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Language, Culture and the Dynamics of Age



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Language, Culture and the Dynamics of Age

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Language, Culture and the Dynamics of Age

edited by

Anna Duszak and Urszula Okulska

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Part I. Introduction

Chapter 1

Age and language studies

Anna Duszak and Urszula Okulska

1. Connecting language and age

What is the connection between language and age? On the one hand, the intimate relation between the two seems natural and somewhat obvious: language and age are central properties of man, they are biologically based, cognitively, experientially and socially co-constructed, and made manifest in social interaction. So people “have” age, measured in years of their lifetimes or chronology of birth. They “have” language too in that they possess linguistic competence. Likewise, people “do” age and they “do” language in that they look and behave in certain ways, and talk (and write) in a particular fashion. Individually and socially, humans experience aging and language use as *dynamic* processes that centrally involve growth, maturation and decline. Both evolve under socialization (and enculturation), taking place in family, school, workplace and various public settings.

On the other hand, language and age are poor isolates, no matter whether examined each in its own right, or taken in tandem. So, biological age is not to be dissociated from the genetic dispositions of an individual, his/her style of living, temperament, or culturally and socially recognized age rights and obligations. Linguistic competence, too, is an outcome of a variety of factors, including one’s exposure to linguistic variation, meta-linguistic training and language awareness, or socialization in specialist communication skills. If language engages the whole of man in his/her capacities and doings, then age “leaks” through life stages and speaking styles indexing them.

In social perception, the salience of age in communication varies. In some sense, displaying age, or attributing it to others, is like managing *face*. As pointed out by Scollon and Scollon (1995: 38), “[t]here is no faceless communication” (emphasis in the original) and, we would venture, there is no “ageless communication” as well. Still, as with face, age need not be a salient factor in communication. If age difference may matter in, say, interactions between adults and children, then in many contexts the actual age of the interactants is negligible, or simply “invisible”. Paying no attention to age is

like not noticing politeness because in the ongoing interaction no threat can be detected to one's face image. As Kasper (1990: 193) put it, "[c]ompetent adult members comment on absence of politeness where it is expected, and its presence where it is not expected." Similarly, it seems, age may be brought into the picture, when for some reasons it is found relevant or foregrounded, to refer here to the foreground–background distinction in people's modes of presentation (after Schlenker and Pontari 2000).

Thus, even though age *is* indeed relevant for language studies, its actual place in meta-linguistic research is not at all obvious or well-established. Sometimes it is perceived as central, yet more often age is believed to act as a "hidden" dimension in social action. The real issue is what perspective we adopt towards language.

What is then the place of age in language studies? First of all, age is salient in much of sociolinguistic research and, independently, in language acquisition studies, where it has always been a key factor. Yet outside of the sociolinguistic venue, mainstream language research has largely ignored age, or presupposed its operation as a default factor in social life and communication. One of the editors (Anna Duszak) briefly addresses this division of labor in modern linguistics (this volume), noting that text and discourse studies, including pragmatics and (im)politeness theories, have been marked by the "the regime of the (age-less) adult". That is to, they invariably suggest models of a mature and fully competent user of a language. This position found its articulation in postulates of central, prototypical, if not "ideal" readers (and writers), constructed as frames of reference for debating the various processes of discourse production and interpretation. More recently, a discourse-community view of communication (esp. in the tradition of Swales 1990) highlights the concept of an *expert*, a specialist disposing of advanced field and discourse competence. Indirectly, such default categories of *core* competences connote age: an expert is a "mature" adult, whereas younger adults as a rule assume the roles of novices, apprentices or peripheral members of a given community (see, however, below).

Important for researching age in communication were contacts with cognate fields of study, and with social psychology and sociology in particular. In sociolinguistics a groundbreaking development came with the work of Coupland, Giles and associates, which started in the 1980s as an interdisciplinary endeavor with a clear focus on detrimental aspects of aging, language deterioration, loss and attrition. This was a project that raised a number of important issues for therapeutic and ethical concerns of caring for the elderly, and raising age-awareness, in particular in Western societies. The current

volume makes a point of contact with this tradition, hosting papers devoted to communication problems of and with the elderly. Yet it also moves towards an important extension of such studies in the face of new challenges for the elderly and the “pre-elderly”. These include new circumstances of living (and communicating) in migrant and emigrant populations, the participation in inter-generational debates over historical traumas, current crises and new challenges of the socio-economic realities of globalization, or the e-literacy imposed by the young.

The work by Coupland, Giles and associates has been important for its contribution to interactive, discursive and constructionist approaches to age in social interaction. It participated in the redefinition of traditional sociolinguistic correlates of age values and linguistic variables in terms of communicative accounts of how age is displayed, managed and challenged in communication. Today interactional sociolinguistics partakes in discursive elaborations on other sociolinguistic categories, so that age is made to compete for salience with gender, ethnicity or occupational characteristics of individuals and groups. It remains under the strong influence of social psychology, the ethnography of communication and conversation analysis, or general cultural studies.

Outside of sociolinguistics, interest in the role of age in communication is growing, with focus being placed on the dynamic, relational and relative nature of aging as a social process. Most importantly, some of such work interprets age as a viable component of *social identities* investigating into how age-concerns (and age-arguments) are enacted in discourse, and how they construe what are cooperative, competitive and confrontational styles of social interaction. It is this line of thinking that construes the leading argument for the structuring of this volume and sets two emphases on how age is positioned for doing linguistic *and* social analyses: age for social identification, and age-as-identity in communication across age groups.

2. Age as (social) aging

A discursive perspective on age offers new vistas on the role of language in the life of an individual and whole social groups. It does this by accommodating cognitive, cross-cultural and critical interpretations, as well as providing new domain-specific and cross-cultural evidence. Still the legacy of earlier sociolinguistic studies remains important in that this is the work that laid out the basic concerns in addressing the role of age in language. Among them is

the difference between *age* and *aging*, and between biological (chronological) and contextual aspects of age (and aging). Discussing the then state-of-the-(sociolinguistic)-art in studying age in relation to language, Eckert writes:

Aging is central to human experience. It is the achievement of physical and social capacities and skills, a continual unfolding of the individual's participation in the world, construction of personal history, and movement through the history of the community and of society. If *aging* is movement through time, *age* is a person's place at a given time in relation to the social order: a stage, a condition, a place in history. Age and aging are experienced both individually and as part of a cohort of people who share a life stage, and/or an experience of history. (Eckert 1997: 151, emphasis in original)

In their attempts to establish correlates between age and language features, sociolinguists tried to "immobilize" age and its languages too. They spoke of age cohorts defined in terms of selected brackets of age values, and worked with descriptive categories such as children, preadolescents, teenagers, adults or the elderly. Sometimes subtle age boundaries were proposed, as illustrated by two numeric elderly age-groups, the "young-old" (64–76) and the "old-old" (with 77 onwards) (Coupland et al. 1991: 7). At the same time it was increasingly recognized that any biologically based age-brackets are relative, for chronological age cannot be separated from an organism's "contextual age" – "an aggregated index of life-circumstantial and subjective factors" (in Coupland et al. 1991: 8). Indeed, arbitrary divisions may be needed in order to cope with aging, whether individually or socially, but our understanding of age is cognitively, physically, socially and culturally co-constructed. Hence it is complex and variable, so that social categorizations of people as "young" or "old", "the elderly" or "the old", are only generalizations based on metaphors deriving from individual and social experience. If such divisions may be inexpedient for the self-presentation or social categorization of people in general, life-stages are only transitional moments in a permanent flow of time and language.

The contextual nature of age and aging suggests that age-based labeling could be essentially an *ideological* strategy in the construction of meaning, to use the terminology common for most discursive approaches and critical discourse studies in particular (for some discussion, see, e.g., van Dijk 1998; Eggins and Martin 1997: 237; Chouliaraki and Fairclough 1999: 29; Fairclough 2003: 9). Some sociolinguistic work pointing to relative readings of age values is actually consistent with such positioning on age. So,

sociolinguists cautioned that adults are not homogenous groups, that variation in language use occurs on all levels, and that age grading may be culturally marked. Eckert notes (1997: 159), for instance, that in US culture, old age is “interestingly enough viewed separately from adulthood.” Fornäs (1995: 3) argues that what is *young* is established in relation to what is understood as *childish* and what as *adult*, and that such estimates go well beyond language and that they engage a wide spectrum of semiotic markers.

All the chapters in this volume address directly or indirectly this fuzzy, transient and dynamic nature of age, on the one hand, and discourses of age, on the other. So, for instance, Okulska demonstrates that the John Paul II Generation – technically established with reference to chronology and locality (Poland) – is a socio-cultural phenomenon feeding on international and all-generational sharing of the Pope’s humanistic stance and his “civilization of love”. In turn, Ardington demonstrates how the transition between late childhood and adolescence is made manifest in a change in the style of interaction, when teasing and playful collaborative exchanges stop, and when name-calling, insulting or other confrontative practices begin. In this way the contribution adds to other work exploring this socially valid theme of “early” aging and the young’s learning how to distinguish between polite and impolite ways of social being in monolingual and multilingual settings (cf., e.g., Eder 1985; Baroni and Axia 1989; Grimshaw 1990; Rampton 1995).

Clearly, our conceptualizations of age and aging are always localized: age as a socio-cultural concept is defined relative to a given culture, historical time and a set of social and linguistic values. The dynamics of age is conditional, and among other things it helps to determine a society’s general social and linguistic change. Everywhere age “progression”, in terms of biological growth *and* contextual learning, is taking place against the background of simultaneous accumulation of linguistic assets, resources and styles. In all cultures and at all times aging involves valuation that has to reconcile a paradox. On the one hand, it is *good* to be aging since growth – biological, social and linguistic – combines with increased agency, responsibility, causality and social power. On the other hand, aging is *bad* in that it connotes the unavoidable deterioration and loss of capacities and powers. The highs and lows of age rights, and cut-off points marking when aging ceases to be *good*, are likely to be culturally and historically determined, as well as continually negotiated, conserved or contested in inter-generational dialogue.

It is this dynamics of social perceptions of age that lends itself to consideration for a new agenda in age-and-language interaction in modern societies. The critical discursive turn in the social sciences affords an integrative

perspective on age variation and valuation pleading for combined social and linguistic analyses. Linguistic age research needs, it seems, stronger integration with such socially minded and language-sensitive accounts of the various processes of integration and disintegration within and across modern societies. A host of issues are begging for attention: globalization, tradition and modernity, new information technologies, ageism and medicalization, cross-cultural communication and new multilingualism, and generational change. Among the focal questions are the following: how does age partake in the ongoing social and discursive change, and how does it contribute to the struggle over power and for power? How do age values influence, if not actually define themselves, the identities that people adopt and attribute to others in their discursive actions? The papers in this volume selectively but pointedly tackle such concerns. The pivotal topics are age-based *identities* and their *voices* across discourse.

3. Age and discursive construction of social identities

In contrast to the initial preoccupation with how age values correlate with language features and how talk indexes life-stages, we can witness of late a growing interest in the ways in which age and its *voices* partake in the discursive construction of social identities. It is at this point that age research enters into a wide stream of language-and-identity studies, drawing on theories of identity developed in other disciplines, and in social psychology in particular, and rapidly gaining ground in linguistic research (for some useful summaries of identity theories see Breakwell 1992; Wieseman and Koester 1993; Simon 2004; for identity studies in linguistics see, e.g., Rubin 1995; Ivanič 1998; Duszak 2002; Joseph 2004; Cortese and Duszak 2005; Benwell and Stokoe 2006; de Fina et al. 2006; cf. also references in chapters to this volume). The sociolinguistic variables of gender, ethnicity and age became the main loci of interactional approaches to identity construction (cf. on gender and ethnicity: Gumperz 1982; Wodak and Benke 1997; Litosseliti and Sunderland 2004; Okulska 2006; on age Rampton 1995, 1999; J. Coupland and Gwyn 2003; N. Coupland and Nussbaum 1993; Williams and Thurlow 2005; Ylänne-McEwen 1999; Nussbaum and J. Coupland 2004; N. Coupland et al. 1991; Giles et al. 2003). A separate scenario of age-and-identity research opens up with a rapid growth of studies in the language in the professions (e.g., Gunnarson, Linell and Nordberg 1997; Niemeier, Campbell and Dirven 1998; Bargiela-Chiappini and Nickerson 1999; Geluykens and Pelsmaekers

1999; Gillaerts and Gotti 2005; Ramallo et al. 2006; Geluykens and Kraft 2008; Okulska and Kowalski 2008; Gunnarson 2009).

Some models of social variation in language serve an *interim* function, acting as interfaces between variationist, interactive and interpretive frameworks in sociolinguistics, and critical discursive approaches to age *as* (or *for*) identity. Relevant here is the *accommodation theory* with its focus on convergence and divergence of styles. So, Giles argues that

[a] basic postulate of accommodation theory is that people are motivated to adjust their speech style, or accommodate, as means of expressing values, attitudes and intentions towards others. It is proposed that the extent to which individuals shift their speech styles towards or away from the speech styles of their interlocutors is a mechanism by which social approval or disapproval is communicated. A shift in the speech style towards that of another is termed convergence and is considered often a reflection of social integration, whereas a shift away from the other's style of speech represents divergence and is considered often a tactic of social dissociation. (Giles 1980: 105; see also Giles et al. 2007)

It is generally assumed that the social function of *convergence* and *divergence* strategies in speech is to establish, respectively, solidarity and distance (or outright exclusion), and in-group and out-group relations. There are cognate concepts, too, especially the common sociolinguistic mechanisms of *code-switching* and *style-shifting*, or *code-crossing* (cf., e.g., Rampton 1995). All, whether directly or indirectly, involve identity judgments in terms of various social and linguistic values, rights and obligations, including considerations of prestige, power and dominance. They are typically discussed in multiracial and multilingual environments, where age tends to function as one of the parameters of variation only. For example, Clyne (2003), discusses age among demographic factors bearing on the dynamics of language maintenance and shift in Australia. He notes (Clyne 2003: 28–29) that language “often functions as a marker of age-group identity.” Thus, at the time of their German data collection, “people were identified as having proficiency in German largely on the basis of their age. For at least a generation, communication with older people was an important factor in language maintenance. Exactly the same has occurred in successive immigrant groups from all over the world. Often this is because the grandparent generation has little or no proficiency in English or much of their limited proficiency has been lost.” This, he argues, has been observed for German, Italian, Polish, Spanish, Turkish and Yiddish speakers. At some other point, speaking on intergenerational variation in attitudes to language, he notes (Clyne 2003: 66) that

across the three pluricentric language communities in Australia today, Arabic, Chinese and Spanish, those “under the age of thirty-five (and especially the second generation) were far less committed to the position that language was central to their culture than were the older first generation, even though the main function of the community language among the second generation was symbolic rather than communicative.” Inter-generational variation in core values and attitudes to language is a major concern for many European societies, struggling with the global dominance of English (cf. Duszak and Okulska 2004; Fairclough 2006; Triandafyllidou et al. 2009).

In turn, Rampton (1995) addresses race issues with the example of cross-ethnic interaction among the youth in multiracial urban Britain. He elaborates on language-crossing as a ritualized adolescent activity. In particular he locates such interactions in a broader context of political and economic relations, demonstrating “the political aspects of multiracial adolescent code-switching in the presence of adults” (Rampton 1995: 132) and suggesting that “the interactional structures and processes clustering around SAE [Stylized Asian English – A.D. and U.O.], Creole and Panjabi” can be seen as ways of avoiding direct confrontation with the elders, yet also as “small but significant building blocks for the kind of collective interracial sensibility that Gilroy interprets in terms of the new urban social movements,” suggesting “resistance” against the social order (cf. contestation styles among Black youth in America in, e.g., Kochman 1981).

In general, speaking about the discursive construction of identities, we are building on the traditional sociolinguistic notion of language-for-identification (cf. Tabouret-Keller 1997). However, usage-based accounts of human identity have led to two emphases, profiled, respectively, on analyses of immediate interactions in ongoing (*micro-*) contexts, on the one hand, and those embedded in “thicker” (in the sense of Geertz, e.g., 1973) analyses of communicative occurrences in (*macro-*) contexts of socially constructed knowledge, on the other. The former, *constructionist* approaches to age and language, typically derive from *interactive* sociolinguistics and dwell methodologically on *conversation analysis* and *positioning theory* (cf. Harré and Langenhove 1999). Positional theory highlights the role of interaction and discourse activities in how they construe self- and other-representations in discourse, and how they make available “positions for subjects to take up” in relation to other people (after Hollway 1984: 236). In turn, discourse analysts readily acknowledge that identity theorizing needs deeper embedding. Namely, identities are not “simply” interactionally constructed. Their dynamics must be interpreted in terms of more stable cognitive categories of

identity knowledge and human naïve theories of themselves and of others. This is the position adopted, for instance, by Simon (2004), who argues that all *self* aspects are cognitive and social by nature. This dual perspective, cognitive and interactional, is consistently and emphatically underscored by van Dijk in his socio-cognitive model of discourse (cf. van Dijk 2008, 2009). Van Dijk (2009: 72) argues that social “actors are unable to locally or contextually construct or perform an identity without any social knowledge about such an identity”, and that such “knowledge may be acquired by personal experiences and interaction, but also by discourses *about* social identities (e.g. normative discourse of parents telling their daughter to behave like a ‘girl’).”

A similar position follows from Goffman’s rejection of hermetically sealed identities:

When an individual does move into a new position in society and obtains a new part to perform, he is not likely to be told in full detail how to conduct himself, nor will the facts of his new situation press sufficiently on him from the start to determine his conduct without giving further thought to it. Ordinarily he will be given only a few cues, hints and stage directions, and it will be assumed that he already has in his repertoire a large number of bits and pieces of performances that will be required in the new setting. (Goffman 1969: 63; in Ivanič 1998: 104)

As a result, discourse approaches to identities, especially if couched in the “critical” social paradigm, dwell on integrative (cognitive-discursive-functional) models of analysis, are genre- (and discourse domain-) sensitive, and often comparative (engaging cross-cultural pragmatics or anthropological linguistics). In our case this involves analyses of discourses *in* (and *across*) different age-groups, as well as discourses *about* such intra- and inter-group communication. In full acknowledgement of the fluid nature of age and age-linked speech boundaries, in this volume we are looking for ideologies in how age distinctions are conceptualized and strategically deployed in inter-age communication. Speaking from different linguistic contexts and with varying goals, both Cortese and Duszak address generational variation in how age difference is exploited in socially sensitive contexts and over socially sensitive issues. Cortese talks about media representations of adolescents in Italy against national *drink/drive* educational campaigns. Duszak addresses the old–young war over national memories of and attitudes to communism in Poland. The two authors demonstrate how age arguments are intertwined in socioeconomic and political changes, and how they partake in languages of generations. Speaking from the perspective of social psychology, in their contribution to this volume Giles and Helmle outline a model of

inter-generational talk based on skills and an ethics of dialogization of the weaker *Other*, in their case the elderly.

In their lifetimes people assume many identities, yet those identities “leak” and their voices are polyphonic too (see Okulska this volume). Actually Bakhtin’s well-known concept of *heteroglossia* accommodates reference to age (cf. also Okulska this volume): for Bakhtin language, or words as he put it (Bakhtin 1981 [1935]: 293), have all the “taste” of “a profession, a genre, . . . a particular person, a generation, an age group” (emphasis added). Age and its talk are accommodative to context and discourse requirements. Accenting or attenuating one’s age may be a strategic ploy. A part of aging is learning how to expedite one’s age rights, but also how to position oneself on the “ages” that “do not belong” to us at a given moment. Biologically anchored, human age awareness wavers between remembering and imagining.

It is still an open issue whether we can talk about age-identities, and we need more data to address issues such as: how age-sensitive are human models of the Self and of Other Minds; how does age-awareness depend on one’s life-stage and the various social, cultural or educational backgrounds for aging; and, last but not least, when and why does age receive particular salience in communication?

Age research, it seems, needs a firmer place in discourse processing models and, notably, in models of contexts, i.e. interfaces between social reality and social action. If communication depends on our abilities to coordinate world views (in the sense of Slobin 1996, “thinking for speaking”), the mediation of culture-specific age values becomes a viable element for cross-cultural communication, translation and language education as well. A topical approach seems worthwhile, focusing on, say, the workings of age in various public domains, institutions and media, and in workplace, where age-difference can be shown to trigger, accelerate or put a brake on social and linguistic changes. Some of such issues are briefly developed below.

4. Age and contextual relativity

Biological, contextual and linguistic aging of individuals and entire generations is always embedded in a particular context, social order and place in history. It is a movement through time, caught up in a more general flow of

social and linguistic change. Along with language and social life, aging is all about variation and change. It may not be asked, then, how age research could contribute to our understanding of *discursive* (and *functional*) *relativity* (in the sense of Lucy 1996). Linguistic anthropologists and discourse analysts agree that successful communication depends on the availability of common ground, the stock of shared knowledge, which functions as a prerequisite for negotiating meanings across social, linguistic or cultural difference. If communication depends on the coordination of meanings and mental models of situations, it also depends on the coordination of context models. Age values, age awareness and age attribution are potential indicators of congruity or incongruity of world-views underlying the use of language. From the perspective of age, the universal category of Participants is important in particular.

In modeling contexts (cf., e.g., Hymes's SPEAKING grid, 1972; Verschueren 1999), participant configurations are structured along such dimensions as communicative roles (e.g., Speaker, Hearer, Audience, Overhearer, Bystander, etc.), sociolinguistic parameters of ethnicity, gender, *age* and social class, as well as other relations between participants, defined in terms of, say, kinship, power, institutional dependence or motivations and goals. Yet until recently age has been largely a covert parameter of analysis in that it was presupposed rather than overtly addressed in modeling contexts. The actual place of age in the debates over linguistic universalism–relativism is still, as we see it, an open issue. In his socio-cognitive model of context van Dijk (cf. 2009), one of the relatively few scholars who bring up this issue, suggests a universal validity of age in how people structure situations, saying that “participant relations and identities such as power, status, kinship, gender or *age* are very general, if not universal, in the definitions of communicative situations and the rules applied to them” (van Dijk 2009: 212, emphasis added). Yet he also rightly points to a relative nature of such concepts over time and space:

though speech events and their contexts may be partly different from Western ones, the contextual *categories* largely appear to be the same as in Western languages and culture: Setting (Time, Place), and Participants: Age, Gender, Authority, Power, Status or Position. Different though are the *rules* and *norms* that relate these categories to forms of discourse or conduct, for instance who may greet whom. [...] Moreover, also under the influence of other cultures, many communicative practices may change within one or a few generations. (Van Dijk 2009: 165, emphasis in original)

Certainly, age is a category of context, so its analysis can only be contributive to our understanding of *contextual relativity*. Ultimately, it can also enhance our understanding of discourse phenomena and processes. The approaches to age-and-language taken so far have much to offer and cover a lot of ground. Still, most of such research is compartmentalized according to age groups, localities and practice types. Many of the topical niches already flagged still invite revisiting and elaboration (esp. adolescents and/vs. adults), and there are gaps too (e.g. diversification of the category of adults, the retiring and the retired age group, let alone the position of age in the universal–relative continuum of researching language variation and difference in discursively mediated world views).

Duszak (in preparation) touches upon such issues working towards an integrative project in cross-cultural linguistics. Specifically she points to implicit age-values in some work on cross-cultural pragmatics, (im)politeness theories, (professional) genre analysis and applied linguistics. So, for instance, the role of age is suggested, even though not directly addressed, in many discussions of *vertical* societies (in the sense of Wierzbicka 1991: 111), or collectivist and sociocentric societies (all departing from the egalitarian, individualist Western order), which are often linked to *normative* and *deference* politeness cultures (for politeness see, e.g., Watts 2003). It is most likely that age considerations should play an important role in the operation of *honorific* systems in Oriental languages, or in *T/V* pronominal systems of address (in the sense of Brown and Gilman 1960) in languages making such distinctions. On the other hand, many non-egalitarian politeness systems may be actually flattening under the impact of global communication patterns, language and culture conduct, or English with its apparent social equalizer, the pronoun *you*. Naturally, though, such processes will vary in scope, speed and the actual effect they have on generational (linguistic) change. Normally we would expect that leveling of styles and politeness norms will go towards diminishing age distance. In most European languages this seems to be the case. Poland is a good example of a country in which young–old *fraternization* is spreading fast, though not without resistance, and a general *conversationalization* of interactions is seen as a new “regime of the young”. Such tendencies reach even the academic milieu, a traditional stronghold of hierarchical relations and high-style of communication (cf. Duszak 2005 for some discussion; here the Polish-medium literature is vast and so is media coverage).

