violent attitude as evidence that the oppressed should be generally non-violent, but these non-violent Christians were quiet when blacks are violently enslaved, lynched or ghettoized. It was an irony for him that white critics, including white clergy and white theologians, discussed Black violence (especially in relation to CRM actions) but were usually "silent about white violence against blacks" (Cone, 2018, p. 49) that dominated throughout history. In response to Philip S. Watson's accusations that he was justifying killing of whites, Cone stressed,

> I wasn't advocating violence against white people. I was exposing and declaring my fierce opposition to white violence against black people (…). I was prepared to discuss its theological merits, but I couldn't compromise it or allow it to be twisted into "black racism" (2018, p. 57).

Concerning black racism, he also often explained that black anger, pain and even hatred were not equivalent with racism. Additionally, he stressed, he had no hatred for white people but for white supremacy, especially in theological disguise. Moreover, he reminded that although he thought that white people oppressed others and had Christianity all wrong, he never denied them the possibility of liberation. In his view, they could liberate themselves from their own oppressive structures by joining in the liberation of blacks. For him, "Being black in America has little to do with skin color. Being black means that your heart, your soul, your mind, and your body are where the dispossessed are" (1969, p. 151).

Cone had also had to face criticism from his colleague at Union Theological Seminary, Paul Lehman, who was generally supportive of Black Power, but in his 1971 essay, he warned Cone of the ubiquitous danger of idolatry in theological discourse. Lehmann was concerned that, "Professor Cone does not always seem to [acknowledge] that "the truth" to which "Christian" theology is open and obedient is not unqualifiedly identical with the concrete reality of blackness or any other concrete reality of the human condition and the human story" (qtd. in Sanders, 2018, p. 19). As a Barthian Lehman was, however, understanding and supportive of Cone's work and they shared a mutual respect for each other (Cone, 2018, p. 79). On the other hand, when Waldo Beach of Duke University Divinity School, called Black Theology a "tribal theology," Cone immediately responded that "white theology is the real tribal theology because it talks only to itself, and is the most savage theological discourse I know, justifying slavery and colonization in the name of God and country" (2018, p. 78)

There was another white scholar who pointed to some inconsistencies in Cone's analysis. A well-known theorist and sociologist, Charles Lemert responded to Cone's critique of Niebuhr. He stressed that King had often cited Niebuhr as an inspiration. He also said that he had never heard that Niebuhr rejected a petition request from King. In his view, Niebuhr had established a long record of speaking out against racism, beginning when he became a pastor in Detroit. According to Lemert, Niebuhr may not have spoken out against lynching and other forms of racism later on because of another reason – he had a stroke in 1951. "By the time the civil rights movement was full blown, he was retired and getting ill" (qtd. in Blake, 2012). The most important thing for Cone, however, was that "Niehbuhrhad expressed no moral outrage against lynching or segregation, even though he lived during that era," as he repeated also in his last book (Cone, 2018, p. 74).

Because Cone's Black Liberation Theology was, like other liberation theologies, strongly concerned with the political and economic aspects of salvation rather than only salvation in spiritual terms, it also attracted attention and critique from both the advocates and adversaries of Marxism (black and white). Cone made comments on the relation of his theology to Marxism e.g. in: *The Black Church and Marxism: what do they have to say to each other* (1980), stressing that although some elements of Marxist analysis might be helpful, he had never seen anywhere in the world that the elimination of capitalism would eliminate racism (1980, p. 8). On the other hand, in the Preface to the 1986 edition of *A Black Theology of Liberation*, he stated that the weakness of his initial analysis was "the absence of a clearly focused economic, class analysis of oppression" (2010, p. xxi). Cone later cooperated with Cornel West who has been deeply involved in criticism toward capitalism in relation to race, but "the angriest theologian in America" always stressed that for him race – not class – was the main category of analysis. In the 1986 Preface he admitted, however, that he had paid too little attention to the global analysis of oppression and to the problems of the 'Third World' (2010, p. xx-xxi).

While Cone was usually quick to respond to his white critics, it was not always the case with his responses to black scholars. He admitted that he truly appreciated some of the criticism of his black colleagues although he had not expected some of their remarks. Eventually, he included many of their suggestions in his later works. In fact, he dedicated the whole chapter of his last book to present what he had learnt from his critics. In the chapter titled *When you Put My Name on the Roll. Learning from My Critics*, Cone admits that Charles H. Long's dismissal of his idea of a separate black theology came as a surprise. He also says he had a feeling that for a long time Long was "more interested in winning a debate" than in a dialog (2018, p. 90). Cone was more appreciative of the dialog with some of his other critics (especially, Gayraud Wilmore, J. Deotis Roberts and William Jones). Yet, in the 2018 book, there are many pages dedicated to the disagreement with Long, who "was thinking of theology in a European mode." Cone concludes that he wanted Long to understand that he had used European theology to create a new black theological language, as slaves used white Christianity to create a new vision of their dignity" (p. 90).