Still, Duszak argues, cultural weighting of age varies, and any global tendencies need to be localized for specific observation and interpretation. The

rising power of the young and of their style of casual interaction sells better in some environments and worse in others. Describing the situation in modern Amharic, Wołk (2008: 94) claims that in Ethiopia today age-related parameters remain the main controllers of communication, and that even in institutions the “power of age overrides that of an official position of an individual” (Wołk 2008: 33). Debating the influence of English on norms of politeness in Oriental languages, Y. Kachru (2006: 371) makes an interesting point that under the natural language-contact situation “the varieties of English used in Asian societies have assimilated some of the deference strategies of the languages of those cultures,” and argues that this “phenomenon of bi-directional accommodation of politeness strategies is worth serious consideration.”

Age-oriented research is also of relevance for explorations into the nature of what looks like cross-cultural misunderstanding rather than intentional infringement on age rights or violation of communication principles. House’s (2003) analysis of miscommunication in intercultural academic settings suggests that age difference may be an important cue for dealing with apparent misattributions of intentions (in her case on the part of a German professor and an American student). Such difference can lead to an incongruent framing of the situation and, ultimately, to pragmatic failure of the whole encounter. Speaking from the perspective of a British academic, Spencer-Oatey (2007: 645) gives an example of an exchange that she personally experienced when a Hungarian male student, thanking her for showing him the way to the train, said to her: “Thank you very much. You are a very kind *old* lady” (emphasis added). With her focus on (im)politeness, she saw in his response a mixture of face-enhancement and face-threat resulting “from the two different personal attributes (kindness and elderliness) that he ascribed” to her, and from her “evaluative judgments in relation to these qualities (positive valence for kindness, negative valence for elderliness).” She ventured that it was quite possible that “for this Hungarian student, ‘old lady’ had neutral or even positive connotations.” As a matter of fact, this “not knowing” is a major issue here. We would need more data on the level of the student’s proficiency in English, and on Hungarian “age culture” in order to get a better sense of how the age of the participants could impact on the flow of this interaction. Needless to say, post-event interviews might be a useful source of information. Age-sensitivity of any communication avails itself of many opportunities for study along with, or on top of, other research priorities, whether politeness, gender, discursive relativity, or failure in cross-cultural competence.

5. Organization of the volume

The purpose of this volume is to chart a comprehensive agenda for a linguistic study of age. From the methodological point of view, the papers are informed by a wide spectrum of the linguistic and social sciences, ranging from interactional sociolinguistics, discourse analysis, critical linguistics, historical linguistics and translation studies, to selected social theories, especially social constructionism, social positioning and social identity theories. The contributors address social communication within and across age cohorts in all major age categories: the elderly, middle-aged, teenagers and children. Exploring age causality in discourse, many of the authors discuss it in terms of power and the struggle over power. As a result, they suggest, whether overtly or implicitly, that age-related arguments represent a high research potential for critical discourse analysis. This applies first of all to studies in inter-generational conflict, yet also to analyses of social and linguistic change taking place today in many societies under the vibrant pressures of globalization. The social skewing of much of the research reported here explains the volume's focus on the dynamics of age, and the discursive construction of social identities, in particular. Age is throughout implicated as a viable controller of how social action is strategically deployed for alignment and alienation, accommodation and divergence. Needless to say, such an orientation validates, and itself enhances, the bonding between a "linguistics of age" and various psychological and sociological perspectives on age. Selective and unsystematic as it certainly remains, this collection hopefully documents that linguistic research into age invites a multicultural and multilingual approach, and that it constitutes a viable line of further linguistic explorations.

The chapters in this volume are structured in two parts. Part Two, *Age and social identification*, assembles contributions that approach age in its capacity to identify individuals and groups. It undertakes the core issue of how the various aspects of age – biological, psychological, contextual and cultural – coalesce in the construction of social identities. The texts are methodologically and contextually diverse, accommodating sociolinguistic accounts of age and language correlates, as well as discursive analyses of how age-based identities are displayed and negotiated in social interaction. The construction of age-based identities is demonstrated on the various life-stages of individuals, children, adolescents, and the elderly. The authors in this part focus on self-presentation in how identity work is done, even though, naturally the construction of the self is always a relational process: it is simultaneously a definition of the other.

In the first contribution, “Aging and sociolinguistic variation”, David Bowie ventures that old age may be “as any other time” in life in that it shows *intra*-individual variation in speech qualities. This he documents on the basis of an archive of religious addresses in the US, emphasizing “natural” progression rather than deterioration. In “Multiple identities of elderly Dutch-Australians” Ingrid Seebus reports on the situation of elderly Australians of Dutch descent. She emphasizes the constructive role of factors other than age, such as standards of living, religion, high social networking and community integration within what is a multicultural and multilingual environment. In turn, Heidi E. Hamilton addresses the dominant pathological perspective on aging. In her “Narrative as snapshot: Glimpses into the past in Alzheimer’s discourse”, she discusses an aggravation of mental and linguistic skills in late life. Drawing on resources from various frameworks, Hamilton analyses narratives of patients with severe memory loss. She shows how, in the (near) absence of coherent reconstructions of the past, when communication practically breaks down, it is still possible to retrieve signs of the speaker’s lost identities. The three remaining contributions in this part address the expression of identity by speakers of younger age brackets. Angela Ardington in “Alliance building and identity work in early adolescent girls’ talk: Conversational accomplishments of playful duelling”, focuses on adversarial talk among girls aged 10–12. She suggests that the “gyrating key” of their talk reflects the “turbulence” often associated with that transitional life stage. Then, in “Discursive construction of the JP II Generation in letters of Polish children and teenagers to Pope John Paul II”, Urszula Okulska draws a picture of what is described in Poland as the “John Paul II Generation”. She looks into multiple self-disclosures of the Pope’s “spiritual children”, who in the epistolary chronicles of their lives passionately articulate their ideals inspired by their guide’s preaching. The final contribution here, entitled “Articulating male and female adolescent identities via the language of personal advertisements: A Malaysian perspective”, authored by Bahiyah Dato’ Hj. Abdul Hamid and Kesumawati Abu Bakar, analyses self-portraits of adolescent Malaysians in the popular press. The authors demonstrate how such discourses – carried by global self-commodifying tendencies – still draw on various cultural resources of local communication patterns.

The contributors in Part Three, *Age in inter-generational communication*, focus on identity negotiation in interaction, exploring cooperative and conflictive positioning on age difference. Some processes of inter-generational communication are highlighted, especially those involving communication of the proverbial *adult* with the elderly, the adolescents, and the children. The

authors address selected cultural, social and historical differences in attitudes to age groups, as well as point to social ambivalence of age, age rights and powers. The section starts with a contribution entitled “Elder abuse and neglect: A communication framework”, co-authored by Howard Giles and Jill Helmlé. The authors present a comprehensive analysis of physical, psychological and social aging, with special attention to detrimental features of communication. They point to cultural differences in attitudes to the elderly and to the social and cultural determinants of inter-generational communication with the elderly. In “Discursive construction of (elderly) age-identity in Poland”, Agnieszka Kiełkiewicz-Janowiak discusses cultural stereotypes of old age in post-communist Poland, demonstrating an ambivalent perception of old age, largely as a result of the society’s efforts to come to terms with an abrupt change in social and economic values. In “Alcohol as a way of ‘doing’ adolescence: Perspective, stance and strategy in the discourse of Italian institutions”, Giuseppina Cortese focuses on drinking styles and alcohol practices of Italian adolescents. She investigates the socio-political positioning, moral sentiments and concerns of the professions (particularly health care and social care) and of the public bodies involved in devising and implementing policies on “young alcohol”. Cortese highlights the ambiguous role of the press, which tends to shock public opinion and to raise public alarm without pursuing the social and political implications of alcohol consumption amongst teenagers. In “‘Old’ and ‘young’ in discourses of Polish transformations”, Anna Duszak explores the ambivalence of age in recent debates on *ustratation* in the Polish media. Using resources of critical discourse analysis, the author shows how the *old–young* dichotomy is strategically exploited in developing social attitudes to the communist past and how it is implicated in an inter-generational struggle for power. The social legitimization of *ustratation* procedures is studied with reference to what is described as social, ethical and pragmatic argumentation. The two final contributions address the situation of the child in the world of adults in two substantially different time spaces. In “‘The regime of the adult’: Textual manipulations in translated, hybrid, and glocal texts for young readers”, Michał Borodo explores how adults today communicate with children through translation. He argues that the adults’ interventions into the original texts substantially affect the image of the “other” culture, and that globally marketable literature is used for local moralizing. In the final contribution to this volume, “Age and the codification of the English language”, Ingrid Tieken-Boon van Ostade demonstrates how the first English grammars for children reflected above all the adults’ own capacities and needs for language learning and language codification. The

section starts with a historical study, on the basis of early English prescriptive grammars, of the generational growth and maturation of adults' attitudes to children's linguistic identities in 18th-century England.

To sum up, the dual perspective that this volume adopts in its focus on age-based identities on the one hand (Part II) and their "voices" in discourses of inter-generational communication on the other (Part III), reveals the dynamic nature of age as a fluid and transient factor in human interaction. As the particular chapters show, age is an aspect of individual and collective experience that permeates all life stages, thus indexing all speaking styles by constructing, shaping and modifying linguistic competence through physical and socio-cultural maturation and growth. The discursive stance adopted here presents age and aging as dynamic processes through which age-related values, attitudes and concerns, as elements of human identity, are cognitively, socially and culturally mediated through intra/inter-generational exchange. The book thus proposes a new and comprehensive agenda for age-oriented research by working towards an integrated socio-cultural, discursive, cognitive model positioning age as a viable component of social and linguistic analyses. First of all, it "mobilizes" age as a relational force that fluctuates across contexts, social orders and time to partake in construing cooperative, competitive and confrontational styles of cross-generational interaction. It also shows the relative nature of age, which is conceptualized, defined and determined in discourse according to the rules of a given culture, its social and linguistic values, as well as historical time. They all point to the conditional aspect of age dynamics, which bearing on a society's overall functioning and progress acts as a barometer in the flow of cultural and linguistic change. Demonstrating age as an important controller of social action that underlies the production of intra/inter-group similarity and difference, the present collection foregrounds the position of this hitherto (mostly) "hidden" or "implicit" dimension in linguistic inquiry by throwing new light on its crucial role in culturally driven language variation.

The contributions in this volume highlight, with their diverse theoretical and methodological frameworks adopted from a wide range of linguistic and social disciplines, some relevant issues that may be of interest for specialists dealing with, touching on, or themselves affected by the workings of age in broadly understood social interaction. The problems include, for instance, ethical and therapeutic concerns of caring for particular age groups, ways of dealing with age-rooted communication barriers, conflicts and misunderstandings, raising age awareness in overall language use, voicing and

debating age arguments in processes of socioeconomic and political changes, mediating culture-specific age values in cross-cultural communication (e.g. through education and translation), or the functioning of the age factor in such social domains as public institutions, media or the workplace. Further research in these and similar topics will undoubtedly contribute to our better understanding of age-generated discourse relativity, and to building a shared age-oriented knowledge on the way to establishing a common age-sensitive ground for negotiating meanings across social, linguistic and cultural space. The book is intended for linguists, language teachers, translators, and philology students, as well as for social scientists, including (social) psychologists, sociologists, ethnographers, anthropologists, and all those interested in the study of age and aging in language, society and culture.

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Part II. Age and social identification

Chapter 2

Aging and sociolinguistic variation

David Bowie

1. Introductory discussion

While the effects of aging on linguistic behavior have been examined at many levels, studies of linguistic production and post-adolescent aging generally deal with the relationship between speech processes and age-associated mental and physical pathologies. However, it is also worthwhile to look into the linguistic processes associated with what is often thought of as “normal” aging – that is, aging marked simply by the continuing progression of time rather than by significant mental and physical pathology, or even by the occurrence of major social changes.

In particular, the relationship between aging and sociolinguistic variation has not often been studied directly. However, a number of studies have been conducted that test the apparent time construct, and these must deal indirectly with issues of aging and variation, due to the nature of the topic. According to the apparent time construct (Bailey et al. 1991), it is possible to use a single sample to get at the progress of language change over time in a speech community, as long as individuals with a range of ages are included in the sample. The logic (in a simplified form here, of course) is rather clear: any individuals born in, say, 1925 would give insight into the state of the speech community’s linguistic system of the 1930s, individuals born in 1945 would give insight into the system of the 1950s, those born in 1965 would reflect the system of the 1970s, and so on.

However, as Bailey (2005) notes in a defense of the apparent time construct, this only works if one makes the assumption that individuals’ linguistic production remains relatively stable throughout the adult lifespan.¹ There are things that can occur over the course of an individual’s life to create linguistic instability, of course – even aside from mental or physical pathologies, major life events such as moving to a new region or a significant change in social status might result in such instability – but the general assumption in sociolinguistics is that if adult individuals do not experience events like these, they remain linguistically stable.

This is an intriguing (and perhaps surprising) claim, since psychological studies of aging outcomes have found that individuals generally become more and more dissimilar as they age, rather than remaining static (for just a few examples, see Christensen et al. 1999; Gerstorf et al. 2008; Novak and Mather 2007). While most of these studies have dealt with age-related changes in attitudes and cognitive processing, it seems reasonable to investigate whether linguistic behavior functions in the same way, since language is, at least at some level, a cognitive process.

This is testable, though, and since nearly every study that has tested whether the apparent time construct actually works has done so by comparing real time and apparent time approaches to the study of language variation, they have actually tested whether adult individuals are linguistically stable. Unfortunately, the studies that have been conducted on this point have yielded radically different results. At one extreme, Bailey (2005) and Cukor-Avila (2002) find that individuals' phonetic and morphosyntactic production is remarkably stable throughout post-adolescent life. On the other side, my own work (Bowie 2005) has found cases in which adults show at times radical phonetic changes. In between are a number of studies, which include, among others, the following: Labov (1994) reviewed a number of variables, finding that adults' phonetic production is stable except in the case of socially salient variables; Trudgill (1988), in a restudy of phonetic variables in a speech community, found that real time evidence agreed with the direction of apparent time analyses, but that they sometimes differed in terms of the speed of change; Sankoff, Blondeau and Charity (2001) conducted a longitudinal study of twenty-five individuals, and found that most of them had remained stable with regard to the variable under study (posterior versus apical production of *r*), but that some individuals had undergone changes in their production that appeared tied to issues of social status and background; and Nahkola and Saanilahti (2004) found that individuals' production is stable during adulthood, except for variables that are undergoing change in the speech community.

In part because of the sometimes-explicit assumption in these studies that age is a biological variable rather than a social or contextual variable, the possible social reasons for age-related linguistic changes (or the lack thereof) have not been investigated as thoroughly as one might like. In particular, individual differences in coping with age have been ignored in the variationist sociolinguistic literature on age-associated linguistic change. One likely reason for this is that coping processes are widely discussed in the context of age-related pathologies and their effects on language (for a few recent

examples out of the very large literature on this, see Armstrong and Ulatowska 2007; Epstein et al. 2009; Laures-Gore et al. 2007; Hamilton this volume), but not so much in connection with aging without pathology. Therefore, it is worth testing not just what changes may occur in individuals' linguistic systems as they age, but also what mechanisms might underlie any changes that do occur.

2. Data

2.1. General issues

First of all, it is obvious that conducting a study of linguistic change over the lifespan from a variationist sociolinguistic point of view is most easily done using real-time panel data (that is, recordings of the same individuals at different points in time) as the primary data source. In fact, using real-time panel data may well be the only way to properly do this – using the same individuals at different points in time allows us to be sure that any changes or stability one finds are actually instances of change or stability in individual vernaculars, whereas a trend approach, using similar samples at different points in time, would only be able to give information on the stability of group rather than individual behaviors. As it turns out, among the previous studies on this subject that I mentioned earlier, most of them do in fact take this approach.

However, as Tillery and Bailey (2003) have pointed out, there are problems with any real time study in general, as well as with the panel approach specifically. The primary problems faced by panel studies are that individuals on the panel who are surveyed at one point in time may move or die by the time the next point in time comes around, thus leaving the researcher with gaps in the sample. In addition, over time a panel sample necessarily becomes less representative of the speech community it is taken from, both because individuals move away or die (creating the gaps just mentioned), and because once a panel sample is set it cannot adjust to reflect changes in the demographic make-up of the surrounding community. This is in addition to the problems faced by real time studies in general, most notably that if there are differences in the survey instruments or the interviewers at each studied point in time, the results might not be directly comparable. This problem has led to the use of some interesting methods to get around it; for example, when Trudgill (1988) conducted his trend restudy of Norwich, England, he kept the same survey instrument that had been used earlier even though that meant

forgoing some methodological advances that had been made in the meantime, and rather than using the original interviewer, a new interviewer who was demographically similar to the original interviewer at the time of the original study was employed. Even this approach is not without problems, however, since unforeseen differences in interviewers can result in different results (a phenomenon that has been called the Rutledge Effect; see Bailey and Tillery 1999).

Fortunately, if what we are interested in is whether individuals' linguistic behaviors change during their adult lifespans (as opposed to changes occurring across a speech community), as is the case with this study, some of these issues are unimportant.² Most notable is the worry that a panel sample will become unrepresentative of a speech community over time; since we are most concerned with individuals rather than communities here, all that is necessary is that the individuals remain representative of themselves. In addition, the fact that members of the panel might move to a different dialect region or *somesuch* (in which case, it could be argued, they might be expected to become linguistically different than they were before) or die is regrettable, and may represent wasted effort from the researcher's point of view. It does not, however, represent a major problem for a study of change or stability in individuals' linguistic behaviors across adulthood, as long as individuals who have moved or such are dropped from further analysis when that happens.

2.2. *This study*

The other issues discussed above remain, however, and they need to be dealt with or avoided in some way. To get around these problems, then, this study uses an archive of recordings that were not originally made for linguistic purposes: a collection of recorded religious addresses delivered at the semi-annual conferences of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints from 1940 to 1980. The parts of the recordings that were analyzed are made up of somewhat formal semi-extemporaneous speeches made by religious leaders,³ simultaneously delivered in person and via broadcast media to an audience made up primarily of believers. The speeches were all delivered in English, and all of those that were analyzed were delivered by native speakers of English. All of the addresses were delivered in the same place (in fact, at the same pulpit) in Salt Lake City, Utah, USA, and the content and rhetorical style of these speeches remained consistent throughout the duration of the archive. In

addition, since the archive spans several decades, with the same speakers appearing regularly, it is possible to track some individuals over a longer span of time than previous studies have.

This archive provides a number of advantages for a study like this one. First of all, it is possible to build a panel after the fact that consists of members that all have desired attributes, in that they appear multiple times over the course of several years, are all from the same region, and have not experienced significant dialect contact due to moving to a different region. In addition, it is possible to ensure that the panel members did not undergo any pathologies that would affect their speech production, and they did not change their social status greatly during the times their archived speeches cover. Essentially, with an archive like this one, it is possible to build a panel made up of speakers where, if anyone should have been linguistically stable over the course of their adult lifespans, it was them. With that in mind, the panel analyzed in this study is made up of five speakers, listed in Table 1. They all lived in the same area (the Wasatch Front region of Utah, which extends roughly north and south of Salt Lake City), and they were all socially stable during the time sampled (they all spent the entire time as religious administrators at the highest levels of their church's bureaucracy).

Table 1. Speakers analyzed

Name	Year born
JRC	1870
DOM	1873
LGR	1886
JLW	1893
MEP	1900

As a sidebar, I stress that I make no claim that the linguistic behaviors exhibited by these individuals are representative of linguistic behaviors generally exhibited along Utah's Wasatch Front. Most glaringly, women's speech is not represented in this archive. In addition, all of the speakers that could be used for this study are representatives of the upper-middle (or perhaps even upper) class, and they are all ethnically Euro-American. However, the purpose of this study is not to get at linguistic behavior along the Wasatch Front generally; it is to analyze the linguistic behaviors of individuals as they age.

3. Methodology

In earlier work with this archive (Bowie 2005), I conducted acoustic analyses of these speakers' production of several different vowels in a number of different environments. Three of these were found to show significant changes at different points in real time, and so those are analyzed more deeply in this study: the lowering of /ɪ/ before /l/, the raising of /æ/ before nasals, and the fronting of /u/ word-finally. In addition, this paper also discusses the results of impressionistic analyses of the diphthongization of /æ/ before both obstruents and nasals, as well as the monophthongization of the diphthong /aɪ/.

To conduct the analysis of each of these variables for the speakers in the sample, I first selected recordings of the speeches made by each of the speakers in years ending with a zero (that is, 1940, 1950, 1960, 1970, and 1980) so as to get data for each speaker over time at a resolution of a decade. Of course, some of the speakers died before the end of the archive, and one of the speakers was not recorded during the first years of the archive, so the speech of each individual did not exist for analysis at every point that was sampled. In the end, three speakers were sampled at three points, one was sampled at four, and one was sampled at all five, as listed in Table 2.

Table 2. Years sampled for each speaker

Name	Years sampled
JRC	1940, 1950, 1960
DOM	1940, 1950, 1960
LGR	1940, 1950, 1960, 1970, 1980
JLW	1940, 1950, 1960
MEP	1950, 1960, 1970, 1980

From these speeches, the first up to thirty instances of each variable vowel that was to undergo acoustic analysis (that is, pre-lateral /ɪ/, pre-nasal /æ/,⁴ and word-final /u/) were analyzed using Praat 4.2 to obtain F1 and F2 values. In addition, the first up to thirty instances of each vowel that was chosen for impressionistic analysis (that is, the diphthong /aɪ/, /æ/ before obstruents, and the aforementioned pre-nasal /æ/) were listened to determine whether they were produced as monophthongs or diphthongs. For the /æ/ variables, the distinction was a binary one (monophthongal versus diphthongal). However,

for /aɪ/ a ternary distinction (monophthongal versus diphthongal with a weakened glide versus diphthongal with a full glide) was used, since studies of varieties of American English exhibiting monophthongization of /aɪ/ have found that it is often best dealt with in such a way.

In addition, the first up to thirty instances of what I call ‘anchor vowels’ (mainly for lack of a better term) were collected. These included word-final /i/ and word-final /o/, as well as /æ/ preceding obstruents. These were used to determine the relative position of the other vowels, since earlier work has found that, relative to the other vowels in these speakers’ vowel systems, word-final /i/ was consistently high and front, word-final /o/ was consistently mid and back, and pre-obstruent /æ/ was consistently low and front. (Essentially, these vowels in these environments were consistently produced by all the speakers in their expected canonical positions relative to the other vowels.)⁵ In all, 1,394 tokens of vowels were analyzed acoustically as phonetic variables, 1,537 vowels were analyzed impressionistically as phonetic variables, and 1,548 vowels were analyzed acoustically for use as ‘anchor vowels’. Some of these categories overlap, so the total number of tokens analyzed for this study was actually 3,414.

The sampling of vowels did not always go quite so perfectly, however. This is reflected in the phrasing above, in which the sampling process was carefully described above as taking the first “up to thirty” of each vowel. These speeches were given without the benefit (from a variationist sociolinguistic point of view) of a survey instrument to control the frequency with which the different variables appeared. This was not a problem for vowels that occur with a high frequency in English, such as /æ/, but some variables occurred less than an optimal number of times for statistical analysis. The only variable presented here that this could have caused a problem for was pre-lateral /ɪ/, but even though fewer than thirty tokens of pre-lateral /ɪ/ could be collected for many speakers in some years, the statistical analysis remained robust.⁶

Statistical testing was then conducted to determine whether the linguistic behaviors of any of the tested individuals were significantly different for any of these vowels in different years. The implications of these tests were simple: if there were no significant differences in the linguistic behavior of an individual at different points in real time, this was taken as meaning that that individual’s linguistic behavior was stable with regard to age. On the other hand, obviously, *instability* meant that the individual’s behavior was not stable, and that this merited a closer look to see whether it could be attributed to aging.

4. Analysis and results

In this section, the results for each of the variables listed above will be dealt with separately, after which I will discuss the more general conclusions that can be drawn from the study.