Nonetheless, he also describes how he came to agree with some of Long's statements, as well as with his brother Cecil and other black scholars' critiques that pointed to him that he had relied on white theologians too much. He stresses that those black critics helped him to think deeper about what he was doing, "to reflect on theology and the black experience in a more critical and complex way (2018, p. 86). He also admits that he was drawing on European theologians, such as Barth, Brunner, Niebuhr, Tillich, Bonhoeffer and Bultmann a lot, but he explains that he "twisted them and bent their language in every way to speak *my* truth, not theirs" (2018, p. 68). In fact, already in the 1986 Preface to *A Black Theology of Liberation*, he confessed he had been methodologically relying too much on the neo-orthodox theology of Karl Barth, not realizing "that neo-orthodoxy was inadequate for my purposes" (2010, p. xxiii).

Therefore, as Cone explains in his last book, he started searching for Black sources, including secular ones which were also a part of black community (2018, p. 103). He focused especially on music and the spirituals. As he recounts, he wrote *The Spirituals and the Blues* to show that black liberation theology was not, as Long had suggested, derived primarily from the European theology" (2018, p. 95). He says that Long, Wilmore, Roberts and Jones motivated him to write not only *The Spirituals and the Blues* but also *God of the Oppressed*. His direct response to these critics can also be found in an essay titled *An Interpretation of the Debate among Black Theologians*, where Cone wrote, "I have learned much from this discussion on

Black religion and Black Theology… If the struggle of the victims is the only context for the development of a genuine Christian theology, then should not theology itself reflect in its speech the language of the people about whom it claims to speak?" Cone's earliest attempts to implement linguistic shifts reflective of the black experience are evident in *The Spirituals and the Blues*, but they were also continued in his later works (Sanders, 2018, p. 34-35). However, Cone "didn't discard European theology and philosophy" entirely. As he stressed in 2018, "I continue to read it today – but black theology began with deconstruction – that is, dismantling the oppressive, white theologies I was taught in graduate school, theologies that not only ignored black people but blinded me to the rich treasure in the black religious tradition" (2018, p. 41).

Cone's last book also discusses his dialog with J. Deotis Roberts, who additionally criticized him for lack of emphasis on reconciliation. Cone repeats his openness to the idea, but continues to stress that for him liberation had to come first. Only after liberation, reconciliation of equals would be possible. He also explains that in his view, "reconciliation is a white responsibility" (2018, p. 47). On the question of theodicy, on the other hand, and William Jones' claim that God must be a white racist, Cone replies by emphasizing that it is a philosophical question while "Theology is symbolic language, language about the imagination which seeks to comprehend what is beyond comprehension" (2018, p. 91). Therefore, while appreciating the intellectual debate, he also fears that most of his critics missed the point that impelled him to write – "to show that being black and Christian could be liberating" (2018, p. 91).

In the chapter *When He Saved My Soul. Learning from My Students*, Cone also describes lessons he received from his students. He especially stresses the influence of his female students who later created a womanist theology. Cone mentions discussions with Delores S. Williams, Jackquelyn Grant and Kelly Brown Douglas, admitting that they made him think about paternalism and sexism in churches. Womanist theologians have critiqued Cone for both male--centered language and for not including the experiences of black women in his sources. They asserted even more blind spots within black liberation theology, especially in relation to the invisibility of black women and, later, black sexuality. Currently, 'womanism' "represents a significant methodological development in black theological discourse, rooted in the lived experiences of black women who suffer at the triply painful intersection of racism, sexism, and classism" (Sanders, 2018, p. 7). Williams, whose intellectual journey started in Cone's classroom, is now committed "to interpreting Christian faith through the history and experiences of black women" and "expands and enriches black theology's conception of identity beyond what Cone's early work (…) could offer" (Sanders, 2018, p. 7).

After having engaged in academic dialog with his former women students, Cone apologized for the sexist language that he had used at the beginning of his career (apologies are included in the 1986 Preface to *A Black Theology of Liberation*). But while Williams acknowledged in a footnote in her book, *Sisters in the Wilderness*, that Cone modified exclusive language for the reprinting of his works, she thought that he still needed to use the experiences of African--American women in his method. At the same time, Cone came to the conclusion that although he had learnt from womanist theologians a lot, he could not agree with one aspect of their theology: rejection of the symbol of the cross. As he recounts in *Said I Wasn't Gonna Tell Nobody*, Williams claimed there was no "power in the blood", "salvation comes through Jesus's 'ministerial vision' and his resurrection, and not through a bloody cross" (2018, p. 122). In his view, she "challenged the heart of black faith" and "he couldn't take a step that far." His meditation on the meaning of the cross lead him to finding historical and religious similarities between the cross of Jesus and the lynching of African Americans. That is why he wrote *The Cross and the Lynching Tree*.

The same chapter in which he explains his thoughts on the womanist critique, also contains vivid descriptions of Cone's discussions with his other students. He mentions, for example, a student who accused him of not knowing anything about gay experience. He agreed with him but encouraged to read theology through one's own perspective. The conclusion of the class was that if Jesus identifies with the oppressed, it is possible to say not only that he is black but also that he is "gay and any other identity being humiliated" (Cone, 2018, p. 110). And although earlier, Cone's response to his critics' claims that "Blacks are not the only people suffering" would have been "but racism is America's original sin" therefore the fight against it is biblically most pressing, with time became much more complex. In *Said I Wasn't Gonna Tell Nobody*, he stated: (…) I began writing about God and the black experience. But since blacks are not the only oppressed people, it is my responsibility to include many voices of the oppressed people who have to fight for dignity" (2018, p. 109). He explained that through his writings, he was "raising up and exalting the voices and experiences of the oppressed" (2018, p. 132). Therefore he eventually declared:

> I write for the forgotten and the abused, the marginalize and the despised. I write for those who are penniless, jobless, landless, all those who have no political or social power. I write for gays, lesbians, bisexuals, and those who are transgender. I write for immigrants stranded on the U.S. border and for undocumented farmworkers toiling in misery in the nation's agricultural fields. I write for Palestinians in the Gaza Strip, on the West Bank, and in East Jerusalem. I write for Muslims and refugees who live under the terror of war in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Syria. And I write for all people who care about humanity. I believe that until Americans, especially Christians and theologians, can see the cross and the lynching tree together, until we can identify Christ with "recrucified" black bodies hanging from lynching trees, there can be no genuine understanding of Christian identity in America, and no deliverance from the brutal legacy of slavery and white supremacy (2018, p. 132-133).

Conclusions

Although James Cone's Black Liberation Theology has been controversial to many commentators and scholars and although his protest against the hegemony of 'white theology' has attracted a lot of critique, it is difficult not to notice the impact of his ideas, especially in American academy. In order to assess it correctly, it is necessary to remember about the context in which Cone's theology was born, including the fact that he was growing up in Arkansas at the time when lynching was still a reality. It is also indispensable to keep in mind that Cone was a witness to the disagreements within the Civil Rights Movement, the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr., and the development of black nationalism and Black Power. His attempts to find a third way for African Americans cannot be disregarded.

While speaking and writing in a provocative way[22], he was trying to address the American white society (instead of communicating only with the black community). These attempts were born not only out of anger and pain but also out of concern that white supremacy had detrimental effects on white people as well. Cone's critical, challenging and sometimes disturbing remarks could not be ignored by white American society on the grounds that they have relevance only to Black Americans (as stressed by Caldwell). In result, Cone managed to provoke a new dialog

[22] As Cone himself admitted in his last book, sometimes even in arrogant way.

within American society, especially in academia. His controversial and thought-provoking statements most powerfully awakened American theologians. Regardless of the final assessment of all the aspects of Cone's theological thought, he undoubtedly, did manage to encourage theologians to take part in a debate on racism and the civil rights struggle in the US. Therefore, in a sense and to a certain degree, he achieved his goals, described as follows

> Yet, while I wanted to write a systematic theology for black people, I also wanted to deepen my dialogue with white theologians about the truth of race in America, and show that their failure to address white supremacy was supporting racism (Cone 2018, p. 58).

The tasks he chose were not easy, especially in the 1960s when American society was experiencing great political, racial and cultural divisions. Nevertheless, apart from initiating significant theological disputes, he also did manage to inspire new thorough research, continued to this day, not only by theologians but also historians, sociologists and political scientists (black and white), including quite recent analyses concerning the language, theology and politics of the white church by JemarTisby or Robert Jones.

Cone's theology, which was one of the first theologies of identity that focused on addressing a political issue, was also a catalyst and forerunner for a multiplicity of similar theologies of varying quality. As Sanders stressed, "[t]he impact of Cone's work is evidenced in the present shape of the global theological academy where generations of black and womanist theologians – both within and beyond the United States – have worked to develop black theological discourse" (19)[23].

The way Cone expressed his cultural and political protest and later modified some of his positions through the dialog with other theologians as well as with his students, belonging to various minorities, clearly demonstrates, how members of a culturally divided society can communicate and enrich each other's perspectives by engaging in thought-provoking discussions.

References

Blake, J. (2012). America's 'angriest' theologian faces lynching tree. *CNN Religion Blog*. Retrieved from: http://religion.blogs.cnn.com/2012/04/21/americas-angriest-theologian-faces-lynching-tree.