4.1. Pre-lateral lowering of /ɪ/

The lowering of /ɪ/ before /l/ has been documented along the Wasatch Front of Utah by several researchers (for example, Di Paolo and Faber 1990; Faber and Di Paolo 1995; Lillie 1998; Lund 2002). Since this variable involves the lowering of /ɪ/ from its canonical position, the relative height of the vowel was measured by measuring the F1 position of /ɪ/ in relation to /i/ (which was consistently high for all speakers) and /æ/ (which was consistently low among all speakers). This is demonstrated graphically in Figure 1, which illustrates the degree of lowering exhibited. It simply shows, for each speaker in each year, the position of the mean F1 value of all of the pre-lateral /ɪ/ vowels relative to the mean F1 of word-final /i/ and pre-obstruent /æ/, given in terms

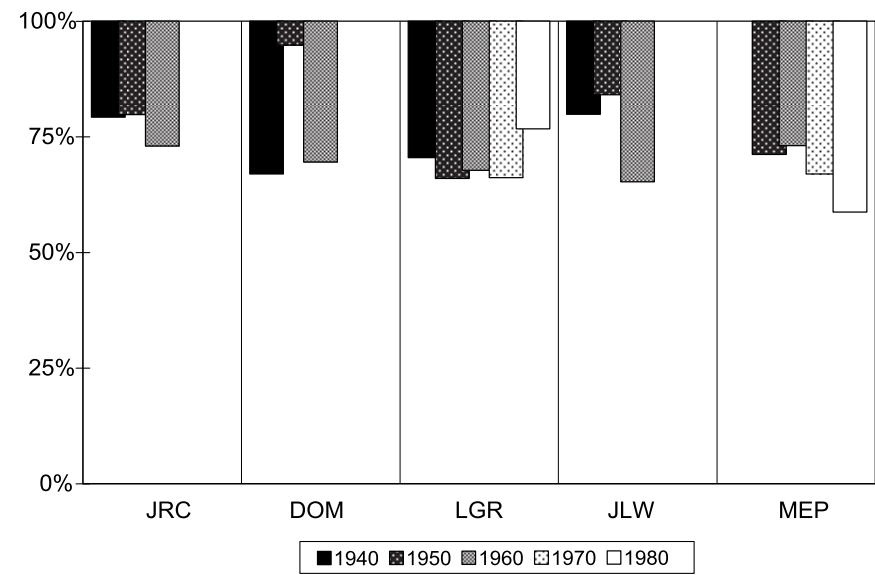


Figure 1. Lowering of /ɪ/ before /l/

of a percentage of the distance as measured in hertz. Because the result shown is given as the percentage of the distance from pre-obstruent /æ/ to word-final /i/, lower percentages reflect production of /i/ as a lower vowel, and higher percentages reflect production of the vowel as higher.⁷

I should stress that Figure 1 (like the similar charts that follow) does, of course, show a simplified picture of these speakers' systems, since it just shows means, but it still gives a useful general picture showing the relative degree of lowering for each speaker in each year. Because it gives a relatively easy to grasp view of the behaviors these speakers exhibit, and a deeper analysis generally backs up what it shows, it makes sense to present these results using this method.

That said, the results shown in Figure 1 do not show a clear pattern across all of the speakers. At first glance, MEP shows a pattern in which pre-lateral [ɹ] gets more or less progressively lower with age, while LGR shows what looks like a sort of U-shaped pattern. DOM shows an interesting one with a relatively low vowel in 1940 and 1960, but in 1950 he produced this vowel, on average, much higher, perhaps even to the point that we would have to call it a *raised* [ɹ].

Upon conducting statistical testing on these results, however, we find that the results are not exactly what one might draw from the chart at first sight. Statistical testing of each speaker's production finds that JRC's and JLW's production of this variable is significantly different in 1960 than in the other years they were recorded, while DOM's production was different in 1950 than in the other years. LGR, on the other hand, showed no significant differences for this variable at all (despite appearances to the contrary), while MEP's production was not different decade to decade, but his starting and ending points were significantly different. Out of all this, though, there is one crucial finding: there is no single pattern that all of the speakers follow – each speaker seems to follow his own path.

4.2. *Pre-nasal raising of /æ/*

The next variable is the raising of /æ/ before nasals. This is a very widely investigated variable in sociolinguistic and dialectological studies of English, but it does not appear to have been previously investigated anywhere in Utah. The results for this study are shown in Figure 2, which gives where the F1 mean value for each speaker's production of pre-nasal /æ/ in each year fell as a percentage of the distance between word-final /i/ and pre-obstruent /æ/

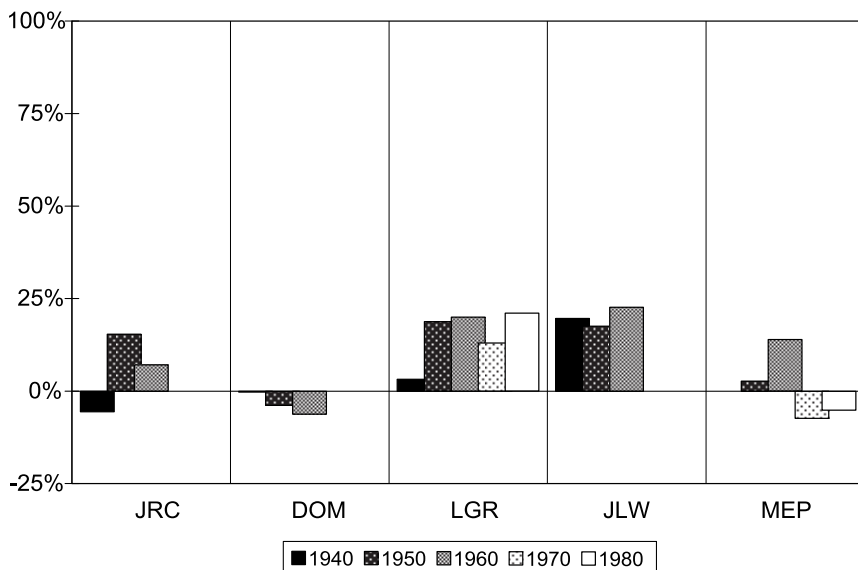


Figure 2. Raising of /æ/ before nasals

(which were, respectively, consistently high and consistently low for all speakers). As in Figure 1, higher percentage values reflect production of the vowel as higher, while lower percentages reflect a lower production. However, in this case some of these values are negative. This signifies that the means of the tokens of pre-nasal /æ/ actually fell below those of pre-obstruent /æ/ for those speakers in those years.

There are, of course, two important things to look at here: whether speakers produced pre-nasal [æ] significantly raised with regard to pre-obstruent [æ] at any given point in time, and whether each individual was consistent over time.

As it turns out, these questions are actually linked on some cases. That is, JRC and DOM never produced /æ/ significantly differently in the two environments, and so not only did they not produce them differently, they did not change their production of /æ/ before nasals (since they, like all of the speakers, produced pre-obstruent /æ/ with the same relative height at all times).⁸ On the other hand, JLW always produced pre-nasal /æ/ raised relative to pre-obstruent /æ/, but he also consistently produced pre-nasal /æ/ raised to the same degree, thus showing stability over time.

LGR and MEP are more interesting. LGR consistently produced pre-nasal /æ/ significantly raised when compared with the pre-obstruent environment,

and he always produced pre-nasal /æ/ the same – *except* for 1940, when he produced pre-nasal and pre-obstruent /æ/ the same.⁹ MEP shows nearly precisely the opposite behavior: he produced pre-nasal and pre-obstruent /æ/ the same in every year sampled except for 1950, when he produced the pre-nasal form higher.

Once again, as with pre-lateral /ɹ/, there is no single pattern that all speakers follow.

4.3. Word-final fronting of /u/

From this we move to the fronting of word-final /u/. This variable has not been looked at specifically along the Wasatch Front of Utah, but it is known to exist throughout most of North America, including Utah (Labov et al. 2006). The results for the speakers sampled in this study are shown graphically in Figure 3 as the distance word-final /u/ was produced further front than word-final /o/, in terms of the percentage of the F2 distance between word-final /o/ and word-final /i/ (which were, for all speakers in all years, consistently back and front respectively). In this chart, which is oriented

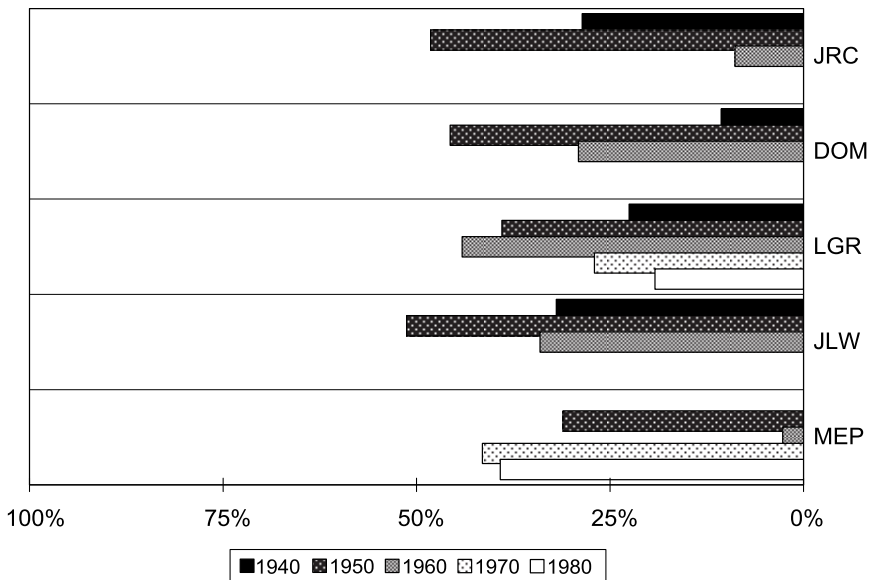


Figure 3. Fronting of /u/ word-finally

horizontally rather than vertically to make the connection visually clearer, lower percentages reflect a production of /u/ that is further back, while higher percentages reflect a more fronted production.

The essential message of Figure 3 is that every speaker shows some fronting of /u/, but there is a great deal of inconsistency from decade to decade among all of them. Perhaps most striking is MEP, who consistently exhibited a moderate degree of /u/-fronting except for 1960, when he showed essentially none. LGR shows a distinctly U-shaped pattern, beginning with less fronting, drifting into more fronting, and finishing off about where he started. Further, JRC, DOM, and JLW all show an odd spike in fronting in 1950.¹⁰ JRC and DOM both show significant differences from decade to decade, and their patterns are particularly interesting if we consider some social factors. These two speakers were born within three years of each other, grew up relatively near each other, attended the same college, and worked for decades in the same office at the highest level of their church's hierarchy¹¹ – and yet their patterns are mirror images of each other, when one might expect them to have more precisely paralleled each other, at least later in life.

In any event, with this variable we have what is perhaps our clearest example of individuals behaving differently at different points as they age, with individuals who really are very demographically similar not behaving as a single coherent group, but all dealing with linguistic production in their own way.

4.4. *Diphthongization of /æ/*

From there, we come to the diphthongization of /æ/, broken down into pre-obstruent and pre-nasal environments. Figure 4 simply shows the frequency that the vowel was produced as a diphthong rather than the normally expected monophthongal form in the pre-obstruent context. This shows that, in general, speakers are stable in their production of this variable, and so it functions mainly as a baseline for what comes next. There is one exception to this general stability, however, and it should be noted: JLW produced the diphthongal form significantly more often in 1960 than other years. This is actually a rather small difference, though, and not a terribly robust one, and I will not be discussing it further here.

Figure 5, on the other hand, shows the frequency of diphthongization of /æ/ in the pre-nasal context. This is worth looking at because, even though no studies specific to the raising of /æ/ have been conducted anywhere in Utah,

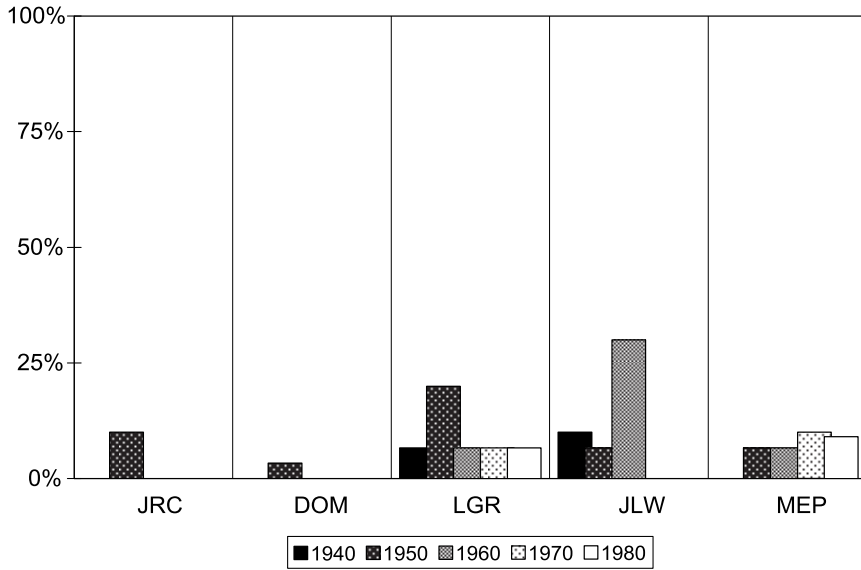


Figure 4. Diphthongization of /æ/ before obstruents

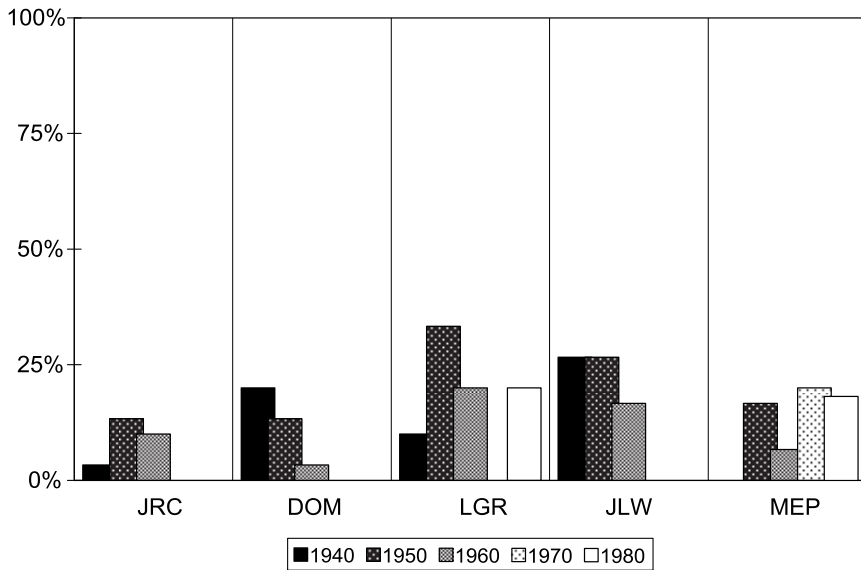


Figure 5. Diphthongization of /æ/ before nasals

diphthongization of /æ/ before nasals is widely found across North America (Labov et al. 2006). Among these speakers, however, we do not see much of a real difference. If we compare Figure 5 with Figure 4 we see what appears to be more variation over time in the pre-nasal environment than we saw before obstruents, but in actuality there is only one speaker who shows a significant difference from decade to decade here: LGR. This is, however, a very robust result; it is particularly worth noting that in 1970 he produced none of the thirty tokens sampled as a diphthong, compared with one-third of them in 1950. Clearly, though, there is no coherent pattern we can draw from these speakers' patterns of /æ/-diphthongization along the lines of "with increasing age we see X" – there is simply a lot of intraindividual variation.

4.5. *Monophthongization of /aɪ/*

Monophthongization of the canonical diphthong /aɪ/ is generally not discussed in North American Englishes outside of the southeastern United States, and is certainly not thought of as a feature of any varieties spoken in the western United States, but it has been found to exist at low rates throughout Utah, including along the Wasatch Front. Further, there is some apparent time-based evidence that /aɪ/-monophthongization was more prevalent there at the time these speakers were growing up than it is now (Morkel 2003). Therefore, it seems worthwhile to see what sort of patterns we find among the speakers sampled for this study.

Figure 6 shows the frequency with which /aɪ/ is produced as a monophthong by these speakers.¹² This chart is included mainly for completeness, since none of the speakers show any significant differences year to year – even MEP's spike in frequency in 1980 turns out to be statistically meaningless. Basically, the only meaningful thing that we can say at this point is that monophthongal /aɪ/ is exhibited by all of these speakers at a low rate that, effectively, never changes.

Figure 7, on the other hand, shows the percentage of the time /aɪ/ was produced with what the literature generally calls a 'weakened glide'.¹³ Despite initial appearances, there is a great deal of stability from decade to decade among these speakers – JLW and MEP are the only ones to show significant differences. JLW and MEP, though, change differently. If we looked only at JLW's pattern, for example, we might be tempted to describe it as increasing glide weakening with increased age – an age-grading pattern, perhaps. MEP's pattern, on the other hand, shows no clear connection with age – he starts

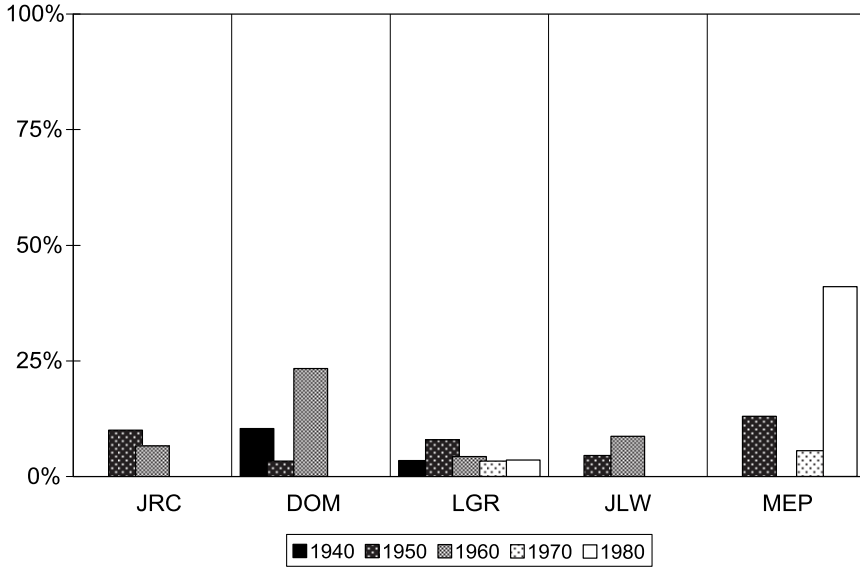


Figure 6. Production of /aɪ/ as a monophthong

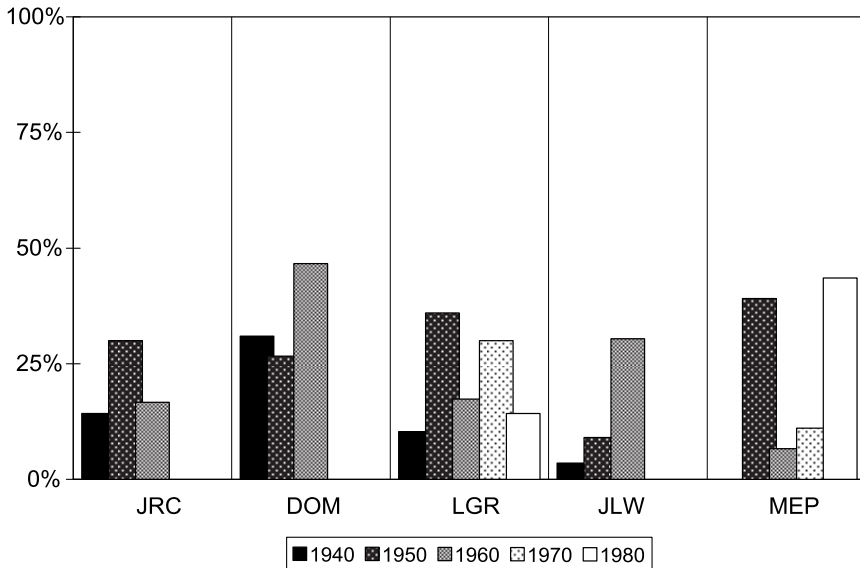


Figure 7. Production of /aɪ/ with a weakened glide

with a relatively high rate of glide weakening in 1950, followed by the next two decades' samples with very low rates of weakening, and finally an extremely high rate of weakening again in 1980. The summary, though, is the same as what we have seen before: yet again, we see different speakers showing different patterns for this variable over time.

4.6. *Summary of results*

In the interest of clarity, it seems worth summarizing the results to this point. Table 3 shows whether each speaker showed any changes from decade to decade for each variable, and what sort of pattern those changes seemed to have, if any.

The pattern that runs throughout Table 3 is remarkable for its utter lack of a pattern. No variable except for /aɪ/-monophthongization shows a consistent pattern across all speakers, and not only do none of the variables seem to show a similar pattern to any of the others, none of the speakers show similar patterns to each other across all variables.¹⁴

5. **Conclusions and discussion**

After going through all of this, there is still, of course, the all-important though rarely explicitly asked question: So what? That is, these results may be interesting in and of themselves, but is there anything of wider importance to draw out of them? Well, as it turns out, there are a few worthwhile conclusions to draw from all of this.

To begin with one that is perhaps most important to variationist sociolinguists, it is clear that the results presented here pose a sizable problem for the common variationist assumption that vernaculars are stable across the adult lifespan. After all, given the considerable changes that this study has documented over the course of twenty to forty years of individuals' adulthoods, at least for certain variables, it is difficult at best to justify the assumption that the core linguistic behavior of a speaker actually reflects the same system from year to year.

Further, this fact points out the importance of looking at individuals' behaviors as the behaviors of individuals, and not only as members of a larger group. If individuals are unstable in their linguistic production from one point in time to another, but we only look at changes across the community that

Table 3. Summary of speakers' patterns for all variables

	JRC 1940 to 1960	DOM 1940 to 1960	LGR 1940 to 1980	JLW 1940 to 1960	MEP 1950 to 1980
Pre-lateral lowering of /h/	Increased lowering in 1960	Decreased lowering in 1950	Consistent production	Increased lowering in 1960	Increased lowering over time
Pre-nasal raising of /æ/	Consistent production (no raising)	Consistent production (no raising)	Consistent raising except 1940	Consistent production (raising)	Consistent lack of raising except 1950
Word-final fronting of /u/	Increased fronting in 1950	Increased fronting in 1950	U-shaped pattern (increased then decreased fronting)	Increased fronting in 1950	Fronting except in 1960
Pre-obstruent diphthongization of /æ/	Consistent production	Consistent production	Consistent production	Increased diphthongization in 1960	Consistent production
Pre-nasal diphthongization of /æ/	Consistent production	Consistent production	Unclassifiably irregular production	Consistent production	Consistent production
Monophthongization of /a/	Consistent production	Consistent production	Consistent production	Consistent production	Consistent production
Weakening of /a/	Consistent production	Consistent production	Consistent production	Increasing weakening over time	U-shaped pattern (decreased then increased weakening)

they are part of, we may well end up missing the precise mechanisms that underlie that change. Communal changes are, after all, simply the aggregate of a number of individual changes, but the simple statistical fact is that aggregating individual data masks the behavior of outliers – and even the outliers are involved in the process of linguistic change. Since this study seems to show that any individual can apparently be an outlier (at least in a manner of speaking) at any point, we need to look at both individual and community data to really find explanations for processes of linguistic change.

In addition, to come around to more of a focus on language and aging, it seems that there is a tendency for those of us looking at variation over time to treat pretty much every change as a change over time that can be explained by either a change in communal norms over time or as age-grading.¹⁵ Well, what we have in this study are a number of individuals who appear to be going their own ways, not marching in lockstep with others' changes, or even caring about or reacting to them. (For the clearest case, consider JRC's and DOM's fronting of /u/, where they went in opposite directions even though one might have expected them to behave very similarly.) Basically, it turns out that those of us looking at the progress of linguistic changes are unable to really account for linguistic variation at an individual level yet, which has implications for variationist sociolinguistics as well as the study of both aging and language more generally.

For variationists, we lack a baseline for finding out which linguistic changes are related to aging and which are not. We simply do not have enough data about individual behaviors to be able to make such generalizations. There is, however, one thing that we can say with surety: individuals vary over the course of their adult lifespans, and this *intraindividual* variation is both real and large. Therefore, we need to get a deeper understanding of what precisely is going on with that as we work to figure out what linguistic changes might be related to aging or not – and to do this, we must look at individuals' behaviors as the behaviors of individuals, and not only as members of a larger community defined in terms of age (or region, or social class, or similar labels).

More generally, this has implications for the study of coping processes and their importance in relation to both language and aging. As mentioned earlier, the vast majority of studies on coping processes as they relate to linguistic behavior focus on the effects of age-related pathologies, sometimes in the context of how those who have suffered pathologies compare to those who have not. However, here we find individuals making large changes in their phonetic production, each according to their own pattern. Though the

possibility must remain speculation at this point, it is possible that what we see here is a sort of “everyday” coping. In other words, each of us is faced with assorted social pressures that we may or may not react to in a number of different ways, for instance by altering our linguistic production, just as coping processes (as normally understood) involve altering one’s behavior in reaction to major pressures. This means that the differences in behavioral trajectories exhibited by the speakers in this study could actually be the result of subtly different social pressures faced by each of them, resulting in different methods of “coping” linguistically.

Such a way of thinking about coping might require us to rethink our understanding of coping processes somewhat, since it may be that the different sorts of coping that life events may trigger are actually differences of degree, rather than type. However, it is already known that individuals who do not face linguistic impairments have access to a large array of potential coping mechanisms (see, for example, Laures-Gore et al. 2007), so this might not be too much of a stretch.

This leads back to an issue with current variationist methodology: variationists have generally considered age-related changes in linguistic behavior to be the result of a mechanical set of processes, instead of the result of what is often a largely social process. Studies of aging have found, again and again, that much of what we call “aging” is not simply the passage of time, but actually a complex interplay of time along with social and contextual changes. In order to be able to explain the effects of aging on language using a quantitative, variationist paradigm, we need to retool our assumptions as well as some of our methodologies to be able to deal with aging as something that is not neatly scalar.

At some level, though, all of this might be read as somewhat distressing. This is a finding that says that, even after all of the data that has been presented here, we do not know precisely what is going on when it comes to language change and aging. This is the case even though aging is a common part of the human experience, and so one might expect that we would have a better idea about it by now. However, having identified this gap in our understanding, we can move to close it. Then, once we get to that point, we will know that what we claim are the linguistic correlates of aging really are related to aging and not to something that we simply interpret as aging in the absence of any other perceived possibilities – and that surety will put us in a very strong position to make better suggestions about what needs to be done to deal with the linguistic effects of aging, whatever we discover they actually are.

Notes

1. Since it is well-known that individuals are linguistically unstable during adolescence (see Eckert 1989; Mendoza-Denton 1997, among several others), it is generally recognized that this assumed stability is limited to post-adolescent life.
2. Studies such as this that focus so intensely on individuals rather than communities are unusual in sociolinguistics and dialectology, but not unheard of. Perhaps the most famous such study is Hindle's (1979) study of one speaker in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.
3. The parts that were not analyzed include songs, prayers, and administrative reports.
4. For diphthongal tokens of /æ/, the values from the nucleus were used.
5. As a sidebar, this means that pre-obstruent /æ/ was used to measure the relative position of other vowels and was also the subject of analysis; this did not cause a problem for this study.
6. The fact that these speeches were given without a survey instrument to guide them means that some variables that might be of interest in some speech communities cannot be investigated using this type of archive, because they are usually rare in natural speech (such as, for example, the diphthong /ɔɪ/ in English).
7. Dealing with vowel production in terms of relative height or backness is not necessarily a frequently used method, but it has the advantage of eliminating the need for frequency normalization, and thus eliminating the potential errors that normalization can introduce.
8. JRC's degree of pre-nasal /æ/ raising in 1950 might be expected to be a significant difference from his production of pre-obstruent /æ/, but this apparent difference is actually attributable to a couple of extremely raised outliers, and so turns out not to be statistically significant.
9. LGR's 1970 results may look like a sizable drop in pre-nasal /æ/-raising at first glance, but it is a statistically insignificant reduction.
10. It would be tempting to try to attribute this to some artifact of the recording process in that year, except that MEP does not show greater fronting in 1950 than in some other years, and LGR's rate of fronting in 1950 is lower than in 1960.
11. Beginning in 1933 or 1934, depending on how one defines "highest level" for this organization.
12. Previous studies of other speech communities have found that /aɪ/-monophthongization is influenced by both following sound and following syllabicity (Bowie 2001; Hazen 2000). However, an analysis of the tokens of /aɪ/ used in this study found that they were balanced for following sound and syllabicity across speakers and years, and so such influences could be safely ignored for the present.

13. Due to the way weakened glides are generally defined, the chart of weakened glide realizations in Figure 7 necessarily includes all of the fully monophthongized forms included in Figure 6, as well.
14. JRC and DOM actually appear similar to each other in Table 3, but the reader is reminded that they show differences that are not reflected here – recall, for example, that their pattern of /u/-fronting is significantly different (as is visible in Figure 3), despite its description in this section.
15. I should note that this sort of reading appears repeatedly across the literature, whether the researchers use apparent time or real time approaches – and I am quite as guilty of it as everyone else.

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Chapter 3

Multiple identities of elderly Dutch-Australians

Ingrid Seebus

1. Introduction

This chapter focuses on the dynamic, social and cultural construction of elderly identity in a multilingual migrant context. More specifically, the paper explores what it means to be an elderly bilingual and bicultural Dutch-Australian. How do age identities intersect with the bilingual, bicultural, and in some cases, religious identities of elderly Dutch-Australians? And how are these multiple identities discursively constructed in bilingual life narratives? To date, the field of multilingualism appears to have paid little attention to the social and cultural construction of age identity. Indeed, as de Bot and Makoni (2005) point out, there is relatively little research on multilingualism and aging at all.

An oft-cited potential language issue facing elderly bilinguals in a migrant context such as Australia, is that of language reversion (i.e. losing one's second language skills and reverting back to one's first language). Although there is limited empirical research to support this phenomenon, the notion of language reversion has become part of the public discourse surrounding older migrants in Australia, and was instrumental in establishing some retirement communities for elderly Dutch-Australians.

In establishing an anti-agist paradigm, Coupland et al. (1991) argued that in regard to the interpretation of elderly talk, diachrony and decrement need to be seen as "themes in its constitution, and not as premisses for its interpretation" (1991: 5). The discourse of language reversion, could be described to some extent as the thematization of decrement in the talk of elderly migrant bilinguals.

The discourse of language reversion also raises some interesting issues for older Dutch people in Australia. Dutch-Australians earned the title of "model" or "invisible" migrant in the Australian public discourse because of the group's strong language shift to English in the home. Consequently, the "model" migrant identity has become an important feature of the group's bicultural identity. At the same time, Dutch-Australians who founded the

Christian Reformed Churches of Australia (CRCA) have always stressed the church's Australian identity despite their own Dutch cultural background, and the church's origins in Dutch Calvinism.

A number of retirement villages have been established around Australia to address some of the needs of older Dutch-Australians, and this study draws on two such villages. One (village D) is Dutch-specific, and virtually all of its residents are Dutch-born. The second (village R) was established by the CRCA. The village itself is non-denominational Christian, and approximately fifty percent of its residents are Dutch-born members of the CRCA. For residents of village D the notion of the "model" migrant is somewhat challenged by the village's overtly Dutch-ethnic character and the frequent use of spoken Dutch. The high concentration of Dutch-born residents at village R gives it a strong Dutch tinge.

This chapter aims to facilitate an understanding of how elderly Dutch-Australians residents negotiate their own age identities in the context of wider public discourses of the "model" migrant, language reversion, and, for some, the religious identity of the CRCA. It also examines the construction of age identity in relation to the cultural, religious and linguistic ideologies of the respective retirement communities.

The findings presented here are drawn from a larger qualitative PhD study. Discourse analysis and positioning theory (Hollway 1984; Davies and Harré 1990; van Langenhove and Harré 1999) will be used to analyse a series of five extracts taken from life narratives interviews.

In the next section of this chapter, the socio-cultural context of the participants will be briefly outlined. This will be followed by a description of the retirement villages and their residents. The methodology and data analysis will then be explained before an analysis of five extracts is given.

2. Socio-cultural context

The majority of Dutch migrants to Australia arrived in the 1950s as part of the post-World War Two mass-migration scheme initiated by Australia. This migration wave was relatively short-lived with migration numbers from the Netherlands peaking in 1952 with 15,828 and dropping significantly in the 1960s (Blauw 2006: 171). Within the space of just over a decade, the Dutch-Australian community represented a sizeable group reaching its peak in 1961 with 102,134 (i.e. 5.7 percent of the total overseas-born population). By 2001

this figure was down to 83,324 (i.e. 2 percent of the total overseas-born population) (Young 2006: 278). At the time of the 1976 Census, the first Australian Census to collect data on languages used in the home, Dutch was the sixth most widely-spoken language (Clyne 1991: 38). By 1996 it had dropped to 15th position and in 2001 to 17th (Clyne and Kipp 2006: 13).

The Dutch arrived in Australia at a time when assimilation was still official policy in regard to migrants (Clyne 1991: 16). The call for migrants to Australia to assimilate was also strongly endorsed by the Dutch government (Overberg 1981; Elich 1985). Migration was actively supported by the Dutch government as it was seen as a solution to the Netherlands overpopulation problem after the war (Hofstede 1964). This means that Dutch-Australians were receiving a twofold assimilation message, that is, from both their old and new homelands. It was not until the 1970s that Australia replaced its assimilation policies with multicultural policies and Australia came to identify itself as “an independent multicultural nation in which people, languages and cultures from all over the world have a legitimate place” (Clyne 2003: 17). Since the 1990s there has been a shift in Australian multicultural policies towards an emphasis on the *economic* advantages of cultural and linguistic diversity (Clyne 2003: 18). This has led to languages of economic value to Australia receiving precedence over those which hold only heritage significance in Australia. Nevertheless, there is “relatively strong” ongoing commitment for multiculturalism and multilingualism in Australia (Clyne 2003: 19).

The post-war vintage of Dutch-Australians acquired a “model” or “invisible” migrant image for appearing to embrace assimilationist ideology. The Dutch were a preferred migrant group when Australia started seeking migrants from outside Britain (Walker-Birckhead 1995: 64). Peters (2004) has argued that “Anglo-conformity” or assimilation was a means by which the Dutch could maintain this preferred identity in Australia (2004: 102). However, there seems to be some ambiguity as to what exactly assimilation has meant for Dutch-Australians. Cahill (2006) has argued that the strategy of the Dutch was one of accommodation rather than assimilation “. . . because the Dutch have been as much Dutch as they wanted to be” (Cahill 2006: 222).

The notion that the Dutch completely assimilated into Australian society thereby abandoning their Dutch culture and language altogether is not supported by the literature. Clyne (1977a) found that although the Dutch were slow to establish clubs after their arrival in Australia, by the 1970s there were over 20 clubs in Victoria alone. Many reported using equal amounts of Dutch and English (Clyne 1977a). This suggests that while the Dutch wore a public

face of assimilation, in private Dutch culture was maintained leading some social scientists to call the Dutch a “closet culture” (Peters 2004: 102).

The numeric strength of the Dutch has not resulted in strong language maintenance for the group as mentioned earlier (Clyne 1991: 88). Language shift to English has played a large role in the discourse of the “model” migrant. Since 1976, the Dutch have consistently demonstrated the strongest shift to English of all migrant groups in Australia (Clyne and Pauwels 1997: 35). Based on the 2001 Census, Clyne and Kipp (2002) reported that 62.6 percent of the first generation Dutch-Australians had shifted to using English only in the home, making it again the group with the highest shift of those reported (2002: 33). The 2001 Census elicitation does not make it possible to estimate language shift among the second generation (Kipp and Clyne 2003: 36). However, in the 1996 Census, the shift for the second generation was already very high at 95 percent (Clyne and Kipp 1997: 495). The Dutch have also traditionally shown a high level of confidence in their English-language proficiency. In the 2001 Census just over 96 percent of all Dutch-Australians felt they spoke English “well” or “very well”. Even in the oldest age category (i.e. 65+) 94.2 percent felt they spoke English “well” or “very well” (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2001).

A number of factors have been identified for the strong language shift by the group as a whole. These are summarized by Clyne and Pauwels (1997) as: a high rate of exogamy; cultural and linguistic similarities with the dominant Anglo-Australian group; the Dutch language is not a core value for the group; the socio-political climate in Australia at the time of migration; and the sociolinguistic background of some Dutch migrants, namely coming from a diglossic situation in the Netherlands (1997: 40).

Even Dutch-Australians who did maintain their mother tongue contributed to the Dutch “model” migrant discourse by adhering to what Kuiper (2004) has called the “earshot norm”. This is a social norm by which minority language speakers feel inhibited from using their minority language within the earshot of majority language speakers. In other words, Dutch-Australians feel they can only use Dutch when non-Dutch speakers cannot hear them. So-called “language sanctuaries”, where the earshot norm does not apply, are an individual’s home, or a Dutch-Australian club. Kuiper’s research is based on the Dutch in New Zealand, but the norm can be equally well applied to the language behavior of the Dutch in the Australian context.

Most studies on Dutch-Australians have focused on the post-World War Two vintage. However, there is some anecdotal evidence to suggest that more recent vintages of Dutch-Australians are showing greater levels of interest in

maintaining their mother tongue than the earlier vintages. In the Melbourne area alone, three children's playgroups have been established in recent times.

It has been suggested that as one ages, there is an increasing use of and attachment to the mother tongue. Given that the "model" migrant image is an important part of collective Dutch-Australian identity, how does elderly identity mediate this discourse? Language has played an important role in the establishment of Dutch-specific villages as language reversion to the mother tongue is cited as a possibility for elderly migrants (Clyne and Pauwels 1997; Grüter and Stracke 1995). While language reversion is an oft-cited phenomenon, especially among those who work with the elderly (Rowland 2006), there is very little empirical evidence at this stage to support this and so the possible extent of the phenomenon is also unknown (Rowland 2006). The lack of research is no doubt at least partly due to the fact that longitudinal studies involving language reversion are very difficult to carry out. The need to ascertain the level of language proficiency with which the individual started out is particularly problematic (Clyne 1991: 160; Fase, Jaspaert and Kroon 1992: 8).

Two quasi-longitudinal studies on language reversion among Dutch-Australians spanning a 16-year period were carried out by de Bot and Clyne (1989, 1994). The studies provide some evidence of language reversion "but not enough to show any clear cut tendencies" (Clyne 2006: 347). De Bot and Clyne (1989) have suggested that language reversion does not necessarily occur in every individual and that reaching a "critical threshold" of second language (L2) proficiency in Neisser's (1984) terms makes participants relatively immune to attrition. The proficiency level is not related to a specific amount of knowledge, but a point at which the L2 "has become a gestalt" (de Bot and Clyne 1989: 174). Clyne (1977b: 48) has identified some possible social factors for why language reversion sometimes occurs, such as retirement, the absence of children and the reduced need for the L2 (in this case English).

3. The retirement villages and their residents

From a social perspective, moving into a retirement village could be described as an act of elderly identity. In the context of this study, this is also how elderly is defined. The biological age of participants spans two decades with the youngest aged 63 and the oldest 85 although both villages were also home to 90-year old residents. Both villages constitute independent living,

which means that residents are deemed to be cognitively healthy. There are minimal institutional support services and neither village has staff members on site although all units are fitted with emergency alarms. There are no communal meals, and services such as house cleaning are arranged individually.

All of the 34 participants in the study were bilingual in Dutch and English. Only two participants (a married couple) from village D reported that they felt their English-language skills had deteriorated in their later years, that is, after they retired. However, their English-language skills were strong enough to be able to function independently outside of the village, they continued following English-medium television and newspapers and the, albeit, limited English used during the interview did not include uncontrolled switching between Dutch and English as has been identified in some elderly Dutch-Australian bilinguals (Clyne 1977b). Conversely, one participant from village R felt that her Dutch-language skills were so poor that they would inhibit the interview, and requested that it be conducted in English.

The language of communication for group activities reflects the cultural and linguistic orientation of the respective village: at village D the language is Dutch, while at village R it is English. As mentioned earlier, village R is also home to non-Dutch speakers. However, the CRCA church (which established the village) has from its inception focused on being an Australian rather than an ethnic church. This is despite its origins in Dutch Calvinism. Language played an important part in the de-ethnicising of the church which made a rapid shift to English for church services in the early years. However, Pauwels (1980: 62) has also pointed out that extensive contact within the community facilitated language maintenance on a social level. The interrelationship between cultural and religious identities for Dutch members of the CRCA church is a complex one with Bouma (1995) arguing that for some members “. . . being Reformed is the same as being Dutch . . . it is a more important part of their heritage than language . . .” (1995: 78).

4. Data collection and analysis

Against the socio-cultural background described above, the paper examines how elderly identities are constructed in a series of five extracts taken from my PhD study. Data collection for the PhD study included bilingual individual life narratives, bilingual semi-naturalistic group conversations and participant observation. The extracts presented here are drawn from the life narrative interviews. These were conducted as semi-structured interviews, in

which the theme of migration played a pivotal role. The interviews were initiated in Dutch, but respondents were free to code-switch to English. The interviews also included sociolinguistic data in regard to language use patterns across the lifespan. A total of 34 residents were interviewed of which 18 were from village D and 16 from village R. The sample included 13 females from each village creating a female dominance across the sample. However, this also reflected the unequal gender distribution at both villages.

Two key themes that arose during the interviews related to the notion of the “model” migrant discourse and the discourse of language reversion. The notion of the “model” migrant arose in relation to discussions around the assimilation climate prevalent when the Dutch migrated. The notion of language reversion was a recurring theme in discussions on the participants’ bilingualism.

The aim of the analysis here is to explore how, within the context of life narratives, participants “position” themselves in relation to the two key public discourses discussed earlier; namely the discourses surrounding the Dutch as “model” migrants and the notion of language reversion. It also explores the role religious identity can play in this positioning.

The use of “position” refers to positioning theory as first introduced by Hollway (1984), and further developed by Davies and Harré (1990) and van Langenhove and Harré (1993, 1999; see also Okulska this volume). Van Langenhove and Harré (1993) describe positioning as a metaphor for how people locate themselves in conversation (1993: 83). As such, a position is “similar to but a more dynamic concept than role” (van Langenhove and Harré 1999: 14). In other words,

[t]he act of positioning thus refers to the assignment of fluid “parts” or “roles” to speakers in the discursive construction of personal stories that make a person’s actions intelligible and relatively determinate as social acts. (van Langenhove and Harré 1999: 17)

The assignment of a part or a position effectively brings with it certain rights and obligations about what remarks an individual can make. Van Langenhove and Harré (1999) cite as an example a conversation between a teacher and pupil. In this conversation the rights of each individual to make certain comments differs based on their positions in relation to each other.

Van Langenhove and Harré also point out that one can position oneself or be positioned (1999: 17). Indeed individuals can position themselves in relation to others, but also in relation to dominant discourses. They can also be

positioned by dominant discourses such as those constructed by “historical, socio-cultural forces” (de Fina, Schiffrin and Bamberg 2006: 7). In the context of this study the public discourse which positions Dutch-Australians as “model” migrants obliges Dutch-Australians to conform to the language behaviour described earlier, that is, speaking English in public. At the same time, the discourse of language reversion positions elderly bilinguals as having difficulty speaking English and so affords them the right to speak Dutch in public. The language reversion discourse effectively means that age identities have mediated the “model” migrant identity. In other words, the “model” migrant discourse does not apply to the elderly. The focus of the analysis in this paper is on how participants construct their own individual identities as elderly bilingual, Dutch-Australians in relation to the positions made available by these discourses. The relationship between religious identities and the discourse of language reversion for participants from village R is also explored in the final extract, extract (5).

Although each of the five extracts represents only one speaker, they were specifically selected because they represent commonly-shared identities at their respective villages. The participant code numbers at the beginning of each extract is prefaced by either the letter “D” or “R” to indicate whether they came from village D or village R.

5. Village D

5.1. Extract (1): “Model” migrant

In this first extract, the participant from village D is responding to a question on whether she had ever been told to forget the Dutch language or the Netherlands, something a previous couple from village D had voluntarily referred to. Like many other participants, D16 did not actively maintain the Dutch language in the home even though some of her children were born in the Netherlands.¹

(1) **Int:** *Heeft iemand ooit tegen u gezegd dat u Nederlands moet vergeten, dat u Nederland moet vergeten omdat u nu in Australië zit en –*

D16: *No, nee. Ik kan niet zeggen dat ze dat ooit gezegd hebben. Ze hebben wel gezegd dat je je aan moet passen wat ik denk dat – dat heel goed is voor de – een hele hoop mensen hier op moment – je woont hier in Australië, je moet je aanpassen aan het land, hè? En wij zijn eig –*

eigenlijk de Hollanders en de Duitsers ook nog wel een beetje die zich eigenlijk wel aanpassen. Maar er zijn een hele hoop niet, isn't it?
 <laughs> *Maar ik vind niet dat ze mij pressure op gezet hebben, nee.*

[Int: Has anyone ever said to you that you have to forget Dutch, that you have to forget the Netherlands because you are now in Australia –

D16: *No, no. I can't say that they ever said that. They did say that you have to adapt which I think that – that is very good for the – a lot of people here at the moment – you live here in Australia, you have to adapt to the country, don't you? And we are real – really the Dutch and the Germans too a little, who do actually adapt. But there are a lot who don't, isn't it?*
 <laughs> *But I don't think they put pressure on me, no.]*

The formulation of the question, i.e. forgetting the Netherlands and the Dutch language is deliberately strongly worded in assimilationist terms. D16 rejects the formulation, in favour of *zich aanpassen* ('adapting oneself'). This term was commonly used by participants and perhaps carries a weaker sense of having to lose one's cultural identity than do such verbs as assimilating, integrating or the notion of forgetting one's heritage. This offers support for Cahill's (2006) comments that the Dutch were in fact "accommodationists" rather than "assimilationists".

D16 also denies ever feeling "pressure" to adapt (*aanpassen*), indicating that she believes it is the obligation of migrants to do so. She contrasts the Dutch and Germans with other migrant groups who in her view do not adapt, thereby creating a distinction between the Dutch and Germans on the one hand, and "other" migrants on the other. This positions the Dutch and Germans in a more positive light and is a covert reference to the "model" migrant image.

The notion of what it means to adapt is unclear particularly in the context of living in a Dutch retirement village where the language of communication in public is Dutch. In describing the Dutch as a migrant group who adapt, she uses the present tense *wij zijn* ('we are') signalling an ongoing claim to this status. Moreover, she uses the first person plural suggesting that she sees no conflict between residing in a Dutch-oriented village and the notion of adapting. This could be because in the context of a life story her present bicultural identity is at least in part drawn from her bicultural identity as a Dutch-Australian active in the wider community before she moved into the village.

In a study looking at how residents were able to manage their elderly identities within an Israeli sheltered housing project, Gamliel and Hazan (2006) argued that participants "drew advantages from their previous roles and

statuses” (2006: 355). Gamliel and Hazan describe the “language of old age” at the sheltered housing project as an

“elaborate” code of communication that reproduced the symbolic meaning of past experiences, turning them into symbolic capital that could be understood by members and outsiders. By drawing on midlife resources, such as roles and statuses, the elderly residents constructed a zone in which continuity with the past was symbolically maintained. (Gamliel and Hazan 2006: 367)

An example of the roles and statuses that Gamliel and Hazan’s participants used was previous career positions. Applied to this study, the notion of “symbolic capital” could be used to refer to “model” migrant status. As such D16 could be said to be drawing on the group’s symbolic capital as “model” migrants in the same way as Gamliel and Hazan’s participants used their previous roles and status in terms of their careers.

5.2. *Extract (2): Language reversion*

In this second extract from village D, the participant evokes the discourse of language reversion which for this resident is a marker of elderly identity:

- (2) **D11:** *... Als iemand Engels gaat staan praten tegen ons, dan ben ik geïrriteerd. ... Want dit is een Nederlands dorp. Uh het is wel in Australië, maar het is een Nederlands dorp. En dat zijn Nederlandse ouderen. En Nederlandse ouderen die, het is algemeen bekend, die langzamerhand verliezen ze hun Engels. Die gaan ze vergeten. En ze willen weer graag hun moedertaal spreken. En het is waarschijnlijk in alle talen zo. En uh dat is wel bekend. Maar als iemand hier Engels gaat praten, dan dan dat ligt mij niet.*

[D11: ... If someone stands there speaking English to us, then I get irritated. ... Because this is a Dutch village. Uh it is in Australia, but it is a Dutch village. And those are old Dutch people. And old Dutch people they, it is common knowledge, they slowly forget their English. They start to forget it. And they really want to speak their mother tongue again. And it is probably the same in all languages. And uh that is well known. But if someone speaks English here, then then I don’t like it.]

The extract begins with the participant signalling his personal irritation about the use of English in the village because of the village’s collective Dutch

ethnic identity. He positions himself as a member of the village community, aligning with its Dutch ethnic identity by using the first person pronoun *ons* ('us') and *ik* ('I') and the demonstrative pronoun *dit* ('this'). The use of the demonstrative pronoun *dit* ('this') also suggests closeness. Although he acknowledges that the geographic location of the village is Australia, he declares the village itself to be Dutch, making the use of the Dutch language a normative choice. In so doing, the speaker effectively declares the village a Dutch language sanctuary in Kuiper's (2004) terms. The speaker also implies that an earshot norm applies in the village. But as it is now Dutch-Australians who are the majority ethnic group, the language which should not be heard within their earshot is English.

In the next utterance *En dat zijn Nederlandse ouderen* ('and those are Dutch old people') the deixis changes. The participant no longer uses an inclusive first person plural pronoun to refer to the village residents but rather casts them as an out-group by using the demonstrative pronoun *dat* (in this case meaning 'those'). In this utterance the village residents are being categorized in terms of their age as well as ethnic identities, *Nederlandse ouderen* ('Dutch old people'). Since the participant did identify with the village in the previous utterance regarding the village's ethnic identity, it can be assumed that it is the elderly age category that he wishes to distance himself from. This change in alignment suggests that the participants' definition of elderly is different from the one used by many in the wider community who would identify all the residents of the retirement community as elderly on the basis of their biological age (generally over 65) or their status (as retirees). Indeed, D11 himself was one of the older participants in the study at age 81.

The strategy of identifying with the village's ethnic but not its elderly identity was a recurring theme across the interviews at village D. In a retirement community with no particular group identity or affiliation, it is possible that what the residents have in common is only their elderly status. However, at village D the residents' shared ethnic background provides them with an important identity on which to base their group identity.