Burdette, M. (2018). The Glorious, Complicated Legacy of James H. Cone. *Catholic Voices. Living Church*. Retrieved from: https://livingchurch.org/2018/05/14/the-glorious-complicated-legacy-of-james-h-cone/.

Caldwell, J.W. (2020). A Starting Point For Understanding James Cone: A Primer for White Readers. *Review and Expositor, 117*(1), 25-43.

Cone J.H. (2004). Theology's Great Sin: Silence in the Face of White Supremacy. *Black Theology, 2.2* (July 2004), 139-52.

Cone, J.H. (1969). *Black Theology and Black Power*. New York: Seabury Press.

Cone, J.H. (1970). *A Black Theology of Liberation*. Philadelphia: Lippincott.

Cone, J.H. (1970a). Consciousness and the Black Church: A Historical-Theological Interpretation. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, 387*, The Sixties: Radical Change in American Religion (Jan., 1970), 49-55.

Cone, J.H. (1971). The Black Church and Black Power. In: Nelsen H.M., Yokley R.L., Nelsen A.K. (eds.), *The Black Church in America*. New York: Basic Books Inc.

Cone, J.H. (1972). *The Spirituals and the Blues*. New York: Seabury Press.

[23] Some of them were also supportive of the Black Lives Matter movement, just like Cone who not long before his death expressed his hope that BLM will achieve a success.

Cone, J.H. (1975). *God of the Oppressed*. Maryknoll: Orbis Books.
Cone, J.H. (1980). *The Black Church and Marxism: what do they have to say to each other*. An Occasional Paper From the Institute of Democratic Socialism.
Cone, J.H. (1982). *My Soul Looks Back*. Nashville: Abingdon.
Cone, J.H. (2010). *A Black Theology of Liberation*. Maryknoll: Orbis Books.
Cone, J.H. (2011). *The Cross and the Lynching Tree*. Maryknoll: Orbis Books.
Cone, J.H. (2018). *Said I Wasn't Gonna Tell Nobody*. Maryknoll: Orbis Books.
Cone, J.H., (1997). *Black Theology and Black Power*. Maryknoll: Orbis Books.
Corbett, M., Mitchell-Corbett, J. (1999). *Politics and Religion in the USA*. New York: Graland Pub. Print.
DuBois, W.E.B. (1903). *The Negro Church*. Atlanta: Atlanta University Press. Retrieved from: http://scua.library.umass.edu/digital/dubois/dubois8.pdf.
Floyd-Thomas, S., Floyd-Thomas, J., Duncan, C.B., Ray, S., Westfield N.L. (2007). *Black Church Studies. An Introduction*. Nashville: Abington Press. Print.
Gonzalez, M.A. (2014). *A Critical Introduction to Religion in the Americas. Bridging the Liberation theology and Religious Studies Divide*. New York: NYU Press.
Jones, R.P. (2020). White too *long: the legacy of white supremacy in American Christianity*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
Lincoln, E.C., Mamiya, L.H. (1990). *The Black Church in the African American Experience*. Durham: Duke University Press.
Marsden, G.M. (1990). *Religion and American Culture*. Orlando: Hartcourt Brace College Publishers.
Pinn, A.B. (2002). *The Black Church in the Post-Civil Rights Era*. Maryknoll: Orbis Books.
Raboteau, A.J. (2001). *Cannan Land. A Religious History of African Americans*. New York: Oxford University Press.
Roberts, D.J. (2005). *Liberation and Reconcilliation. A Black Theology* (second edition). Maryknoll: Orbis Books.
Sanders, B. (2018). *"Traditioning" Blackness: A Theo-Ethical Analysis of Black Identity in Black Theological Discourse*. Electronic Theses and Dissertations. Retrieved from: https://digitalcommons.du.edu/etd/1442.
Tisby, J. (2019). *The Color of Compromise: The Truth about the American Church's Complicity in Racism*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan.

Michał PALMOWSKI
Uniwersytet Jagielloński

"A RAT BECAME THE UNIT OF CURRENCY" – ZBIGNIEW HERBERT IN DON DELILLO'S *COSMOPOLIS*

Abstract

The present article examines the function of the quotations from Zbigniew Herbert's poem "A Report from Besieged City" in DeLillo's novel *Cosmopolis*. DeLillo uses Herbert's phrase "a rat became the unit of currency" as an epigraph to his novel, and in the novel itself Herbert's poem is mentioned and quoted at least on two different occasions. This might come as a surprise, considering the fact that Herbert is not a poet who is frequently quoted in English language novels and his poetic concerns are very different from the ones articulated by DeLillo. A brief survey of critical articles on DeLillo's *Cosmopolis* demonstrates that English language critics either have at best a superficial knowledge of Herbert's poem or try very hard to accommodate the poem's meaning to DeLillo's novel, which results in distorting the meaning of the poem. I argue that Herbert's poem functions within DeLillo's novel as an ironic juxtaposition. It needs to be recognized that it describes a completely different sociopolitical reality and its message contradicts (or at least problematizes) the message of DeLillo's narrative.