The elderly category that the speaker D11 has evoked here relates to the notion of language reversion. The argument is presented in factual terms by being cast as an assertion. The participant offers no experience of having personally witnessed language reversion. However, he reinforces the existence of the phenomenon of language reversion by twice referring to it as common knowledge . . . *het is algemeen bekend* . . . *dat is wel bekend* ('. . . it is common knowledge . . . that is well-known'). It would seem that language reversion is being presented as a cognitive rather than a social issue and an

inevitable part of being an elderly bilingual. As such it is a deterministic argument in which the bilingual is being positioned as lacking any agency in regard to its onset.

The way in which elderliness is being associated here with declining L2 and cognitive skills is similar to the way in which Coupland et al. (1991) noted that some people associate “later life with declining health” something which the authors then refer to as a “decremental myth” (1991: 61). In other words, there is an expectation by some that decremental changes are a natural part of the aging process (Coupland et al. 1991).

The discourse of language reversion positions the individual as reverting back to the mother tongue, that is, the language of childhood and one’s early years. This could be regarded as evoking the conceptualization of the “inverted-U model”, a life course metaphor which implies that

... elderly linguistic and other behaviours are in some specific respects not only moving towards lower levels of competence but moving *back* to the levels and types of behaviour associated with the early years of life. (Coupland et al. 1991: 12)

In the extract being discussed here, it is interesting that in the context of language reversion, the participant aligns the Dutch with other migrant groups. This is at odds with the positioning of the Dutch in the first extract, where they were contrasted with other ethnic groups and so cast as “model” migrants. In other words, it could be argued that the group’s “model” migrant identities are mediated by their elderly identities.

In this extract the speaker ends by returning to the point with which he began, namely his dislike of an anonymous *iemand* (‘someone’) using English in the village. In both these utterances it is unclear to whom this refers. Presumably it means a Dutch-English bilingual since the speaker neutrally reported elsewhere in the interview that he did use English with his children and grandchildren. Moreover, he made a point of maintaining his English by reading English-language newspapers and watching English-language news.

In addition to not identifying with the *Nederlandse ouderen* (‘Dutch old people’), who have supposedly reverted to Dutch, the speaker makes no reference to any English-language problems of his own. Elsewhere he does report that his Dutch language skills were stronger, but his English-language skills were certainly adequate to actively take part in the village’s annual general meeting with management staff which was conducted in English. His irritation then would seem to be based on notions of solidarity with those elderly Dutch who have lost their English skills and to whom it would thus

be an affront to speak English. As such he shows a high level of solidarity and empathy with his age and ethnic cohort. At the same time, those who do not use Dutch are positioned as not showing solidarity towards the group, and the implication is that somehow they are denying their ethnic identity.

However, D11, like most of the participants, did not identify who these supposed Dutch language reverts were. Nor did I come across many participants who reported spoken English-language difficulties as indicated in section 3 above. So when D11 refers to *Nederlandse ouderen* ('Dutch old people') it is unclear who he means. It may well be that D11's irritation regarding language use in the village may simply be related to a Dutch language preference but that declaring a preference for speaking Dutch may be interpreted as being at odds with the "model" migrant identity. However, as bilinguals are positioned as having no agency in relation to language reversion, declaring the village a language sanctuary on the basis of a cognitive issue such as language reversion, mitigates the threat to the group's "model" migrant status within the broader Australian community.

6. Village R

The following three extracts are taken from interviews with participants at village R.

6.1. Extract (3): "Model" migrant

In this next extract the participant R13 is talking about language use in the village. As mentioned earlier, the language of communication in the public sphere of village R is English because of the mixed ethnic background of the residents. Because of this, participant R13 dislikes using Dutch in the village:

- (3) **R13:** ... *ik hou daar niet van om het te doen* [[i.e. speaking Dutch]] ... *omdat daar andere mensen altijd bij zijn en omheen lopen – because ze vinden het niet prettig, de mensen die geen Hollands kennen, zie? En dat heb je ook in een village – als wij hier Hollands gaan spreken, wel de balance gaat out of – out of balanc – out of balance. Ze vinden het niet prettig als we Hollands – zie donderdags hebben we die koffiemorgen en daar zijn daar die praten altijd Hollands en dan praten ze ook Hollands terug en dan zitten ze* [[i.e. the non-Dutch speakers]] *zo te kijken. Ze kunnen het niet verstaan. Het is niet beleefd. En we zitten in*

een anders zijn land. Laten we dan maar eerlijk zijn. Ook al zijn we hier nou geboren en getogen om het zo te zeggen. Het is still not the land of our birth.

[R13: . . . I don't like doing it. [[i.e. speaking Dutch]] . . . because there are always other people with you and walking around you – *because* they don't like it, the people who don't speak Dutch, see? And you have that too in a *village* – if we go and speak Dutch here, well the *balance* goes *out of* – *out of balanc* – *out of balance*. They don't like it if we – see on Thursdays we have the coffee morning and there are some who always speak Dutch and then they respond in Dutch too and then they [[i.e. the non-Dutch speakers]] sit there looking at them. They can't understand it. It is not polite. And we are in another person's country. Let's be honest. Even though we are born and bred here, so to speak, it is *still not the land of our birth*.]

The extract illustrates that the language norms operating in village R reflect ongoing support for Australia's assimilationist ideology of the 1950s and so do not acknowledge the change to multicultural ideology. The participant continues to endorse the notion of Kuiper's (2004) "earshot norm", that is, that Dutch should not be spoken in the public realm of the village. This positions the Dutch speakers as a minority language group even though within the context of the village they are in fact the largest ethnic group. Their adherence to the earshot norm effectively positions the Dutch as continuing to behave as "model" migrants.

The non-Dutch speakers (i.e. the vast majority of whom are Anglo-Australians) are positioned as disliking the use of Dutch making the use of Dutch impolite. In view of this, the use of Dutch becomes potentially divisive within the village. The participant R13 had lived over two-thirds of her life in Australia. Nevertheless, she positions Dutch-Australians as lacking ownership of Australia which is *een anders zijn land* ('another person's country'). Based on her argument, it is only being born in Australia which gives an individual ownership of Australia.

Of course, the suppression of bilingual identities may also stem from the fact that the village was established on the basis of religious rather than ethnic identity. As mentioned earlier, the use of English forms an important part of the CRCA's identity as a non-ethnic church. However, what is interesting is that unlike in extract (2) from village D, in this extract elderly identities do not mediate the residents' ethnic identities. In other words, R13 makes no concessions at all to the elderly on the basis of language reversion. In fact,

she criticises those who inadvertently speak Dutch in public as impolite rather than suggesting that they may have English-language difficulties. As such she positions the Dutch-Australians in her village as having agency in regard to their ongoing bilingual language use. This shows that the bilingual identities being constructed here are different from those being constructed at village D.

Although the focus of this chapter is on the discursive construction of elderly identity, it is perhaps interesting to note that in terms of biological age only a couple of years separate speakers D11 (81) and R13 (79) and both participants were among the first residents to move into their respective villages. Their ages measured in terms of migration and life experiences have been very different.

6.2. Extract (4): Language reversion

In extract (4), participant R7 takes up the theme of language reversion although she too takes a different position to that of D11 in extract (2). Participant R7 expresses uncertainty about language reversion which she describes as a possibility rather than an absolute:

(4) **R7:** . . . *Dus we weten niet wat er met onze mind gaat gebeuren. Maar het – ik heb wel een paar keer gezegd hier, ik wil wel mijn Engels zo veel mogelijk bijhouden en niet maar overal zo tegen iedereen Hollands praten omdat – dan kun je je Engels nog wel verliezen als je ouder wordt. En dat moet natuurlijk niet, met al die Australische in-laws.*

[**R7:** . . . So we don't know what is going to happen to our *minds*. But it – I have said a few times that I want to keep up my English as much as possible and not just speak Dutch to everyone because – then you can lose your English when you get older. And that must not happen of course, with all those Australian *in-laws*.]

R7 also distances herself from a direct reference to an elderly category by using the second person pronoun *je* ('you') (i.e. *als je ouder wordt* 'when you get older'). Although R7 does allude to language reversion as being a cognitive matter, *we weten niet wat er met onze mind gaat gebeuren* ('we don't know what will happen to our minds'), she also treats it as a social issue which can be overcome by practising her English-language skills. This also positions R7 as having agency in relation to her bilingual skills. As such, the village's choice of English as the dominant language of communication is

treated as having instrumental value and serving as a source of English-language maintenance.

The importance of not losing one's English is also explained in terms of her Australian in-laws who do not speak Dutch. A loss of English skills on the part of R7 would effectively cut off communication with them. Raising this issue of potential alienation in the family through language positions the speaker as having a strong orientation towards the family. This was also a recurring theme at village R.

6.3. *Extract (5): Elderly and religious identities*

In this final extract, the focus moves to the construction of religious identity and how these can be mediated by elderly identity for a participant from village R who was also a CRCA church member. In the following extract R1 talks about the church's current services which as mentioned earlier, are now held in English:

- (5) **R1:** *Ik vind het* [[i.e. the church service]] *sometimes a pantomime. That doesn't sound nice doesn't it? Er is – Ik heb daar geen andere woord voor. Ik weet dat dat geen – maar ik noem 't een pantomime. Het – het is uh – en ik heb er moeite mee om het te aanvaarden maar ik aanvaard het wel maar ik vind waarom moet het nou zo overdaan worden? Daar is ook dat song 'Give me the old time religion' and that's me.*

...

Ze staan zo met hun handen omhoog – um doen ze nou in onze kerk ook of ze klappen. En daar doe ik niet aan mee. Ik erg mij daar niet aan dat ze het doen, maar ik ga daar niet staan klappen. Daar ben ik dan nou echt te oud Hollands voor. En maar ik heb het in Holland ook gezien dat het was anders. En het is hier allemaal veel ruime, veel losser wat in een zeker zin moet om de jongeren in de kerk te houden. Want als ze die ouderwetse kerkdiensten kregen dan kwamen ze helemaal niet meer.

- [R1: I find it [[i.e. the church service]] *sometimes a pantomime. That doesn't sound nice doesn't it?* There is – I have no other word for it. I know that that isn't – but I call it a *pantomine*. It – it is uh – and I have trouble accepting it but I do accept it but I think why does it have to be so overdone? There's also that song 'Give me the old time religion' and that's me.

...

They stand there with their hands in the air – um they do that now in our church too or they clap. And I don't join in. I'm not annoyed that they do it, but I'm not going to stand there clapping. I am too old Dutch for that. And but I've also seen that it was different in Holland. And here everything is more open and looser, which in a way it has to be to keep the youth in the church. Because if they had those old-fashioned church services then they wouldn't come at all any more.]

In this extract R1 constructs an elderly religious identity for herself using an explicit “age category label” in Coupland et al.'s (1991: 60) terms, that is she is *te oud Hollands* ('too old Dutch'). She also positions herself as elderly by aligning with a preference for “old time religion”. In both instances it is in relation to changes to the style of worship that R1 positions herself as elderly. She contrasts her preference for “old time religion” with the preference of the youth for a more charismatic approach. While the reference to *te oud Hollands* ('too old Dutch') suggests that she identifies with a more conservative form of Dutch Calvinism, probably the form which her vintage of Dutch migrants brought with them, she makes no comment on language use. It is the cultural rather than the linguistic aspects of the service that she dislikes. This preference for a more conservative form of worship was shared by other participants from village R. There is no indication that R1 has a growing preference for Dutch-language services as she grows older, and, indeed, none of the participants from village R indicated a growing preference for Dutch-language services either. Some even indicated a lack of interest in the annual Dutch Christmas service. No-one expressed concern about language reversion in relation to their own religious worship. Perhaps this reflects confidence that the church, which acted as an important source of English-language instruction in their early years, will also function as an important English-language maintenance institution in their later years.

R1's elderly identity also cuts across Australian-Dutch and Netherlands-Dutch cultural identities as the participant is aware that her preference for a conservative style of worship would position her as elderly in the Netherlands as well.

7. Summary and conclusion

The above extracts highlight the heterogeneity of elderly identity construction between the two villages. In other words, even when individuals share the same age cohort, ethnic and linguistic background, what it means to be an

elderly Dutch-Australian bilingual can differ, particularly when religious identity becomes a mediating factor.

The homogeneous ethnic identity of residents at village D enables the village to function as a Dutch-language sanctuary for the elderly, and consequently the use of Dutch to be an expression of Dutch ethnic identity. For village R, it is the religious identity of the village that encourages a mixed ethnic community. This in turn calls for the village's *lingua franca* to be English. Using English here could be argued to be an expression of Australian identity which is in keeping with the ideology of the CRCA church. As such, elderly cultural identity as performed through language use is partly driven by the language ideology of the respective village.

Residents from the two villages also evoke different constructions of elderly identity by aligning with the public discourse of the "model" migrant identity in different ways. For village D it is largely through drawing on the group's symbolic capital as "model" migrants within the wider community before moving into the village. Village R residents are able to position themselves as "model" migrants by continuing to practise the earshot norm in the village and to some degree continuing to suppress their bilingual and bicultural identities outside the privacy of their homes. Changes over the years from a migrant policy of assimilation to one of multiculturalism appear to have had limited impact on residents at village R. It may be that the group's strong desire to identify religiously as Australian has had a stronger impact on their cultural and linguistic identity than have advances in Australia's multicultural policies. Even as the group ages, religion continues to be a mediating factor.

Residents from both villages evoke the discourse of language reversion but again position themselves differently in relation to it. For village D, there is a deterministic view that language reversion is a cognitive matter over which the individual has no agency. In view of the limited language transmission to the second generation, the notion of language reversion highlights the need for solidarity within this age cohort. Village R residents are more likely to position themselves as having agency over the possible decline of their English-language skills, treating English-language practice as a possible deterrent. An English-language orientation is important for ongoing contact with the children.

Participants from both villages treat language reversion as a marker of elderly identity. Defining elderliness in terms of language reversion but not identifying personally with language reversion enables participants to distance themselves from the category of elderly. Since participants at village

R indicated such a strong level of agency in relation to their English-language skills, it is perhaps not surprising that they do not mention language reversion in regard to their church lives. Moreover, in the absence of Dutch services, English-language skills are an important part of their religious identity. Consequently, indicating a preference for English-language services aligns them with the Australian identity of the church. Elderly religious identity is expressed, however, through an alignment with old-time religion or a more conservative form of worship.

This paper has tried to highlight the complex interrelationship of identities for a particular group of elderly bilinguals. It has endeavoured to establish what it means to be elderly from the perspective of the individuals themselves. In focusing on elderly bilinguals, the paper has tried to give voice to a particularly interesting group who remain largely under-represented in either the area of language and aging, or in bilingualism studies. The area of aging bi- and multilinguals should be of increasing importance and interest as aging migrant populations around the world continue to grow.

Appendix

Transcription notation is as follows:

<i>Italics</i>	Dutch utterances
Non-italics	code-switches to English
< >	non-lexical phenomenon, e.g., laughing
–	utterance broken off
. . .	omission of part of text
[[]]	extra information to clarify textual ambiguities

Note

1. See Appendix for explanation of transcription symbols.

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Chapter 4

Narrative as snapshot: Glimpses into the past in Alzheimer's discourse

Heidi E. Hamilton

1. Introduction

Scholars who study everyday talk find that much of it is made up of narratives of personal experience; that is, people recount for others who will listen to what has happened to them. Sometimes these recounted events are as important as finding a new job, having a baby, or winning the lottery, but usually they take on the form of “throwaway” narratives (Polanyi 1981) about, say, a friend seen at lunch or a computer that crashed at work. Some researchers are interested in the ways in which stories¹ relate to the surrounding conversational interaction, examining how a narrative is sparked by verbal and non-verbal triggers in the immediate context (cf. what Jefferson 1978 calls “local occasioning”) as well as by cognitive connections between interlocutors (cf. Chafe 1994), and how the narrative is made sense of in upcoming conversation (cf. what Jefferson 1978 calls “sequential implicativeness”). Others are interested in the multiple ways in which audience members contribute linguistically and non-linguistically to the emergence of the narrative as well as the ways in which the narrator accommodates the telling to differing levels of interest and information on the part of the listeners (see Goodwin 1986). Still others are interested in the skillful way in which narrators make clear to their audience what the points of their narratives are, not only by relatively explicit means (such as saying *That was the craziest thing that ever happened to me!*), but also by deviating from “basic narrative syntax” (Labov 1972) by, for example, contrasting what did not happen to what did happen (e.g., *The train never came, so we ended up taking the bus.*), or by carefully crafting the orientation to time, space, people and activities (Labov 1997).

Standing on the shoulders of this foundational work on narrative, some linguists and discursive psychologists interested in the construction of identity in discourse have focused their attention on how people recount their stories, arguing that narrative choices can reveal much about how narrators

see themselves and how they wish to be seen by those listening to their stories (see especially de Fina et al. 2006). Bamberg (1997), for example, identifies three levels of positioning within the narrative: 1) positioning of figures in the storyworld vis-à-vis each other; 2) positioning of the narrator as related to the audience of the narrative; and 3) positioning of the narrator to self in answer to the question “Who am I?” In fact, in recent work, Bamberg (2004, to appear) has made the critical point that identity work is carried out not only within what he calls “big” stories, such as autobiographical or life stories, but also within “small” stories that are triggered by what might look to be relatively inconsequential everyday life. Schiffrin (1996) uses a powerful visual image, that of a “self-portrait”, to discuss this relationship:

Telling a story provides a self-portrait: a linguistic lens through which to discover peoples’ own (somewhat idealized) views of themselves as situated in a social structure. The verbalization and textual structure of a story . . . combines with its content, and with its local and global contexts of production, to provide a view of self that can be either challenged or validated by an audience. (Schiffrin 1996: 199)

Other narrative analysts have also related specific linguistic resources and choices to the construction of narrators’ identities. In their study of a woman suffering from agoraphobia, Capps and Ochs (1995) observed that a specific set of grammatical forms worked together to paint a “coherent portrait” of that individual as irrational and helpless. In my own examination of internet discussion list postings by individuals dealing with bone marrow transplantation (Hamilton 1998), I found that linguistic choices related to represented speech tended to support either a survivor’s or a victim’s identity in the recounting of physician–patient conflicts. In their analysis of topical talk among the elderly, Boden and Bielby (1986: 79) found that the situated conversational identities of conversationalists under study were achieved through “reference to, and relevance of, the past: ‘I am what I am now because of what I was/did/experienced.’”

If storytelling is both so prevalent in everyday talk and integrally related to the construction of the narrator’s identity, then it makes one wonder what the situation is in cases of severe chronic memory loss, as in Alzheimer’s disease. Discussions both within the scientific and lay literature related to Alzheimer’s disease speak of identity crises, loss of self, and profound changes in personality (cf. Cohen and Eisdorfer 1986; Kitwood 1988; Sabat and Harre 1992; and Shenk 2005). A Pulitzer Prize-winning poet, George Oppen, expressed this feeling most eloquently in the early stages of his dealings with Alzheimer’s

disease: "The worst is that one cannot recognize himself. There is a dead man with his name."²

Several studies over the past two decades have provided insight into personal narratives told by some individuals with Alzheimer's disease (see, for example, Obler 1980; Ramanathan 1994, 1995, 1997; Sabat 2001; Leibing and Scheinkman 2002; Davis ed. 2005; and Shenk 2005). When I first began to read this work, however, my own experiences with Alzheimer's disease prevented me from relating fully to it. The narratives excerpted in these studies were relatively well formed; problems had to do with the narrator becoming distracted, being verbose, or miscalculating the status of given and new information – i.e., problems generally identified with Alzheimer discourse. In stark contrast to these forays into the past, the conversational contributions by "Elsie" (pseudonym), the elderly woman who had been my conversational partner for the $4\frac{1}{2}$ years documented in Hamilton (1994), focused overwhelmingly on the here-and-now (see Appell et al. 1982; Obler 1981; Shindler et al. 1984 for discussions of this characterization of Alzheimer discourse). When Elsie referred to the past during our conversations, it was nearly always in a cryptic and vague way. I could not recall any full-fledged personal experience narratives being told even during the earliest of our conversations when Elsie was at the moderately severe stage of Alzheimer's disease – neither about the distant past nor about recent events. So when I became interested in identity construction related to Alzheimer's disease, I focused my efforts on examining the non-narrative discourse of our conversations (see Hamilton 1996), pointing to the linguistic subtlety that underlay fleeting and dynamically con-constructed shifts along a continuum from a relatively symmetrical relationship of friends to a more asymmetrical relationship of caregiver/care receiver. Ultimately, however, I could not shake the feeling that narrative, even in relatively advanced Alzheimer's disease, would be something both fascinating and potentially worthwhile to examine with a finer toothed comb. It is this challenge that I take up in this chapter.

In Section 2, I provide brief background information on the interrelationships between language and Alzheimer's disease and on five conversational interactions (total of 2 hours 39 minutes) that form the basis of my analysis; I also introduce the reader to Elsie. Section 3 then focuses on the relative amount of talk about the past across these conversations, drawing upon Chafe's (1994) discussion of discourse, consciousness and time. Section 4 distinguishes clauses that are part of short narratives from what I call "narrative traces", independent clauses that (seemingly) refer to the past, but are

surrounded by clauses that refer to the immediate context. Section 5 focuses more closely on the linguistic construction of the storyworld within each of the short narratives found in these conversations. The examination of the storyworld centers on Elsie's use of noun phrases and pronouns to reference people and objects in the story (Section 5.1), verbs to describe actions undertaken and states inhabited within the storyworld (Section 5.2), as well as spatial (Section 5.3) and temporal (Section 5.4) adverbs and prepositional phrases to anchor the story in space and time. Section 5.5 discusses the negative cumulative effect of deficiencies within each of these areas of reference on Elsie's identity construction, and suggests an alternative approach (drawing on Bakhtin 1981 and Agha 2005) to find identity clues in the discourse. In Section 6, I summarize the findings of the study and discuss implications for narrative analysis and Alzheimer's care.

But first, it is important to become acquainted with two of the short narratives told by Elsie. This familiarity will serve as a necessary backdrop for subsequent discussions and findings.

1.1. Short narrative 1: "That's why I came"

Just prior to the interaction represented in Excerpt (1), Elsie and I had been looking out of the picture windows across the front of her residential center. I had pointed to a church across the road and had asked Elsie whether she had ever been there. She asked for clarification and I reformulated what I had asked (see lines 1–2):

Excerpt (1)

- 1 Heidi: I was wondering if you had ever been there.
- 2 That's a Methodist church.
- 3 Elsie: Yes.
- 4 That's what ours ours is.
- 5 Yeah.
- 6 That's right.
- 7 *That's why I came when I . . . when there were groups that were making up one.*
- 8 Uh.
- 9 *I was anxious to see it and uh get it straightened out*
- 10 *and so . . . and so I did.*
- 11 Heidi: Mhm. And that's why you came here?
- 12 Elsie: *So I came here*
- 13 *and then I (used) different things working on them.*

- 14 So sometimes they go a long (road)
 15 or they come down in a hurry.
 16 Y'know, things like that.
 17 So there's a lot of things on.
 18 and uh what have they got on now today?

In the interaction represented in Excerpt (1), the focus on the church appeared to serve as a trigger for a short narrative. In lines 3–6, she seemed to recognize the church or indicate that she had indeed been there before; in line 7 then, she shifted tense from present to past (*That's why I came*), making a causal link between the church (or something it stands for) and an action of hers. She made no explicit spatial reference, although in the absence of such, it is likely that the spatial reference was to the building we were occupying at the time; temporal reference was made but in only a vague way (*when I . . . when there were groups that were making up one*). In line 9, she provided more information about her state of mind as well as her goals (*I was anxious to see it and uh get it straightened out*); in line 10, we learned that she carried through on those goals (*and so . . . and so I did*). The syntax and falling intonation contour of that line must have indicated to me that Elsie was finished with her narrative, as I took the opportunity to check my understanding of the missing spatial referent (*And that's why you came here?*), repeating her clause from line 7 with the addition of the word *here*. Elsie's repetition of the term *here* in line 12 seemed to indicate that my guess was correct. In line 13 then she continued with more details of that time in her life (*And then I [used] different things working on them*). In line 14, Elsie shifted tense back to the present, seeming to make general comments through line 16, although it was unclear whether those referred to the storyworld just recounted or not. After seeming to draw a conclusion in line 17 (*So there's a lot of things on*), she turned to me and asked a question (*and uh what have they got on now today?*) about some people or objects in the present time, although its lack of specificity (*they, got on, now*) impeded my understanding and, therefore, my ability to respond in a meaningful way.

1.2. *Short narrative 2: "That was the time when we were here to going down this way"*

Prior to the talk in Excerpt (2), I had asked Elsie *Do you have pictures . . . photographs from other countries?*, as I knew that she had lived abroad much of her life. Elsie asked a clarification question and we negotiated the

meaning of my question. In response, she abruptly shifted her gaze from me to a group of paintings on the wall of the lounge in which we were sitting, referring initially to a single painting with the term *dress*³ (line 1). Following a comment on a second painting (*And this other one is the one that has another one on it*), I provided a minimal response (line 3). Elsie followed up on this “pass” by providing what seemed to be the first move towards her storytelling – a general comment about the paintings; i.e., presumably that residents and/or staff of the center have been *kind of enjoying having some of these things* (line 5). A more definitive move into a storyworld occurred when she shifted from speaking more generally about the ongoing activity (providing orientation information within the framework of Labov 1972) to focusing on a particular instance in line 8 (*one of the times*):

Excerpt (2)

- 1 Elsie: My dress . . . my name is that one on the right . . . the right one.
- 2 And this other one is the one that has another one on it.
- 3 Heidi: Uhhuh.
- 4 Elsie: And so.
- 5 So they have uh been kind of enjoying having some of these things,
- 6 cause people were looking around and wondering what they’re going.
- 7 And then the first parts
- 8 *one of the times* oh quite a (yong) time ago over across those two
- houses over there
- 9 way over there.
- 10 And then then that was the time when we were here to going . . . down
- this way.
- 11 And so he was . . . quite spoiled . . . for trying to get those that other
- part to use.
- 12 But I think they’ve done most of it.
- 13 So I’m not sure.
- 14 I do hope it looks like we’re not going to rain . . . if anybody wants to
- rain tonight.
- 15 Do you think?
- 16 Heidi: Mhm. I don’t know. They keep saying

Elsie appeared then to provide more orientation information regarding time (*quite a [yong] time ago* in line 8 and *that was the time when* . . . in line 10), space (*over across those two houses over there* in line 8–9 and *here and down this way* in line 10), and person (*he was quite spoiled* in line 11). Elsie never actually uttered a complicating action clause (Labov 1972) indicating what the plot of her story might be before she began to come out of the

storyworld back to the ongoing conversation, as she indicated her current state of mind about some action begun in the storyworld (*But I think they've done most of it. So I'm not sure.* in lines 12 and 13). In line 14, Elsie appeared to have switched topics completely, to her hopes about the weather (*I do hope it looks like we're not going to rain . . . if anybody wants to rain tonight.*) Perhaps my lack of response prompted her direct question of me in line 15 (*Do you think?*) which then finally engaged me back into the ongoing conversation and marked the end of the storytelling event.

Based on the evidence in Excerpts (1) and (2), I argue that Schifffrin's (1996) notion of "narrative as self-portrait" needs to be recalibrated to be applicable to this kind of narrative. Instead of these narratives providing multi-dimensional access to Elsie's view of herself "as situated in a social structure", it seems here that they provide at best a "snapshot". Since snapshots are usually captured fleetingly and without much forethought, we often have difficulty remembering years later where or when the picture was taken and sometimes even who the individuals are in the photo. These records of fragments of our lives – the kinds of photographs that land on the floor or are cut into smaller pieces when we put together scrapbooks – find their analogy in Bamberg's notion of "small stories"; i.e., if memory sustains itself long enough, these small stories can stand for our lives. If Alzheimer's disease intervenes, however, this already difficult process of recalling becomes nearly impossible.

Try to envision the snapshots that would represent the short narratives in Excerpts (1) and (2). We know they contain Elsie, but how old was she "when there were groups that were making up one"? Who was "quite spoiled"? Who belonged to "the groups"? What is going on in the snapshot? When was the picture taken? What does the physical surrounding look like?

2. Background information

All individuals with Alzheimer's disease exhibit a progressive and apparently irreversible deterioration of their ability to communicate with others. Researchers agreed early on in investigations of language, communication and Alzheimer's disease that problems in these areas were due less to phonological and morphosyntactic disorders than to difficulties on the semantic and pragmatic levels (Appell et al. 1982; Bayles 1979; Baynes and Kaszniak 1987; Hier et al. 1985; Kempler 1984; Obler 1981; and Schwarz et al. 1979). Because of their basically well-formed syntactic structure, many of

the inappropriate or irrelevant utterances characteristic of the language used by Alzheimer's patients – at least until severe stages of the disease – would not appear out-of-the-ordinary in isolation, but only when heard within the larger discourse context in pursuit of some interactional goal, as illustrated by Elsie's line 3 in Excerpt (3):

Excerpt (3)

- 1 Elsie: And where did you say your home was?
 - 2 Heidi: I'm on Walter Road.
 - 3 Elsie: You can do that. That's a good idea.
- (Hamilton 1994b: 185)

In my earlier work (Hamilton 1991, 1994a, 1994b), I found it useful to discuss changes in discourse-level communication that accompanied the progression of the disease in their relationship to two concepts: 1) taking the role of the other in interaction (Mead 1934) and 2) automatization of language (Whitaker 1982), using Schiffrin's (1987) 5-component model of discourse coherence and Halliday's (1978) systemic-functional grammar to organize specific discourse phenomena. For example, Elsie's decreasing ability to take the perspective of her conversational partner was most apparent in the initial stages of our time together in terms of ideational content construction, such as in the selection of pronouns, lexical items, and topics. Problems relating to the management of interpersonal positions, roles, and faces, such as the use of politeness strategies, or the more procedural demands of discourse, such as turn-taking, became apparent later in our conversations. She was generally able until late in our interactions to use relatively more automatic language, such as linguistic formulas, more successfully than utterances she had to create anew in the situation.

As mentioned above, the observations and analyses reported in this paper are based on five tape-recorded, naturally occurring conversations (total length of conversations: 2 hours, 39 minutes) I had over $4\frac{1}{2}$ years with Elsie in a 121-bed private assisted living center in northern Virginia (suburban Washington, D.C. USA). At the time of these conversations, Elsie was 81–86 years old. She had earned an advanced degree and had been professionally active as a leader in the church until retiring ten years prior to the beginning of this study. According to the Global Deterioration Scale (GDS) for age-associated decline and Alzheimer's disease (Reisberg et al. 1982) she was at stage 5, moderately severe cognitive decline, at the onset of our conversations in 1981 and had reached stage 7, very severe cognitive decline, by 1986. At the beginning of the study, Elsie could walk and eat independent of others'

assistance; by 1985, she needed assistance to eat and drink. By March 1986, she was bedridden and her verbal production consisted only of her systematic use of the vocalizations *mmm*, *mhm*, *mm hm*, *hmm?*, and *uhhuh*.

During the first three of these five conversations, Elsie was a very active participant. She had trouble finding words, however, and frequently dealt with this problem by providing an “empty” word (e.g., *thing* for ‘an inanimate object’), a circumlocution (e.g., *just a few uh . . . oh a couple of uh . . . not a whole day* for ‘hours’) or a semantically-related word (e.g., *writing* for ‘reading’); less frequently, she provided neologisms (e.g., *ringlim* for ‘circle drive’) or a word used with a completely different lexical meaning (e.g., *dress* for ‘painting’). At the beginning of our time together, she was generally aware of her memory problems, as evidenced by her explicit reference to them, as well as the unusualness of these problems with word-finding, reference and memory, as she often provided excuses for this unexpected behavior. She also recognized when her abilities were unexpectedly good, as she provided explicit attestations to these abilities and seemed to be proud of them. The communicative evidence for these kinds of self-awareness dropped off over the course of our time together.

In spite of these difficulties, people generally enjoyed talking with Elsie – especially during the first year or so. Contributing to this overall ease in talk seemed to be Elsie’s use of positive politeness devices, such as compliments, expressions of appreciation to others, terms of endearment, and light-hearted jokes. Elsie had an outgoing personality and was friendly to residents, volunteers, and staff alike. She enjoyed taking part in social activities in the health care center until she became bed-ridden relatively late in our time together and was visibly pleased when she saw people she appeared to recognize at these activities.

Although the focus of this study is on Elsie’s use of language to talk about the past – and not directly on the fuller range of her communicative abilities and disabilities – this abbreviated communicative profile is provided to offer the reader a general sense for those abilities and difficulties which serve as the environment for the short personal experience narratives and narrative traces examined in this paper.

3. Talk about the past

Because previous work on discourse and Alzheimer’s disease (including my own) has pointed to a proclivity for talk in the here-and-now along with

memory problems of a variety of sorts, I begin this study of narratives in conversational interaction by casting a wider net; i.e., I identify first how frequently Elsie seemed to refer to the past in our sample of five conversations.

But rather than starting off with a simple count of how many of Elsie's verbs were inflected for the past tense, I place my study within Chafe's (1994) thought-provoking work on the intersections of discourse, consciousness, and time. In this work, he suggests a variety of ways of looking at how consciousness⁴ and conversational interactions are related to each other. Taking "ordinary conversation" as the baseline from which all other uses of language deviate, Chafe (1994: 210–211) argues that "a fundamentally important property of human consciousness is its ability to focus, not just on the immediate environment, but also on remembered and imagined experience." In fact, he goes on to observe that the displaced mode usually predominates over the immediate because "introverted (remembered and imagined) ideas tend to be less shared, more interesting, more extensive, and more fully processed than what is available to an extroverted (perceiving, acting, and evaluating) consciousness." In characterizing discourse shape related to this distinction, Chafe (1994) points out that

any differences can be attributed to differences between perceiving, acting, and evaluating on the one hand and remembering and imagining on the other. Extroverted experience has a continuous quality that contrasts with the island-like nature of introverted experience. In representing introverted experience, *speakers compensate by providing settings that locate an experiential island sufficiently to orient the listener's consciousness* (my emphasis). Extroverted experience also has access to a wealth of detail, all of which is potentially available to focus on. In contrast, introverted experience is restricted to a coarseness of detail that is sometimes mitigated, though only partially, through recourse to generic experiences whose detail has been enhanced by rehearsal. (Chafe 1994: 210–211)

With Chafe's distinctions in mind – along with the recognition that talking about the past is a larger category than narrating (it is, after all, possible to point something out about the past without telling a story about it), I began my investigation of tense. By examining the inflected verbs used by Elsie in the transcripts of our conversations, I identified 204 clauses that contained verbal reference to the past. Because I wanted additionally to have a sense of the percentage of time-at-talk that was spent referring to the past, I also performed a word count on those 204 clauses.

The figures in Table 1 clearly show that Elsie's contributions to our conversations contained relatively little talk directed towards the past. In fact,

Table 1. Number of lexical items in Elsie's clauses containing a verb inflected for the past tense as a percentage of total number of words used by Elsie in each of the five selected conversations (total talk-time = 159 minutes)

Date of conversation	No. lexical items in Elsie's clauses containing a past tense verb (a)	Number of total lexical items used by Elsie (b)	Percentage a/b
March 1982 (41 minutes)	697 (52 clauses)	4639	15.02%
September 1982 (31 minutes)	561 (48 clauses)	3625	15.48%
March 1984 (38 minutes)	650 (95 clauses)	4336	14.99%
July 1985 (26 minutes)	49 (9 clauses)	467	10.49%
March 1986 (23 minutes)	0	91	0
TOTALS	1957 (204 clauses)	13,158	14.87%

during our first three conversations, only approximately 15 percent of all lexical items were spoken within clauses containing verbs inflected for the past tense; during the fourth conversation that percentage dropped to 10 percent; and during the fifth conversation that percentage dropped to zero. This finding that 85 percent or more of Elsie's talk was in the "immediate mode" contrasts strongly with Chafe's claims about the consciousness within "normal" interactions, and provides additional empirical evidence for the "context-boundedness" (also termed "stimulus-boundedness" by some scholars), identified in early examinations of Alzheimer's patients (Obler 1981; Appell et al. 1982); such boundedness refers to an individual's reduced ability to free him- or herself cognitively from the immediate temporal and spatial context.

With regard to our general interest in this chapter, an overwhelming use of the immediate mode in communication (such as that observed here) could be expected to have dire consequences for any individual's construction of identity in talk. For example, it may be that an elderly person's professional identities (e.g., teacher, attorney, minister, physician) are no longer lived out on a daily basis due to changes in employment status (e.g., such as retirement or change in profession) or physical location (e.g., moving into an assisted living center). These earlier identities may, however, be sustained within a new environment through talk (including personal experience narratives) about

professional ideas, actions, and associations, but only if the individual’s consciousness can shift from the immediate mode of the here-and-now to the displaced mode of earlier times and places – and when those shifts are displayed linguistically within the current conversational interaction.

In what follows, we move beyond this recognition of the difficulties related to the relative lack of talk about the past for the construction of an individual’s identity. In the remainder of this chapter, we focus on those portions of Elsie’s discourse in which she did indeed seem to recount the past, as infrequent as that was.

4. Narrative traces

In the next phase of the investigation, I sorted the 204 clauses identified above into two categories: 1) narrative traces and 2) narrative clauses. A narrative trace is defined here as a clause that references the past but that is not part of a narrative; it is identified as such by its sequential placement within the discourse. The trace contains a verb inflected for the past tense but is preceded and followed by clauses that do not contain verbs inflected for the past tense (and which are not orientation clauses for a narrative).⁵ In contrast, a narrative clause is a clause that references the past but is part of a narrative; in addition to the restricted plot-advancing clauses that fall under Labov’s (1972) definition, I also include free clauses that provide orientation or evaluation.⁶ Table 2 provides the numbers of each type of clause, as well as the number of lexical items used within these clauses, for each of the five conversations in the study:

Table 2. Categorization of clauses with past-tense verb into 1) narrative clauses; and 2) narrative traces

Date of conversation	Number of narrative clauses (number of lexical items used within these clauses)	Number of narrative traces (number of lexical items used within these clauses)	Total number of clauses containing past-tense verbs (number of lexical items used within these clauses)
March 1982	25 clauses (257)	27 clauses (440)	52 clauses (697)
September 1982	7 clauses (104)	41 clauses (457)	48 clauses (561)
March 1984	24 clauses (204)	71 clauses (446)	95 clauses (650)
July 1985	0	9 clauses (49)	9 clauses (49)
March 1986	0	0	0
Totals	56 clauses (565)	148 clauses (1392)	204 clauses (1957)

In Table 2, we observe that 73 percent ($n = 148$) of the 204 clauses that referred to the past were in the form of narrative traces, whereas only 27 percent ($n = 56$) were part of narratives.⁷

Excerpt (4) illustrates this predominant phenomenon within its larger discourse context. In this interaction, Elsie and I were sitting in a sun-filled lounge at the end of her residential floor that overlooked the front entrance to the building. She was cleaning her eyeglasses:

Excerpt (4)

- 1 Elsie: So I'll have to get some off I think [blows on eyeglasses].
- 2 I'll see if I'm getting of it off.
- 3 Cause sometimes they'll go all right
- 4 Heidi: Yeah.
- 5 Elsie: and other times they won't be.
- 6 Heidi: Uhhuh.
- 7 Elsie: And then let's see.
- 8 Now how this is doing.
- 9 It looks like it's not doing it very () greasy things.
- 10 *One of the young men wanted to have . . . lots of fun [laughs].*
- 11 Yes, so . . . so on that one now I'll take a little more on this . . .
- 12 I'll ask this one . . . here. [blows on glasses]

Following the definition above, a narrative trace can be found in line 10: *One of the young men wanted to have . . . lots of fun*. Accordingly, we observe not only that this clause contains a verb inflected for the past tense (*wanted*), but also that it is preceded and followed by clauses that do not contain verbs inflected for the past tense. The clause that immediately precedes the trace is in the present tense (*looks*); the clause that immediately follows it is in the (immediate) future tense (*'ll take*).

This narrative trace seems to appear “out of the blue”. What accounts for this perception? Again, as earlier, we can turn to Chafe (1994: 202) for insight. In his terms, while she was cleaning her glasses, Elsie was providing linguistic evidence of an extroverted consciousness that “has the quality of a continuous, uninterrupted flow. Any segment of it is experienced as part of a connected sequence flowing out of what happened just before and into what will happen just after. The familiar metaphor of stream of consciousness (James 1890, 1: 224–290) captures this quality.” When she uttered the narrative trace in line 10, she was shifting to the voice of her introverted consciousness that was not focused on the immediately surrounding environment, but was either remembering or imagining something that was displaced.

This conscious activity yielded, in Chafe's terms, "isolated segments of experience whose antecedents and consequences are inaccessible." This memory of one of a group of young men wanting to have *lots of fun* is what Chafe calls an "experiential island" that is disconnected from its surroundings. When such disconnections occur between the immediate surroundings and what is spoken about, speakers usually bridge the divide by providing information regarding the displaced surroundings, mentioning space, time, social setting, and/or ongoing events and states.⁸

And since this need for such information is equally valid for individuals who are attempting to orient themselves within real-life environments (as, for example, in Chafe's illustration of a person regaining consciousness following an accident) as well as for individuals who are attempting to orient themselves as listeners within narrated storyworlds, we can use this observation to understand our difficulties in comprehending line 10. Not only do we not know who the young men were (although Elsie's use of the definite article *the* in *the men* makes us think that she perceived this to be shared knowledge), we do not know when or where the recounted event originally took place. The only connection we can draw upon (and this turns out to be insufficient) is a storyline that could link a *young man* having *lots of fun* by playing with Elsie's eyeglasses, thereby getting fingerprints all over them. But the work that needs to go into inferring this connection (if it is indeed the connection meant by Elsie) is too much for the time a listener has. In Excerpt (4), Elsie's narrative trace is disconnected from the clauses surrounding it, both in terms of surface-level cohesion as well as in terms of underlying coherence. This disconnection was found within the discourse contexts of each of Elsie's other narrative traces.

5. Construction of the storyworld within short narratives

In order to design a story that will be understood by the audience, the narrator needs to orient her listeners to the time and place of the storyworld and let them know something about the characters who people that world. Then, on that backdrop, the characters can act and the narrator can show her listeners – however subtly – what the point of the story is and how she feels about the characters and their actions (see Bamberg 1997; Chafe 1994; Johnstone 1990; and Schiffrin 1996). A world needs to be created through language that is vivid enough for the conversational partners to be able to enter into together. A meeting of minds must take place in order for the

meaning and point of the narrative to be captured and understood by the listener(s).

In this section, then, we turn our attention to the 56 remaining clauses that contain verbs inflected for the past tense – to what we have identified as narrative clauses, in that they are part of conversational narratives told by Elsie. Table 3 shows the distribution of these narratives (and the clauses constructing them) across our conversations.

Table 3. Distribution of narratives across conversations

Date of conversation	Length of conversation	Number of narratives
March 1982	41 minutes	5 narratives (25 clauses)
September 1982	31 minutes	3 narratives (7 clauses)
March 1984	38 minutes	7 narratives (24 clauses)
July 1985	26 minutes	0 narratives
March 1986	23 minute	0 narratives
TOTALS	159 minutes (2 hrs; 39 mins.)	15 narratives (56 clauses)

In what follows, we examine the anchors of the storyworld, studying the linguistic features that answer the following questions: 1) Who or what was present? (nominal reference); 2) What was happening? (reference to activities and states); 3) Where did this take place? (spatial reference); and 3) When did this take place? (temporal reference).

5.1. Nominal reference

In the creation of a storyworld, nominal reference helps to answer the question “Who or what was there?” In all of Elsie’s fifteen narratives there was reference to persons or objects in some way (as opposed to spatial and temporal reference which was sometimes lacking, as we will see in Sections 5.3 and 5.4 below). The minimal number of nominal references within a narrative was three. Table 4 provides a list of all such references to persons or objects.

As is evident from Table 4, within the fifteen narratives, Elsie made greatest use of pronouns to refer to people and objects in her stories (90 of 134 instances or 67 percent), usually inappropriately to refer to these referents upon first mention (e.g., *And so he was spoiled*). In addition to the pronouns, she also used 44 tokens of 33 different nouns; of these different nouns, four lexical items were neologisms (e.g., *lade*, *rager*, *resers*, and *chining*) as seen in the

Table 4. Nouns and pronouns used by Elsie in fifteen short narratives (# of instances in parentheses)

Nouns n = 33 different lexical items n = 44 tokens	Pronouns n = 11 different lexical items n = 90 tokens
time/s (6)	I (19)
one (3)	Me (1)
people (2)	You (2)
part/s (2)	he (5)
church/es (2)	him (2)
woman (2)	she (2)
all lexical items below used only one time each:	it (22)
back	we (11)
chining (neologism)	they (19)
clay (inappropriately used)	them (7)
clothes	
course	
fellow	
group(s)	
hurry	
kind	
lade (neologism)	
love	
money	
nose (inappropriately used)	
pair	
pay	
phase (inappropriately used)	
place	
playcards	
rager (neologism)	
resers (neologism)	
somebody	
talk	
thing(s)	
type	
week	

utterance *So I left the (lade) some of the (chining)*. Three additional nouns were English lexical items that were inappropriately used (e.g., *clay*, *nose*, and *phase*). Of the remaining 26 nouns, at least seven (*people*, *type*, *part*, *group*, *time*, *one*, and *place*) were arguably semantically relatively “empty”, as seen in the utterance *people were looking around*. These 7 nouns accounted for 16 tokens.

In sum, we find that at least 113 (84 percent) of the 134 references to people and objects in these narratives were either semantically relatively “empty” or actually misleading or confusing (in terms of the neologisms and inappropriately used nouns). Specific, explicit answers to the important narrative question “Who or what was in the storyworld?” were, therefore, only very infrequently found, leading to few clues (other than perhaps gender or animacy) in the mind of the listener.

5.2. *Reference to activities and states*

In the creation of a storyworld, verbs help to answer the question “What happened?” All of Elsie’s fifteen narratives contained such reference to activities or states. The minimal number of references within a single narrative was three (and that occurred in four narratives). Table 5 provides a list of all such references.

As is evident from Table 5, Elsie used a total of 106 instances of 38 different verbs within the fifteen narratives. In order to gain greater insight into the kind of work that Elsie’s verbs accomplished in the creation of the storyworld, the 38 different verbs can be placed into the following five categories: 1) verbs of state; auxiliary; 2) modal verbs; 3) action verbs; 4) verbs of saying; and 5) internal state verbs (referencing cognitive processes and emotions). We note from Table 12 that 18 percent of her tokens were state or auxiliary verbs; 4 percent were modals; 63 percent were action verbs; 6 percent were verbs of speaking; and 9 percent were internal state verbs. This range of verb forms used indicates that Elsie’s ability to communicate actions and states was quite robust, especially when contrasted with her relatively deficient use of language to refer to people and objects as well as times and spaces (as seen in Sections 5.1, 5.3, and 5.4).

Relative deficiencies within this overall category of verbs fell within the ‘action verb’ subcategory that accounted for 63 percent (67 of 106) of the verb tokens Elsie used in these narratives; a closer examination of this subcategory revealed that 39 percent (26 of 67) of these tokens were of the semantically relatively “empty” type (e.g., *do*, *get*, *make*, and *put*). As a

Table 5. Verbs used by Elsie in fifteen short narratives (# of instances in parentheses)

State/auxiliary N = 2 types N = 19 tokens (18% of total tokens)	Modals N = 2 types N = 4 tokens (4% of total tokens)	Action N = 26 types N = 67 tokens (63% of total tokens)	Speaking N = 2 types N = 6 tokens (6% of total tokens)	Internal state (thinking, feeling) N = 6 types N = 10 tokens (9% of total tokens)
Be (10) Have (9)	Can (3) Supposed to (1)	Change (1) Come (2) Do (5) Eat (1) Get (14) Give (1) Go (7) Help (1) Leave (3) Look (3) Make (3) Move (1) Pack (2) Park (2) Play (1) Put (4) Run (1) See (1) Sit (1) Stop (1) Straighten (1) Take (4) Think (1) Try (2) Use (2) Work (2)	Ask (1) Say (3) Tell (2)	Enjoy (1) Feel (1) Know (2) Think (1) Want (4) Wonder (1)

percentage of all tokens of verbs used, this amounted to 25 percent (26 of 106); even when the 19 tokens of the verbs *to be* and *to have* were added in (as these may also be considered relatively devoid of meaning), the percentage rose only to 42 percent (45 of 106). In contrast to the 84 percent of

nominal references that were semantically “empty” or even misleading, however, Elsie’s use of verbs was comparatively well-preserved.

5.3. *Spatial reference*

In the creation of a storyworld, spatial references help to answer the question “Where did this take place?” Narrators can tell stories about distant locations as well as the current location but at an earlier time (e.g., telling a story about a dinner one had eaten ten years earlier at the restaurant where one is currently sitting). Sometimes this assistance from the physical surrounding helped Elsie be understood; at other times, however, it served as a source of confusion, when I could recognize only that the story was being told about an earlier time in the current location, but had no idea as to how far back. Additionally, since the scope of the spatial adverb *here* can vary widely, I also faced difficulty in identifying the spatial referent (e.g., Did *here* refer to the lounge, the unit, the healthcare center or the city, etc.?).

In thirteen of these fifteen narratives, Elsie referred in some way to spatial aspects of her story; seven of these thirteen narratives contained only a single spatial reference. As evidenced in Table 6, Elsie’s spatial referents were only rarely specific enough to help me construct my understanding of the storyworld.