Introduction

A recurrent theme in Don DeLillo's *Cosmopolis* (2003), dramatizing the hyperreality of financial capitalism, is that of a "rat becoming the unit of currency." This quotation ("a rat became a unit of currency") from Zbigniew Herbert's poem "Report from a Besieged City" serves as an epigraph to the novel. In the novel itself, it is first evoked by the main protagonist, Eric Packer, a billionaire who has made his fortune trading currencies, in his conversation with his currency analyst. "There's a poem I read in which a rat becomes a unit of currency," says Packer (2012, p. 23). And they exchange jokes about latest breaking news regarding the new strange currency. Later, when Eric watches Times Square stock tickers, suddenly, instead of the stock prices, he sees those very words:

> It took him a moment to absorb the words and identify the line. He knew the line of course. It was out of a poem he'd been reading lately, one of the few longer poems he'd chosen to investigate, a line, half a line from the chronicle of a city under siege (2012, p. 96-97).

Apparently, someone hacked into the system to deliver this message. This is preceded by an incident during which some pranksters enter a restaurant and start throwing live rats at customers. Eric is confused but on TV they explain that it is a protest against global capitalism.

The present article is an attempt to answer the question why DeLillo quotes Herbert (Zbigniew Herbert, unlike Shakespeare or Milton, is not a poet who is frequently quoted in English language novels), and what function Herbert's poem could be playing in DeLillo's narrative. The fact that DeLillo does quote Herbert is duly noted by the critics (after all, it cannot be missed since the quotation from Herbert is an epigraph to the novel), but they usually do not offer any in-depth analysis of this intertextuality, or any convincing explanation of how Herbert's poem as a whole could be contributing to the novel's meaning. On the rare occasions when they do comment on the Herbert-DeLillo's connection, their observations tend to concern

the level of individual sentences, or paragraphs. However, the problem of how Herbert's poem in its totality, relates to DeLillo's novel should be considered since DeLillo chooses a phrase taken from Herbert's poem for an epigraph. This relationship has been defined by Genette as paratextuality and, as Genette argues, it "binds the text […], taken within the totality of the literary work, to what can be called its paratext" (1997, p. 3). The paratext provides the text with a setting or a commentary (Genette, 1997, p. 3). The critics may be wise to shun such deliberations, though, since, as Genette warns, paratextuality "is a treasure trove of questions without answers" (1997, p. 4).

The main problem in this particular case is the radical incompatibility of Herbert's "Report from a Besieged City" and DeLillo's *Cosmopolis*; the two texts belong to two completely different literary traditions and articulate completely different concerns. What could they possibly have in common?

1. Cosmopolis as a postmodern novel

Cosmopolis describes one day from the life of a 28 year-old currency trader, Eric Packer, the head of Packer Capital, who bets against the yen and refuses to cut his losses, which eventually reduces his vast fortune to ashes. Eric cruises through New York City in his self-sufficient limo in search of a haircut, interviews his financial director, his chief of technology, his chief of finance, his currency analyst, and his chief of theory, has a doctor's appointment (during which we learn that his prostrate is asymmetrical), on several occasions meets his wife of twenty two days (each time he has more problems recognizing her), makes love to his old lover and then to his female bodyguard, shoots his chief of security, and eventually gets only half a haircut and gets shot by his former employee, Richard Sheets, alias Benno Levin, a baht analyst.

The novel is customarily placed in the context of postmodernism. Set "in the year 2000" on "a day in April," it may be read as a symbolical representation of the Age of Cybercapital (when DeLillo was writing *Cosmopolis*, the stock market was in the midst of the dot.com bubble). DeLillo's work evinces typically postmodern concerns about the nature of objective reality. Critics see the novel as an indictment either of contemporary man's growing reliance on technology or the destructive nature of global (financial) capitalism – they both replace objective reality with simulacra, imprisoning the main protagonist in the world of self-referential data. Eric's technology records the events before they actually happen, making him doubt the evidence of his senses. The money that he wins and loses is just an abstract number, devoid of any referential value.

Erick Packer experiences existentialist angst; he suspects that he misses something important in his life. Eventually he reaches the point when pain, any pain, is welcome, as a re-affirmation of the fact that he has a body which can feel and which is vulnerable (the safety of his capital and his limo are no longer perceived as a value). That is why he tends to ignore the compound's repeated warnings about an imminent death threat (if anything, the prospect of a threat to his life fills him with a strange elation). And that is why in the final scene, just before he is shot by Benno Levin, he shoots himself in his left palm. The pain that he feels allegedly frees his mind.

At this point it may be reminded that Packer's odyssey through New York City begins when he decides to have a haircut. "He didn't know what he wanted. Then he knew. He wanted to get a haircut" (2012, p. 7). To a sensible objection that to get a haircut, there is no need to embark on a perilous journey through the crowded city, on the day of the President's visit, since he can always summon a barber to his self-contained limo, he replies, "A haircut has what. Associations. Calendar on the wall. Mirrors everywhere. There's no barber chair here. Nothing

swivels but the spycam" (2012, p. 15). Thus, his longing for a "proper" haircut reflects his longing for a lost connection to the material reality of the ordinary world and a simple haircut becomes, at least for him, a transcendent experience capable of curing his spiritual malaise.

2. Herbert's "Report from a Besieged City" and Polish martyrology

Herbert's poem, on the other hand, paints a depressing picture of life in an unspecified city besieged by the forces of "Goths the Tartars Swedes" and "troops of the Emperor," united only by their hatred towards the city's inhabitants. The speaker, being too old to carry arms, has been tasked to write a chronicle of the siege. He proceeds, in a seemingly dispassionate manner, to record various atrocities suffered by the city's defendants. It was actually on the very first day of the siege, Monday, that storehouses became empty and "a rat became the unit of currency." The speaker understands that the fight is futile. The city receives from its allies "across the sea" only "sincere compassion" and "sacks of lard"; such help will not be enough to stop the advancing enemy. The speaker calmly accepts the fact that "those struck by misfortune are always alone/ the defenders of the Dalai Lama the Kurds the Afghan mountaineers." Nevertheless, he is determined that the struggle must continue. "[C]emetries grow larger" but he has only utmost contempt for whose who contemplate negotiating with the enemy. His only hope is that whoever manages to survive the City's fall "will carry the City within himself on the roads of exile/ he will be the City."

Herbert's poem, written in response to the martial law being introduced in Poland in December 1981, is heavily embedded in the Polish martyrological tradition. The eponymous "besieged city" is clearly the allegory of Poland, whose historical mission, according to the poet, has been to defend the western (Christian) civilization against various "barbarians": Turks in the seventeenth century, the Soviets, German Nazis. Now Poland, betrayed again by its western allies, who did not honor their commitment to defend it against Hitler in September 1939 and then, during the Yalta Conference in February 1945, sold Poland to Stalin, suffers under the communist yoke. Herbert believes that the centuries of suffering and struggle give Poland a moral advantage over the West as "they have not experienced a siege as long as eternity".

3. DeLillo's critics on Herbert

Since DeLillo shows no apparent interest in the Polish martyrology, establishing any meaningful connection between *Cosmopolis* and "Report from a Besieged City" is a challenge. Some critics, like Shonkwiler in her article "Don DeLillo's Financial Sublime" (2010), decide not to mention Herbert at all. Others present readings of Herbert's poem which radically depart from the original.

Varsava, while commenting on the episode concerning the protest on Times Square, writes:

> The street mayhem is punctuated by the bombing of an investment bank and the now commandeered news-ticker provides a rhetorical finial for the day's proceedings: "A RAT BECAME THE UNIT OF CURRENCY." Drawing upon a line from *Report from the Besieged City* (1983), a long poem by Polish writer Zbigniew Herbert (1924-1998), which portrays life in a Polish city under siege by the Nazis, protesters identify global capitalism as a fascistic force bent on world dominion over the beleaguered masses (2005, p. 97).

This is, to put it very mildly, a very imprecise rendering of the contents of Herbert's poem. Nowhere in the poem does the speaker identify the city as Polish, neither is the identity of the current invaders explicitly stated. There are oblique references to the Second World War ("but I don't know when the invasion began/ two hundred years ago in December in September," "their fathers betrayed us/our former allies at the time of the second Apocalypse"), but this event is placed in the remote past. The historical context (the imposition of martial law in 1981) suggests that the enemy now is not the Nazis but Polish communists. In other words, for Herbert the enemy is actually those who allegedly wanted to free "the beleaguered masses" from the capitalistic oppression.

A similar problem appears in other articles on *Cosmopolis*. Herbert is shown as a poet who protests against capitalism and who even sees "a rat becoming the unit of currency" as a solution to the evils of financial capitalism.

Osteen in "The Currency of DeLillo's *Cosmopolis*" (2014) writes,

> Herbert's speaker, surveying the history of foreign invasion and occupation, seeks a universal language adequate to these atrocities. He finds it in the rat, which exposes the vanity of wealth and asserts against it the fact of mortality (2014, p. 297).