Table 6. Spatial reference used by Elsie in thirteen short narratives (# of instances in parentheses)

Spatial reference (n = 26)	
Preposition only (n = 14)	Phrases (n = 10)
Over (4)	Clear up higher than this (1)
On (4)	Down here (1)
In (3)	Down this way (1)
Out (2)	On the back (1)
From (1)	On the da dackum stuff (1)
	On the p.ay (1)
Single adverb only (n = 2)	Out there (1)
Here (2)	Over cross over those two houses over there way over there (1)
	Through them (1)
	Where it is (1)

Note that of the 26 instances of spatial reference, 16 were accomplished with a single lexical item. Fourteen of these were single prepositions; 2 were instances of the adverb *here*. Eight of the other 10 instances were prepositional phrases including only pronouns (*through them*), semantically empty nouns (*down this way* or *on the da dackum stuff*), or a noun used inappropriately (*on the p.ay*). One of the other two instances was the subordinate clause *where it is*. The only specific spatial reference was a prepositional phrase that included a noun and that was linked explicitly (also via nonverbal pointing gestures) to physical context within eyesight (e.g., *over those two houses over there way over there*). In this single instance, I did not need additional information to help paint the picture in my mind as a listener.

5.4. Temporal reference

In the creation of a storyworld, temporal references help to answer the question “When did this take place?” Temporal orientation in normal narratives can be, for example, to 1) calendar/clock time; 2) historical events such as wars or presidential terms; and 3) specific family events, such as births, deaths, or jobs, to name just a few options. In eleven of her fifteen narratives, Elsie referred to some aspect of time. In six of these eleven cases, she made only a single reference to time (e.g., using *finally*, *then*, etc.). The additional five narratives included temporal references that were not specific enough to help the audience construct their understanding of the storyworld (e.g., *When she first asked . . .*). Table 7 provides a list of all such references to time in the eleven narratives.

Note that of the 26 instances of temporal reference, 14 were in the form of *then* or *when*, which signal virtually nothing on the semantic level. Most of the other choices were also deictic in nature, needing the context to be understood. Note that there was not a single instance of *last week* or *last year* and only one instance of *today*. With deictic spatial references, the physical surroundings can help a listener fill in his or her understanding; time, however, is so abstract that – without additional linguistic assistance – it is nearly impossible to be able to construct this anchor of the storyworld.

5.5. Cumulative effect

In each of the sections above, we focused specifically on a single particular challenge (nominal reference, reference to activities and states, spatial

Table 7. Temporal reference used by Elsie in eleven short narratives (# of instances in parentheses)

Temporal reference (n = 26)	
Single adverb (n = 17)	Adverbial phrase (n = 1)
Then (9)	Earlier than that (1)
Finally (1)	
Sometimes (1)	Prepositional phrase (n = 1)
Today (1)	At such and such a time (1)
When (5)	
	Noun phrase (n = 5)
Single noun (n = 2)	One of the times (1)
The week (1)	Quite a (yong) time ago (1)
Two times (1)	That long a time (1)
	The first parts (1)
	The time (1)

reference, and temporal reference) related to the linguistic construction of storyworlds in interaction; in so doing, we deconstructed the fifteen narratives Elsie told during our conversations and examined specific evidence regarding her communicative difficulties related to each kind of reference. These are summarized in Table 8. Each category of reference is followed by the numbers of tokens and types used in the fifteen narratives, along with a notation regarding possible contributions in each category to the lack of semantic specificity.

In order to comprehend the cumulative effect of these individual challenges, we now view these pieces in action at the discourse level. To this end, we return to the short narrative that was presented initially in lines 5–13 of Excerpt (2) in Section 1.2. In Excerpt (5) I have highlighted each kind of reference in a different way: nominal references are represented with small capital letters, verbal references are represented with bold font, spatial references are represented with italicized font, and temporal references are underlined:

Excerpt (5)

- 1 So THEY **have** uh **been** kind of just **enjoying having** SOME OF THESE THINGS
- 2 cause PEOPLE **were looking around** and **wondering** what THEY're **going**.
- 3 And then THE FIRST PARTS
- 4 One of THE TIMES oh quite A (YONG) TIME ago over across THOSE TWO HOUSES
over there way over there

Table 8. Summary of references types

Category of reference	Number of tokens	Number of types	Contributions to lack of semantic specificity in these references
Nominal	134	44 (33 nouns; 11 pronouns)	90 tokens (67% of tokens) were pronouns, often at first mention 16 tokens were of semantically weak nouns, such as “people,” “type,” “part,” “group,” “one,” and “place” 3 tokens were neologisms 3 tokens were inappropriately used lexical items
Verbal	106	38	39% of the action verbs (26 of 67) were semantically relatively empty (“do,” “get,” “make,” and “put”)
Temporal	26	14	14 (54% of tokens) were of the semantically weak adverbs “then” and “when”
Spatial	26	16	14 (54% of tokens) were single prepositions (from, in, on, out, and over)

5 And then then THAT uh whe . . . **was** THE TIME

6 when WE **were** *here* to **going** . . . *down THIS WAY*.

7 And so HE **was** . . . quite spoiled . . . for **trying to get** THOSE THAT OTHER PART to **use**.

8 But I **think** THEY've **done** MOST OF IT.

9 So I'm not sure.

Note the challenge to the listener in trying to create in his or her mind a mental image that comes close to matching that in Elsie's mind (or the “real-life” events that provided the material for the narrative). Semantic imprecision can be found within almost every reference – nominal (e.g., *people*, *some of these things*), temporal (e.g., *that was the time when we were here to going . . . down this way*), spatial (e.g., *down this way*), and verbal (*they've done most of it*). As observed above, Elsie's use of verbs to describe actions within the storyworld is relatively well-preserved in contrast to the other areas, as evidenced by semantically-rich verbs such as *looking around* and

wondering. Overall, however, the deficiencies overwhelm what is spared, with the net result being a flat, confused storyworld in the mind of the listener.

And it is this flat, confused storyworld that is potentially problematic in terms of Elsie's identity construction. Because of her insufficient referential specificity at all levels, the fifteen storyworlds that she painted with the words she chose did not display important aspects of herself at earlier times. The deficient narrative accounts blocked anything approaching full understanding of agency, interests, competencies, and values that are so vital to the construction of identity in interaction.

To return to the metaphor used in Section 1, verbal accounts such as these clearly cannot act as 'self-portraits', but they may indeed be worked with as 'snapshots'. Just as we can look closely at hairstyles and fashions displayed by photographed individuals for clues as to *when* the snapshot was taken or we can look at buildings and landscaping for clues as to *where* the snapshot was taken, we can be alert to clues hidden within the words of the spoken narrative. These clues, however, are not likely to be found within the referential language, as we have just seen. Instead, such clues may be found in what Bakhtin (1981) calls the "flavors" of the words (rather than their specific meanings or functions) or what Agha (2005) calls the "social characterization" of identified voicing contrasts within a single speaker's discourse.

To illustrate, we return to Excerpt (1) (reproduced below as Excerpt [6]), the short narrative that was used in the introduction of this paper (see lines 7–13 of Excerpt [1] in Section 1.1). As mentioned earlier, Elsie's lack of specificity hampered an understanding of what she was trying to recount from her life. In our attempt to envision the snapshot that would represent the story, we knew it contained Elsie, but we did not know how old she was. For example, we knew virtually nothing about the other people in the photo beyond the fact that they were part of "the groups". We had little idea what these people were doing in the snapshot (*making up one?*). And, finally, our only clue to the physical context was the word *here*:

Excerpt (6)

- 1 **Elsie:** **That's why I came when I . . . when there were groups that were making up one**
- 2 Uh.
- 3 **I was anxious to see it and uh get it straightened out**
- 4 **and so . . . and so I did.**
- 5 Heidi: Mhm. And that's why you came here?
- 6 **Elsie:** **So I came here**
- 7 **and then I (used) different things working on them.**

From the perspective of Bakhtin (1981), however, we can begin to fill in some of the snapshot. Based on his discussions of the “flavor” of words, we have a sense of a goal-directed intensity in Elsie’s face (*That’s why I came . . .*) and the cooperative spirit among the individuals (*groups that were making up one . . .*) in the photo with her. In hearing *I was anxious to see it and get it straightened out*, we imagine a strong-willed individual who was able to set goals based on a state of mind and then to carry them through to completion (*and so . . . and so I did*). In terms of Agha’s insights, we notice a ‘social characterization’ associated especially with line 3 (*I was anxious to see it and . . . get it straightened out*); here we realize we may indeed be listening to the strong voice of Elsie’s leadership associated years earlier with her professional role within the church. Thus, in this way, attributes of Elsie’s identity can indeed come through even when we are not certain what exactly is being communicated on the semantic level.

6. Summary and implications

We have now re-examined the language of conversations that took place between Elsie and me over a period of $4\frac{1}{2}$ years – this time through the lens of narrative. The narrative perspective was chosen because of the wealth of evidence that indicates its importance in helping to construct social identities for those voicing the narratives as well as for those characters who inhabit the social world created by the narrators/narratives. The importance of drawing on the past as an identity resource seems to be all the more important for individuals who are approaching the end of life, as many live in a maelstrom of change: some live in diminished social surroundings due to reduced mobility and/or new residence in retirement homes or assisted living centers; many are having to deal with chronic health problems ranging from arthritis to diabetes to pulmonary diseases; most are experiencing the pain of losing increasing numbers of friends and family members to death; many have retired from lifelong professions that have sustained vital aspects of their identities; still others may be suffering from loss of hearing or eyesight or even cognitive changes due to Alzheimer’s disease. Such individuals still have a chance to hold onto a robust and varied sense of self through narratives that allow flight away from the challenges in the here-and-now – back to times and places that serve as the stuff of enduring personal experience narratives. The question posed at the beginning of this paper pointed to the possible ramifications of Alzheimer’s disease with its memory loss on this kind of discursive identity work.

The first step in this study followed Chafe's insights regarding displaced and immediate modes in conversation. In Section 3, Elsie's clauses were examined and separated into two categories: 1) those that referred to the past via the use of a past tense verb, and 2) those that did not. Through this examination, we discovered that only approximately 15 percent of Elsie's talk referred to the past time (at least overtly through the use of the past tense). And closer examination revealed that these clauses that comprised the 15 percent of talk were of two types: 1) narrative traces; and 2) narrative clauses. Section 4, then, showed that the vast majority of Elsie's already minimal amount of talk about the past was in the form of narrative traces, not in the form of narratives. In fact, of the 204 clauses that contained verbs inflected for the past tense, 73 percent were narrative traces. These traces were found in all except the last of our five conversations and seemed to appear "out of the blue" within stream-of-consciousness type discourse related to the here-and-now. Since they included neither sufficient temporal or spatial orientation nor cohesive/coherent ties to the surrounding discourse, these traces contributed to a paradox. The very type of utterance (talking about the past) that characterizes healthy speakers and that could have allowed Elsie 1) to be viewed as a more typical conversational partner (i.e., not talking only about the here-and-now but about displaced times and places) and 2) to offer glimpses of her younger self in times of better health actually contributed to the construction of a jerky discourse that was difficult to understand.

In Section 5, then, we intensified our investigation into the set of 56 remaining clauses that made reference to the past – those that were part of fifteen short conversational narratives. These narratives took place only in the first three of the five conversations, indicating that they were perhaps more challenging communicatively than the production of independent narrative traces alone. The analysis focused on the actual linguistic construction of the anchors of the storyworld, including reference to people, objects, activities and states, time and space. Frequency lists of lexical items and phrases that were used in Elsie's narratives provided evidence that Elsie's abilities to use these linguistic building blocks to construct meaningful storyworlds were quite diminished. These problems began with relatively infrequent references and were exacerbated by the weak semantic nature of those references that were actually made. Vivid storyworlds simply could not be conjured up with building blocks that included overwhelming numbers of personal pronouns and lexical items such as *people, part, thing, place, do, get, make, put, then, when, in, on, and over*. Since the linguistic reference work could not be relied upon for the accomplishment of identity work, we revisited an earlier

narrative with new insights from Bakhtin (1981) and Agha (2005). Being attuned to “flavors” of words used (Bakhtin) as well as voicing contrasts within the narrative identified as “social characterization” (Agha), assisted us in uncovering attributes of Elsie’s identity (after-the-fact) even though we were uncertain about the narrative’s semantic meaning or its point.

It is hoped that this study of talk about the past by a single speaker struggling with Alzheimer’s disease will contribute to the ever-expanding understanding of Alzheimer discourse in general, especially regarding narrative abilities in the middle to late stages of the disease. Focus on Elsie’s unsuccessful use of what I call “narrative traces” may spark research into this little-examined phenomenon that seems to contribute to the jerky nature characteristic of some Alzheimer talk. Additionally, findings regarding short narratives may illuminate the myriad challenges associated with all narrative tellings, especially as related to the linguistic construction of the anchors of the storyworld. Researchers studying narratives told by speakers of other groups that face communicative challenges may find my frameworks and methodological approaches useful. Such groups may include second language users, healthy elderly speakers (especially in terms of word-finding difficulties), and speakers with health problems that affect communication, such as aphasia, autism, and schizophrenia. Further, researchers interested in identity construction and narrative may be informed by the discursive and identity effects of Elsie’s linguistic and memory challenges and may find that insights from Bakhtin and Agha highlight intriguing additional evidence regarding identities within their own narrative corpora.

Finally, I hope that professionals and personal caregivers working with individuals who are living with Alzheimer’s disease may be better equipped through these analyses to think about the language used by those in their care. If a person with Alzheimer’s disease tends to speak overwhelmingly about the here-and-now, interlocutors can support identity work by picking up on formulaic small talk (*Have a nice day!*) and instances of positive politeness (Brown and Levinson 1987), such as compliments and jokes (see Hamilton 1994a, 2003). Taking the initiative to focus conversational attention on visible personal objects (such as photographs, books, artwork, and greeting cards) in the residence may evoke a sense of well-being and some positive comments, even if no narratives are forthcoming. For example, upon seeing a photograph of her husband, Elsie joyfully commented to me, *That’s mine . . . my husband . . . and that was when he was younger and now he’s of course older*. When looking over a letter she had received from a well-known politician, she glowed, *It was a very interesting time!*

If, on the other hand, the person with Alzheimer's disease is still referring to the past, taking on the role of an attentive and active listener is very important. Listening intently for verbal clues (including the "flavors" of words and "social characterizations" of voicing contrasts) and scanning the surroundings for physical and nonverbal clues may provide the listener with resources to draw upon for important supportive turns-at-talk. Depending on the amount of shared background information, these clues may be the first step in providing scaffolding for a more extended narrative. This scaffolding can come in the form of guiding questions, cooperative overlap (Tannen 1989), or completed utterances (see Ramanathan [1994, 1995] for more information).

In closing, short narratives told by individuals living with Alzheimer's disease may indeed not function well as "self-portraits", but even a narrative as "snapshot" can provide clues that help interlocutors reconstruct aspects of the individual's identity. These clues can then be used as a springboard for further crucial, life-affirming interaction.

Notes

1. The reader will notice an alternation between the terms "narrative" and "story" in this chapter. This is purposeful. Although I personally prefer the term "narrative" and indeed most scholars in this area use this term (e.g., Labov 1972; Schiffrrin 1996), others use the term "story" (e.g., Jefferson 1978). I have attempted in my discussion of others' work within this paper to use the relevant scholar's preferred term.
2. From George Oppen's unpublished notes in the George Oppen Archive of the Mandeville Department of Special Collections, University of California, San Diego (see Hamilton 2000 for more information).
3. Interestingly, Elsie used the term *dress* six months later to refer to different paintings in her room (see Hamilton 2003: 43–44).
4. Chafe (1994: 38) regards consciousness as "the crucial interface between the conscious organism and its environment, the place where information from the environment is dealt with as a basis for thought and action as well as the place where internally generated experience becomes effective – the locus of remembering, imagining, and feeling."
5. The qualification to the definition regarding orientation clauses is necessary to rule out the misidentification of a clause as a narrative trace when it actually is a narrative clause that is surrounded by orientation clauses containing verbs inflected for the present tense. This situation is illustrated by the following constructed example: (1) *Chicago's the largest city in Illinois, you know*; (2) *I went to school there*; (3) *It's a fun city!* (4) *Anyway, I studied philosophy at the*

University of Chicago [narrative follows]. Without the orientation condition in the definition, clause 2 in this example would be miscategorized as a narrative trace rather than a narrative clause.

6. This is a pragmatic decision that is motivated both by the confusing language used within these narratives as well as the extreme brevity of the narratives in the first place. Rather than using what would be potentially a 6-way distinction within the short narratives (as abstract, orientation, complicating action, resolution, [external] evaluation, coda [following Labov 1972]) versus the single classification of a narrative trace, I have opted for a binary distinction.
7. The lexical analysis reveals that 29 percent of lexical items contained in these 204 clauses were part of narrative clauses; 71 percent of lexical items were part of narrative traces. This similarity indicates that narrative clauses and narrative traces do not differ in a meaningful way in terms of the number of lexical items they contain.
8. Or, as Chafe (1994) simply puts it, need for answers to the following kinds of questions: “Where am I?”, “What time is it?” or “What day is it?”, “Who are you?” or “Who are these people?”, and “What’s going on?”
9. See Agha (2005: 43–45, 54–55) for more information on his proposed process regarding segmentation and typification of voices. To illustrate briefly, imagine a speaker involved in a political discussion who integrates into his argument an utterance that was spoken by a particular politician during a televised debate. If a listener not only recognizes the voicing contrast (what he calls “contrastive individuation”), but also identifies the utterance as having been uttered by a particular biological person, that would be an example of what Agha calls “biographic identification”. If, however, the listener recognizes the voicing contrast, but does not identify the speaker, he may still assign a “social characterization” to that contrast; i.e., one that would be typical of a politician’s way of speaking.

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Chapter 5

Alliance building and identity work in girls' talk: Conversational accomplishments of playful duelling

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1. Introduction

Many diverse factors contribute to an understanding of identity construction and alliance building, among them nationhood, religion, professional status, life-stage (Duszak 2002; Eckert 2003). As speakers we construct (and continue to revise and reconstruct) our identities, social and personal, through our everyday talk in a variety of ways at different stages of our lives, according to a number of socially contextual variables, e.g. addressee, purpose of talk, cultural norms. This chapter explores the linguistic construction of age in early adolescence and seeks to understand processes of identity construction and their enactment in everyday experience in the spontaneous peer talk of girls crossing from late childhood into early adolescence.

Language use is a very visible resource and highly indicative marker of the group(s) we belong to (Abrahams 1962; Labov 1972). Through language use we display our affiliation/disaffiliation in aligning or non-aligning actions. Concepts of identity and belonging, both social and personal (Tajfel and Turner 1979), vary situationally, i.e. ideas that we sometimes think of ourselves as group members and at other times we think of ourselves as unique individuals, are particularly important during adolescence when behavioural norms seem to be in flux and peer behaviours are highly influential (Eder 1993; Nilan 1992b; Mendoza-Denton 1999). Thinking of yourself as a group member and belonging to a group fulfils that human desire for solidarity and rapport, crucial for the early adolescent coming to terms with their place in the wider society. Language use can effectively create both an immediate sense of friendship/alignment or equally non-alignment and lack of group membership. Obvious examples of the assertion of peer group membership are encoded in distinctive language varieties and collaborative performances, i.e. ritual insult practices (Labov 1972), rapping (Berns and Schlobinski 2003). Other less obvious, though highly significant interactional practices

that seem to be particularly pertinent during adolescence, can signal alliance building and it is this exploitation of the play potential of language which is the topic for investigation in this chapter.

While this is a synchronic study of a small group of girls approaching adolescence, we must be aware that youth is a relational and dynamic concept. Youth is then approached as “something which is culturally determined in a discursive interplay with musical, visual and verbal signs that denote what is young in relation to that which is interpreted as respectively childish or adult” (Fornäs 1995: 3). Accordingly, speakers’ language use is likely to display connections both to earlier child discourse (Garvey 1977: 108) and foreshadow future discourse patterns. Mindful of this, a broad aim of this paper is to identify patterns of language use in these early adolescent girls’ talk data to show how these interactional behaviours serve as markers for the transitory life-stage between late childhood and adolescence. More specific aims include the categorisation of collaborative verbal practices along a continuum to suggest how playful exchanges shift into more confrontational practices, and finally a focus on speaker roles and their local management of these activities to demonstrate the variety of ways in which alliance building and identity construction is accomplished in spontaneous interaction.

2. Theoretical research context

I have used a synthesised methodology to analyse these data drawing on interactional sociolinguistics, Conversation Analysis and cultural feminist ethnography. Interactional sociolinguistics and cultural feminist ethnography provide the broad lens through which to explore the data. The social interactionist framework enables an analysis of the broader social identities being enacted and is used in combination with the Conversation Analytic paradigm which focuses on local discourse identities. Goffman’s (1967: 5) analysis of social interaction derives primarily from the concept of face, “an image of self delineated in terms of approved social attributes” and has been highly influential in theorising about language use as a social behaviour. An interactionist stance defines behaviour as its own context where speakers are organising what they do together without full knowledge of what is likely to come next. During the course of the interactional arrangement of utterance possibilities, speakers use talk to build the context in which they understand what they are doing and talking about with each other.

Conversation Analysis is used as the principal analytic tool as it is concerned with “actual, particular social actions and organised sequences of them” and how a close analysis of them can provide access to an understanding of these social actions (Schegloff et al. 1977: 151). Talk consists of observable and orderly sequences of turns whereby participants together construct and interpret action. The meaning of a speaker’s turn, the action accomplished, is observable in the manifest details of that turn and responses to it. An analytical emphasis on the discourse rules of relevance can help to explain the accomplishments in the collected conversational data.

Studies of interactions within cultural feminist ethnography enable an integration of insights from recent studies of girls’ talk (Griffiths 1995; Greenwood 1998; Coates 1999) and women’s talk (Coates 1996b; Tannen 1994) to assist in locating interactional practices in the present data. Detailed studies of younger children’s interactive practices (Goodwin 1999, 2000) and recent advances from a range of perspectives from sociolinguistics (Boxer and Cortés-Conde 1997; Eckert 2003; Mendoza-Denton 1995) to social psychology (Keltner et al. 2001; Carlson Jones et al. 2005) are valuable studies that help to locate the present data as exemplifying what happens in between.

3. Talk indexes life-stage

Set against a backdrop of influential frameworks of women’s talk (Coates 1996b, 1999; Tannen 1994) that emphasise an underlying premise of co-operation and support in interactive behaviours and a substantive body of research on younger children’s discourse (Brenneis and Lein 1977; Corsaro and Rizzo 1990; Garvey 1984), there is within discourse studies a growing and insightful body of research on adolescent practices (Eder 1993; Eckert 2003; Berns and Schlobinski 2003), yet there remain many unanswered questions particularly with regard to girls’ early adolescent discourse practices:

Preadolescents are trying to find their place in a complex social world. They typically announce their friends as “best friends” and identify others using labels, eg. dorks, nerds, techs (super studios) with whom they would not be caught interacting with. However, it is not clear though how older kids verbally encode friendship – or enmity – or how they “play” together in conversation in creating and supporting these friendships. (Greenwood 1998: 68)

Central questions of concern here are: How do children at this early adolescent lifestage show their affiliation and construct identity in their language practices? How do these practices demonstrate links to other lifestages, i.e. earlier childhood discourse and future interactive practices? More specifically, can we distinguish boundaries where teasing stops and where name-calling and insulting practices start? How do speakers signal their meta-messages as playful or serious? How do these practices influence alliance building and identity construction in talk? In the following quote, Heath (1998) succinctly highlights a particular quality of talk of the older child as 'inexplicable' and 'gyrating':

The older child's gyrations between likes and dislikes, inaction and constant motion, noise and silence, silliness and wisdom strike adults as inexplicable. Overheard language and attempted conversations with youth leave adults at a loss to how much of a mutual communication system they actually share with young people. (Heath 1998: 217)

It is precisely this "inexplicable quality" that became the focus of investigation in the present study. It is both similar yet distinct from early childhood discourse and young adulthood, though difficult to pinpoint systematic differences. For instance, keen eavesdropping on early adolescent girls' talk confirmed observations that their talk seemed to be predicated on distinctly uncooperative or confrontational practices. This is in marked contrast to currently popular views of women's ways of behaving which emphasise connection through an avoidance of direct confrontation and disagreement; an orientation to suggesting rather than telling. Certain speech activities assist in locating talk at particular life-stages. Playful teasing and the management of conflictual episodes in early childhood demonstrate highly explicit strategies, e.g. repeated patterns of direct opposition (Garvey 1977: 108), reliance on prosodic signals (loudness, marked pitch shifts) and a high frequency of physicality/withdrawal in closing strategies, all of which reveal the younger child's use of direct strategies (verbal and nonverbal) in interactions likely to cause discomfort to their conversational partner (Brenneis and Lein 1977; Garvey 1984; Corsaro and Rizzo 1990; Vuchinich 1990).