In his article Osteen makes some very interesting observations concerning the figure of the rat in both texts (he reads it as a form of "countercurrency"), but in this passage his argument is marred by his insistence on seeing similarity where in fact there is difference. What he says is perfectly applicable to the predicament of Eric Packer in *Cosmopolis*, but it is highly doubtful whether the recipients of "sacks of lard" needed any reminder abut "the vanity of wealth," or whether people whose friends and relatives died in the Second World War could have forgotten about the fact of mortality.

Sciolino in "The Neoliberal Antihero in Don DeLillo's *Cosmopolis*" (2015) mentions Herbert in only two sentences. The second sentence reads: "Herbert's rat is a sign of the market's totalitarian agency, what the protestors call, in another allusion, the 'specter haunting the world... the specter of capitalism'" (2015, p. 214).

Most likely what she really means is not Herbert' rat (which is a sign of destitution and the havoc wreaked by the war) but DeLillo's rat.

This short survey shows that DeLillo successfully re-writes Herbert. It is also interesting that Sciolino should mention the protesters paraphrasing Marx's *Communist Manifesto*. In the original, the term "specter" is used ironically. Marx says,

> A spectre is haunting Europe – the spectre of communism. All the powers of old Europe have entered into a holy alliance to exorcise this spectre: Pope and Tsar, Metternich and Guizot, French Radicals and German police-spies.
>
> Where is the party in opposition that has not been decried as communistic by its opponents in power? Where is the opposition that has not hurled back the branding reproach of communism, against the more advanced opposition parties, as well as against its reactionary adversaries?

On the one hand Marx ridicules the exaggerated fears of the conservative establishment, on the other he recognizes that communism has become a force to be reckoned with. The protesters make only a superficial formal allusion to Marx, ignoring the message of his manifesto (unless they want to equate those who protest against capitalism in the twenty-first century with those who protested against communism in the nineteenth century).

Similarly to the protesters in the novel, DeLillo seems to have highjacked Herbert's phrase, emptied it from its original meaning and re-appropriated for his own purposes. Such an act of radical re-appropriation is not something uncommon in the field of intertextuality. One of the most popular functions of quotation is that of evoking established authority to support one's argument. The supposition is that the quoted authority agrees with the speaker, which does not have to be the case. Since meaning is contextual and the quotation is recontextualized (taken from its original context and placed in a new one), its new context may impose on it meanings which directly contradict the underlying meaning of the original text. Such a practice would be consistent with the postmodern tendency to subvert authority, mislead readers, and exercise the spirit of free play.

4. Herbert as a counterpoint

While explaining her understanding of the politics of postmodernism, Linda Hutcheon writes:

> The prevailing interpretation is that postmodernism offers a value-free, decorative, de-historicized quotation of past forms and that this is a most apt mode for a culture like our own that is oversaturated with images. Instead, I would want to argue that postmodernist parody is a value-problematizing, de-naturalizing form of acknowledging the history (and through irony, the politics) of representations (2002, p. 90).

Applied to the problem which is currently examined, that is, why DeLillo quotes Herbert, this suggests that the function of this quotation is not purely aesthetic, the original meaning of the poem is not ignored by DeLillo, even though it may seem so, but problematized. The original meaning should be remembered and contrasted with the argument that could be constructed on the basis of DeLillo's narrative.

In "Report from a Besieged City" the fact that a rat became the unit of currency reflects the collapse of the economy of the city under siege. Money became worth only the paper it was printed on; it could not be exchanged for anything of value. The society reverted to the times when animals were used as money (initially it was cows, camels and goats – see "The History of Currency From Bartering to the Credit Card"). Interestingly enough, in the time of famine, rats, despite being viewed with disgust, still have a certain exchange value. But this only emphasizes how degrading life has become.

Additionally, in the poem the ubiquity of rats in the besieged city might also refer to the fact that some defenders have cracked under the pressure; they have betrayed their friends and sided with the enemy (closer to the end the speaker says, "we look in the face of hunger the face of fire face of death/ worst of all – the face of betrayal"). The material hardships are exacerbated by the emotional pain caused by betrayal. Both are symbolized by the rat figure.

In the novel the image of rat is usually valorized positively. Rat becomes a symbol of protest against the unjust system. Paradoxically, it seems to promise a simpler, more natural and spiritually more rewarding life (according to Merola it reflects the ecological awareness of DeLillo's *Cosmopolis*), free from the stresses and anxieties to which the main protagonist of *Cosmopolis* is exposed:

> The yen spree was releasing Eric from the influence of his neocortex. He felt even freer than usual, attuned to the registers of his lower brain and gaining distance from the need to take inspired action, make original judgments, maintain independent principles and convictions, all the reasons why people are fucked up and birds and rats are not (DeLillo, 2012, p. 115).

The allusion to Herbert underscores the irony present in this passage and the entire novel. In the passage, the process of transvaluation is taking place. "Inspired action," "original judgements" and "independent principles and convictions" are condemned as things responsible for the fact that "people are fucked up." In the novel, Packer sees his own undoing, which has a ripple effect on the world economy, as liberating:

> There were currencies tumbling everywhere. Bank failures were spreading. […] He knew it was the yen. His actions regarding the yen were causing storms of disorder. He was so leveraged, his firm's portfolio large and sprawling, linked crucially to the affairs of so many key institutions, all reciprocally vulnerable, that the whole system was in danger.
>
> He smoked and watched, feeling strong, proud, stupid and superior. He was also bored and a little dismissive (2012, p. 115-116).

His inability to see destruction as something more than a magnificent spectacle is a consequence of his being a part of the world in which the reality of physical suffering is questioned. It is also connected to his failure to see in Herbert's poem an account of genuine suffering; he only notices and comments upon the poem's unusual imagery.

For Packer suffering is not a reality but a strange fantasy. When he notices the injured eye of his driver, he feels a pleasant sense of satisfaction: "Eric liked the idea that a man with a devastated eye drove a car for a living. His car. This made it even better" (2012, p. 157). The eyes fascinate him "in a childlike way, beyond the shame of staring" (2012, p. 163-164).

He watches the eye and tries to invent the story behind it:

> "You were beaten and tortured," Eric said. "An army coup. Or the secret police. Or they thought they'd executed you. Fired a shot into your face. Left you for dead. Or the rebels. Overrunning the capital. Seizing government people at random. Slamming rifle butts into faces at random" (2012, p. 168)

Packer is a spectator rather than a participant. He tends to think of himself as a character in a show, even when his very life is threatened. When he enters the building where his future killer resides, he appreciates the fact that there are rats there: "He liked the two rats he saw moving towards the food nearby. The rats were good. The rats were fine and right, thematically sound" (2012, p. 168).

He remains a spectator till the very end. The camera in his watch, which is supposed to operate in real time, inexplicably feeds him the image of his dead body well before he is shot by Benno Levin.

Packer's condition of extreme detachment should be contrasted with that of the speaker in Herbert's poem. Herbert's speaker is a witness. He tries to restrain his emotions but it does not mean that he does not have them. He records and reflects upon the current events not because of their thrill and drama but because of a certain ethical imperative. His actions are motivated by the concern for the well-being of his community (even when they die, they will live on in his chronicle) rather than his own desires.

Conclusions

DeLillo's references to Herbert's "Report from a Besieged City" produce the effect of ironic juxtaposition. Herbert's poem evokes the socio-historical reality of communist Poland from the perspective of which the problems experienced by Eric Packer must seem unreal. Herbert's poem evokes the epoch when the problem was not the overabundance but the scarcity of goods and the time when physical suffering was not a strange fantasy but a very palpable reality. This might serve as a reminder that absolute, that is de-historicized, valued judgement is not possible as everything is contingent on history. It is worth stressing that from the perspective of communist Poland, capitalism appeared as a system protecting the economic and political freedom of an individual, so quoting Zbigniew Herbert in the novel which allegedly criticizes capitalism creates a poignant irony.

References

DeLillo, D. (2012). *Cosmopolis*. London: Picador.

Genette, G. (1997). *Palimpsests. Literature in the Second Degree*. Transl. by Ch. Newman, C. Doubinsky. Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press.

Herbert, Z. (1987). *Report from the Besieged City and Other Poems*. Transl. by B. Carpenter, J. Carpenter. Oxford: OUP.

Herbert, Z. (2006). *The Collected Poems: 1956-1998*. Transl. by A. Valles, C. Miłosz, P. Dale Scott. New York: Harper Collins, E-book.

Hutcheon, L. (2002). *The Politics of Postmodernism*. London and New York: Routledge.

Marx, K., Engels, F. *Manifesto of the Communist Party*. Transl. by S. Moore. Retrieved from: https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/download/pdf/Manifesto.pdf

Merola, N.M. (2012. *Cosmopolis*: Don DeLillo's Melancholy Political Ecology. *American Literature*, *84*(4), 827-853.

Osteen, M. (2014). The Currency of DeLillo's *Cosmopolis*. *Critique: Studies in Contemporary Fiction, 55:3*, 291-304.

Sciolino, M. (2015). The Contemporary American Novel as World Literature: The Neoliberal Antihero in Don DeLillo's *Cosmopolis*. *Texas Studies in Literature and Language, 57:2*, 210-241.

Shonkwiler, A. (2010). Don DeLillo's Financial Sublime. *Contemporary Literature, 51:2*, 246-282.

The History of Currency From Bartering to the Credit Card. Retrieved from: https://www.hostmerchantservices.com/articles/the-history-of-currency-from-bartering-to-the-credit-card/

Varsava, J.A. (2005). The 'Saturated Self: Don DeLillo on the Problem of Rogue Capitalism. *Contemporary Literature, 46:1,* 78-107.