Young children will explicitly state, "we don't want to play with you", whereas older children, who are preoccupied with "fitting in" (Eckert 2003; Nilan 1992b), are likely to be more subtle about defining their group identity. Conversational meaning is not conveyed merely through the informational content of individual words but through the meta-messages or attitudes of

one participant to another, which can be conveyed through verbal and non-verbal cues within the interactive frame. Speakers identify meta-messages through "contextualization cues" (Gumperz 1982: 131) that include prosodic phenomena, i.e. exaggerated intonation, stress, laughter and lexical and syntactic oppositions. These cues signal participants' stance towards each other as either playful or confrontational.

On reaching preadolescence speakers are beginning to be more concerned with the face needs of their addressee (Goffman 1967; Brown and Levinson 1987). Speakers can choose to align themselves with or distance themselves from their addressee through their local linguistic choices, which in turn index their broader social identities. Aligning talk, most obviously indexed in utterances which attend to a co-participant's face needs (positive and negative) can be realised in complimenting actions (Herbert 1989; 1990; Holmes 1986) or others such as collaborative narratives and hedging actions that address interactants' face needs, though they are not the focus of this paper. The specific focus here is on girls' performances of verbal duelling to consider its potential contribution in structuring peer relationships. Episodes of verbal duelling comprise: teases, name-calls and insult exchanges, which in turn index interactants' stance towards each other.

4. Criteria for alliance building and identity construction

It is suggested that alliance building and identity construction is most likely to be accomplished through talk when speakers display a shared perspective. A shared perspective is realised in a number of ways based on conversational participants' interactional history (Gumperz 1982). An interactionist approach asks how the language code is shared and understood in a given social setting. As such, it is likely to draw on participants' interests, experiences, sense of humour to negotiate connections. Whilst acknowledging that identifying similarities displayed in talk is important in building alliances and identity construction, analysis of these data emphasises the prominence of expressions of differences in performing these accomplishments. It is advanced that speakers' management and negotiation of differences is particularly salient in the present data and contributes significantly to alliance building and identity construction. Negotiation of differences is realised through episodes of verbal duelling, e.g. teasing, name-calling and insult exchanges and assists in distinguishing the specific life-stage of the speakers.

5. Framing verbal duelling

Episodes of playful duelling are very frequent in girls' everyday interactions with each other (Eder 1990). Crucial to an understanding of verbal duelling is the concept of an underpinning conflict model advanced by Goodwin (1990), where teases can upgrade into insults, and insults downgrade into name-calls. The boundaries between such verbal performances are more difficult to determine.

The theoretical tradition of interactional sociolinguistics (Goffman 1967; Brown and Levinson 1987) defines teasing as an intentional provocation accompanied by playful markers that together comment on something relevant to the target of the tease. Salient speech activities have been described as follows. Teasing is a relational process that can be verbal or nonverbal, in which there is less reliance on nonverbal markers as children develop. From the literature on teasing (Baxter 1992; Long and Graesser 1988; Miller 1986) we know that among a rich variety of uses, teasing mitigates conflicts, reaffirms affiliation, and encourages equity in relationships (Yedes 1996). Eder (1993) defines teasing as any playful remark aimed at another person. Researchers agree overwhelmingly on the inherent ambiguity of the tease where playfulness distinguishes it from bullying (Land 2003). For example, a tease is a playful activity with aggressive potential according to Straehle (1993) and confirmed by Boxer and Cortés-Conde (1997), who describe teasing as antagonistic activity with a mocking surface form. Similarly, Norrick (2003) continues to emphasise the complementary roles played by aggression and rapport. According to Carlson Jones et al. (2005: 423), "teasing by definition includes an element of humour or playfulness that balances or turns the provocation into an acceptable form for the target". Schieffelin (1990: 166) comments on the unstable nature of teasing frames which influence the nature of the discourse, "... where speakers attempt to inhibit or change a person's actions as well as convey a particular affective message about the relationship between those individuals involved and an audience or potential audience of family, peers, and community", looking beyond the local management of the tease to the wider social network of the speakers. Undoubtedly, teasing lies on a perilous boundary which creates tension, where one is never sure which way an interaction might swing.

The content of the tease varies from early childhood to preadolescence. Examples from early childhood can be realised in ritualised language play in possessiveness and direct aggression. Form and timing mark this activity as a ritual where repetition, for children, is enjoyable for its own sake (Garvey

1977: 108). Common topics of teasing, name-calls or insulting practices in early adolescent talk are more likely to target appearance, behaviour, competence such as academic clumsiness, ineptitude. Typical realisations of insulting practices are: *idiot, retard, psycho* (Eder 1991; Nilan 1992a; Kowalski 2000; Warm 1997).

Criteria for teasing require that speakers target a co-present member of the group (Boxer 1997: 279). As an example of prosocial behaviour teasing shows a high degree of sensitivity during which group bonds are strengthened; it both reflects and reaffirms an egalitarian relationship (Eder 1993; Holmes 2000; Yedes 1996). However, it is the inherent ambiguity in the teasing action which both diffuses and controls conflict, i.e. it can “bond, nip or bite” (Boxer and Cortés-Conde 1997: 280). The terms ‘bond’, ‘nip’ and ‘bite’ serve as useful functional descriptors for the activities of teasing, name-calling and insulting respectively. Successful duetting or duelling therefore relies on the recipient’s appropriate skills of interpretation and subsequent response to the intended meta-message (Tannen 1986).

While the body of research is considerable on teasing, few studies have focused on more antagonistic (antisocial) verbal duelling actions, such as name-calling and insult exchanges in girls’ talk, exceptions being Goodwin’s rigorous micro-analytic ethnographic study of younger children’s talk (1990), Lytra’s investigation of nicknames and teasing among multilingual, multicultural preadolescents in Athens (2003), Mendoza-Denton’s research in collaborative opposition among Latina adolescents (1999) and Tetreault’s study of parental name-calling by Algerian adolescents (2004). These studies show that name-calling and insult exchanges seem to share certain core characteristics with teasing, i.e. that it can be both affiliative and hostile. For example, a name-call is defined as an indirect face attack in which elements of collaboration and oppositional stance coexist (Mendoza-Denton 1999) and an insult is a direct face attack inextricably tied to the recipient, often in turn-final position in an exchange sequence (Goodwin 1990). It is suggested that name-calls are likely to be distinguished from insults by the employment of mitigating contextual cues, e.g. voice quality, pitch change, modulating prosody (Gumperz 1982).

It is clear that the above understandings recognise the essential duality of teasing; that its nature lies in the delicate balance between affiliation and confrontation. A useful approach first identifies the respective forms and their distribution in an interaction. The sequential environment in which these actions occur may help to predict/indicate a participant response in terms of either shared, shifting or non-aligned goals. An analysis of the recipient

response should assist in explaining how they are constructed, embedded, interpreted and managed in the discourse. Through tracking speakers' local management of verbal duetting and duelling actions, i.e. teases, name-calls, insults, we can better understand how participants construct and negotiate their larger social group identities within their peer group.

6. Participants, settings and data

Participants in the study are a group of nine girls living in Sydney, Australia, aged between 11 and 12 years old. The following fragments involve 3 speakers: Hannah, Pam and Sue. While all participants are in the same class, some girls are more peripheral than others in the wider friendship group. They have all attended the same single sex independent primary school for 7 years. They are the oldest in the school and as such are in a position where they can act as leaders/role models, thus they are in a strong position in the school environment. They are eager for independence yet still oscillate in and out of late childhood. However, it is suggested that while being secure in their school status, they are also hesitant and uncertain of their future, and it is anticipated that their talk will reflect this precarious position. Some of the girls share common interests both in and out of school, e.g. horse riding, sailing. Others are members of the school orchestra. All interactions took place in informal settings, in out of school contexts. For girls of this age language often accompanies an activity, e.g. eating, listening to music, doing homework, looking at magazines, commenting on immediate surroundings, all of which help to foster opportunities for related amusement or relief (Goffman 1974; Ervin-Tripp and Kuntay 1997). Other settings included talk that occurred when informants were passengers in a car being transported to or from recreational activities.

The collected data comprise selected fragments from nine hours of audio-taped interactions between three girls aged ten – twelve years old. The data demonstrate how speakers, using their shared interactional history, collaboratively negotiate alliance building employing a range of speech activities. Speech activities are identified as performances of verbal duetting and duelling and are analysed in terms of form, function and interpretation and posited on a continuum from playful to more confrontational actions to reflect the oscillating tenor and dual nature of girls' talk in and out of play and confrontation. The analytic focus of the following data fragments identifies 11 episodes of playful confrontation/verbal duelling subcategorised as: teasing,

name-calling and insulting sequences respectively. These sequences from the present data go some way to reveal how speakers manage their talk, balancing linguistic duetting and duelling in accomplishments of alliance building and identity construction.

Teases are presented first, followed by name-calls and insult sequences, as it is argued that teases typically display a more playful, game-like character demonstrating a progression from “*nice-mean: mean*” dimension (Hughes 1988), therefore a more aligning, less face threatening, affiliative duetting action, whereas name-calls and insult sequences display a progressively more confrontational duelling action. The name-call, as a form of address is “one of the simplest techniques for depicting another participant” (Goodwin 1990: 84). It provides a clear and concise way of evaluating a co-participant.

The following data fragments comprise 5 teasing sequences, 3 name-call exchanges and 3 insult exchanges. Examples of playful confrontation sequences from the present data are presented from simple to more complex. Most obvious teasing actions are signalled in surface forms of repetitions/re-use (phonological and lexical), exemplifying participants’ willingness to engage in the teasing activity. They all demonstrate a duality associated with teasing, i.e. a moderately antagonistic key. Speakers’ strengthening of ties is evident in format-tying practices and accompanying laughter, prosody and marked pronoun use. Less readily identifiable or misinterpreted teases can merge into name-calls or insults. Twelve examples of verbal duelling sequences from the present data are presented to illustrate preadolescent girls’ use and developing competence in such activities.

7. Data analysis

The following 5 examples of teasing (T) demonstrate how speakers frequently employ collaborative practices of playful confrontation/verbal duelling in their talk with each other in the accomplishment of alliance building. Speakers often include remarks that are potentially offensive, but make these remarks with an overlay of humour and/or integrate off-record behaviours.

Example (T1)

Hannah and Sue are doing math homework. The source of the above tease grew from a recent water contamination scare in Sydney’s water supply.

⇒ H ↑I’ll open it (.) you’re about to get meningococcal disease (.)that’s the side I (.) bit

- S hahahah
 ⇒ H you're about to get meningococcal disease
 ⇒ S it's *ninja turtle disease*-
 H oh(.) yeah(huh)(.) *ninja turtle(.) disease*=

The duality of this teasing action emerges in speakers' employment of *meningococcal disease* (a very rare and highly infectious disease), juxtaposed with the neologism *ninja turtle(.) disease*, employed as a mock threat (Eder 1990). The tease is successfully accomplished in participants' collaborative actions which foreground the playful/nonsense aspect of the talk, reducing any real prospect of contracting such a disease to mere fantasy. Speakers are co-constructing the tease using their shared knowledge (of *ninja turtles*) and sound play (Lytra 2003). The teasing action is reciprocated in next-turn laughter and the taunt is repeated but not taken seriously as interwoven laughter suggests. A recycling of the tease is acknowledged in a return tease *it's ninja turtle disease*, employing word and sound play that is reciprocated in the next turn. In collaborative action both speakers engage in the teasing activity by playing with the phonological rules of language. In phonetic manipulation the original mock threat is dissipated. These interactive behaviours are associated with earlier child discourse patterns.

Example (T2)

Hannah and Sue are doing homework together.

- ⇒ H what are you a-↓*ttempting* (.) to do?
 ⇒ S I'm a-↓*TTempting* (.) to fix my glasses

The above exchange demonstrates a teasing activity conducted in an adjacency pair where speakers employ format tying practices of lexical and prosodic repetition coupled with pronoun replacement to frame antagonistic talk-as-play (Straehle 1993). The teasing activity is enacted through mirrored phonological patterning (Eder 1993; Heath 1998) used by the recipient, who clearly displays her recognition of the mocking quality of the preceding turn and her willingness to return equivalent playfulness. Hannah employs lowered pitch and stress (*a-↓ttempting*) in her request to which Sue responds with mirrored syntactic and prosodic patterning distinguished only by the change of subject pronoun functioning as a counter move. Format tying is a practice typically associated with affiliation. This minimal syntactic change in form, however, changes the participation framework. In this case, the change signals returned sarcasm: a practice of playful confrontation (Goodwin 1990).

Such behaviours lend both game-like and a competitive colour and resultant tension to the interaction. It is argued that close monitoring and partial re-use of other's preceding talk, both syntactic and mirrored prosodic behaviours signal the complex and shifting dynamic of the interactional relationship between the speakers. While similarities in surface structure can indicate affiliation, they can similarly highlight playful ribbing between participants in revoicing, where speakers take on the characterisation of another (Heath 1998).

Example (T3)

In the following two examples Hannah and Sue are sitting in Hannah's room covering school textbooks with plastic covering and discussing their respective levels of expertise. Commenting on the difficulty of presenting a satisfactory "bubble-free" book cover, participants begin to target each other's lack of competence. Their talk winds in and out of playful teasing activities that shift into more confrontational frames.

- S I think you've got the wrong type of contact for some
 H no:(.) y jus' can't cover it
 ⇒ S ok(.) it's a tad bad:(.) but you know
 ⇒ H a ↑tad bad?
 ⇒ S hahaha
 ⇒ H it's pathetic; (.)

The tease is enacted in lexical under- and overstatement, *tad bad* and *pa-thetic*. Lexical repetition of *tad bad* initially signals the jokey nature of the interaction but is soon upgraded, and blurs into an insulting exchange. Sue tentatively suggests that her difficulty is due to Hannah supplying inadequate materials. *I think you've got the wrong type of contact for some* is a directive formatted as an attenuated suggestion hedged with *I think* (Goodwin 1990). Despite Sue's attempt to reduce the force of the face attack, it is returned in a direct oppositional stance. Hannah's non-alignment is displayed unambiguously in next turn position in which she targets Sue's lack of skill, *(.)y jus' can't cover it*. Mild attenuation signalled in Hannah's use of *jus'* assists in moderating further potential antagonism. This action succeeds in receiving an initial confirmatory response followed by concessive agreement, *(.)it's a tad bad:(*, drawing Sue into closer alignment. In same turn, Sue's final action, *(.)but you know*, similarly invites a concessive next move from Hannah. Hannah responds reusing Sue's words applying playful prosody in syntactic repetition, *a ↑tad bad?*. In reusing words provided by a prior speaker, a subsequent speaker can substantially modify what is being done with those

words by the way in which they are spoken (Goodwin 1990). Hannah's modified prosodic behaviours succeed in transforming the tease into a challenge. Sue responds to Hannah's challenge in laughter, a signal of mild embarrassment (Glenn 1991). In a second non-aligning action, Hannah seizes the opportunity to issue an upgraded negative assessment of Sue's efforts as *pathetic*, escalating the potential conflict. In same turn she redirects the talk back to the ongoing activity. Speakers continue in a form of linguistic "dance" around each other shifting in and out of playful and duelling actions that are tied to the ongoing joint activity.

Example (T4)

- S you can say that was a good joke
 ⇒ H it was *pathetic*
 ⇒ S I mean how pathetic can you get
 ⇒ H I mean how pathetic a:re you?
 ⇒ S pretty pathetic

Despite Sue's indirect invitation to agree, positive feedback from Hannah is denied. Instead Hannah remains resolute in refusing to attend to Sue's face needs. Sue frames her request as a suggestion in her use of the modal (Goodwin 1990), through which she deflects the focus from herself to the credibility of the *joke*. Hannah's negative evaluation, *it was pathetic*, clearly displays that Sue's efforts were unappreciated. Hannah underscores her confrontational stance and distanced attitude in her unambiguous criticism in an emphatic downgrade in her employment of contrastive prosody. Speakers' increasing interactional distance is reflected in their lexical choices in which *pathetic* becomes the pivot. Sue re-uses *pathetic* as a form of irony through which she targets herself. Hannah returns a counter tease employing *pathetic* in the format tying and revoicing (Goodwin 1990; Heath 1998) in the form of a reproach and personal insult. In this direct face attack, Hannah's action shifts the teasing activity to a more confrontational frame; an insult exchange. Hannah's reproach receives a form of hedged agreement in response, *pretty pathetic*, which serves the conversational accomplishment of defusing further conflict while also making fun of herself and returning to the interaction to a jokey tenor.

Example (T5)

Hannah, Sue and Pam having a snack in Hannah's home after sitting a scholarship exam at a different school. This sequence exemplifies an extended prototypical teasing activity illustrating the collaborative nature of teasing actions that build on

preceding talk (Eder 1993; Tannen 1993). It displays certain behaviours typified as characteristic of teases that highlight the equitable nature of the teasing activity (Straehle 1993). Interwoven laughter and its use by all participants are also signals of group recognition and willingness to participate in a teasing activity thus contributing to alliance building.

- P we've gone mental this () haven't we?
H hawhah
P hmmm=we've gone mental
S a(h)m
S yes it must be the school
⇒ H especially=One=of us ((gaze directed to Pam))
P no=which one?
((all laugh))
⇒ P yoU:: (huhuh) ((gaze directed to Hannah))
((all laugh))
⇒ H no=I was thinking of someone else actually
((simultaneous inaudible talk, laughter, all eat maltesers))
P can't stop laughing (huhuhuh)
H must be the maltesers
P ye(huhuh)h=
((lots of joint laughter))
⇒ P yeah= Sue it's all your fau(hh)lt=you've killed *me*=*you're gonna*
get sent to=to malteser jail
((all join in laughing))

In the above sequence Pam jokingly refers to the assembled group as *gone mental*. Hannah then uses the same words to target Pam. The target is not named and becomes an object for group play. Pam, fully aware that she is the butt of Hannah's tease (signalled in Hannah's gaze), adopts a playful stance and enters into the teasing frame. Pam responds in a bout of laughter followed by a deflective and accusatory turn, *yoU:: (hhh)*, tossed back to Hannah in the form of a counter tease. Hannah, now the butt of the tease, takes similar deflective action in *I was thinking of someone else actually*. Hannah's tease displays characteristic indirectness of teasing actions (Eder 1993; Heath 1998).

Speakers' parallel actions key the interaction as another round of playful duelling in which all members are available and subsequently targeted for further group play. All girls signal their willingness to join in the linguistic play interpreting the accusations as game-like (Eder 1990; Straehle 1993; Yedes 1996). Prosodic behaviours and accompanying laughter succeed in

attenuating accusations and generate further group laughter. The interaction takes on a game-like quality that tests the solidarity of the group and the teasing actions build up a conspiratorial quality in which all speakers take turns in excluding co-present participants. Hannah and Pam are playfully “ganging up” on Sue. The teasing action culminates in Pam explicitly targeting the only remaining participant in a named accusation *yeah= Sue it’s all your fau(hh)lt*. Interwoven laughter attenuates the accusation as the teasing sequence dissipates into joint laughter (Ellis 1997), which again serves to bind the group in friendship.

In her selection of the inclusive pronoun *we*, and following tag question inviting group agreement, Pam groups speaker and hearers together as equal agents (Goodwin 1990) contributing to an accomplishment of alliance building. Also, embedded laughter from all speakers is interwoven throughout this interaction and serves to mark it as playful and collaborative. The above example demonstrates a clear pattern of alternating teases, deflections and counter-teases that test the bonds of friendship through linguistic playfulness.

8. Name-calls

Like teasing, name-calls (N) can signal both hostility and playfulness. The forms selected in the following examples, e.g. *numbat*, *sicko*, *dingbat*, *idiot*, *foul face*, *feral*, emphasise an underpinning of the conflict model as they degrade the recipient in some way:

Example (N1)

Sue and Hannah are trying to manage the joint activities of looking at (and kissing) magazines while doing math homework.

- H (0 3) (.) oh (.) now what does nought point eight plus one plus and one point three equal?
 S I’m doing this one
 H two point one
 ((singing))
 ⇒ S numbat=
 ⇒ H =sicko=
 ⇒ S =↑sicko=>you’re the one who’s kissing it<=
 H =I wasn’t (.) I was eating

Example (N1) demonstrates three instances of reciprocal name-calling in latched turns. Beginning with initial playful name-calling (recycled from

earlier in the discourse) the interaction takes on a more confrontational tone where the playful address form *numbat* (referring to a cuddly Australian marsupial unlikely to convey serious offence) is upgraded to the more offensive *sicko*. *Sicko*, a pejorative person descriptor (Goodwin 1990), attributes distasteful characteristics to the recipient. Sue's latched rejection of the negative characterisation is clearly signalled in re-use (Heath 1998) and tossed back to Hannah, reinforced in raised pitch. Speakers' confrontational stances escalate as Sue's disapproval is further emphasised in targeting Hannah's behaviour, *you're the one who's kissing it*. Such action would more likely qualify as grounds for her to be the *sicko*. Speakers are engaged in verbal duelling, tossing accusatory comments at each other, which in turn provoke confrontational responses.

Example (N2)

Hannah and Pam are in Hannah's room looking at magazines and discussing another non-present classmate. The topic of this interaction is a video of the Spice Girls that Pam likes very much. Upon hearing that another classmate received this for her birthday, Pam expresses this as a personal injustice. The complaint triggers the defamatory name-calling sequence about the absent party, Sarah.

- H spice girls the movie
 P oo:h h
 H sarah got that for 'er birthday
 ⇒ P sarah(.)hogbutt
 H yeah huh huh
 ⇒ P I hate(.)SARAH SCHUMPETER(.)why did SHE:
 have to get it(.)why couldn't I: get it?
 H huhhuhuh(.)no(.)because(.)Sue gave it to her
 ⇒ P nnh(.)I hate(.)SUE too(.)why couldn't she give it to me?

Pam indicates her attitude towards Sarah in the name-call *hogbutt*, emphasising physical characteristics that liken Sarah to a pig. The relatively playful name-call receives a preferred response and accompanying laughter from Hannah, indicating her jocular approval. Pam's statement of opinion about the non-present party shifts from relatively mild, playful name-calling to more vicious statements clearly expressed in her lexical choice and further emphasised in her prosodic behaviours, *I hate(.)SARAH SCHUMPETER(.)*. Pam's open hostility is further signalled in the following two rhetorical questions emphasising their differences in terms of her perceived personal injustice. Hannah responds in the next turn with initial laughter indicating that she does not take Pam's outburst of complaint too seriously (Eder 1990).

Name-calling actions with the potential to switch abruptly, upgrading to direct insults index a volatile and unstable frame.

9. Insult exchanges

The three following exchanges display overt face threatening behaviours in forms of insults (I) easily identifiable as being inextricably tied to the recipient in use of the preceding personal pronoun: *you're putrid*; *you're gro (huh) ss (huh)*; *you're a nit wit*; *you(h) idiot*. An insult displays direct opposition by undermining the target's image typically in terms of physical unattractiveness, degradation, and social ineptitude.

Example (11)

- H #[ding ding ding dingbat (.) ding ding ding
 ⇒ (.) you're putrid
 ⇒ S (huhuhuh) feral

While *you're putrid* is undoubtedly an example of a direct personal insult, associating processes of decay with the recipient, it is preceded by singing which serves to mitigate the face attack (Goffman 1974). Rather than disputing the face attack, Sue signals her willingness to treat the interaction as game-like in countering the face attack with a playful response signalled in initial laughter. Demonstrating close attention to Hannah's preceding talk, Sue returns an alternative, yet similarly pejorative, term of abuse. While this insulting exchange is clearly derogatory, both speakers appear to relish the opportunity to participate in reciprocal playful activity; a "contesting" practice reminiscent of ritual insulting practices (Labov 1972) in which speakers seem to derive enjoyment from the very act of providing a smarter response to an accusation or provocation and so negotiating the interaction away from serious dispute. Speakers integrate singing and laughter to key the interaction as non-serious (Eder 1990).

In the following exchange Sue and Hannah are trying to complete their math homework, at times finding it difficult. As they comment upon their respective progress they swing in and out of agreement and disagreement. Speakers are simultaneously eating chocolate, concerned with the off-task discussion of chocolate and disagreeing about that too. The interaction moves swiftly in and out of aligning and non-aligning actions illustrating the precarious nature of this girls' talk in shifting frames:

Example (I2)

- S =I can't work out number five
 H I know it's impossible
 (.)
 S (huhuhhh)
 ⇒ H that's pathetic
 ⇒ S you're pathetic
 H me!
 S an all this choc_l- latey (.) all this choc_l- latey
 H I know(.)I love it when that happens
 S I hate it
 H it's delic:ious
 ⇒ S you're gro(huh)ss(huh)
 H I'm not
 S ()
 H (.) (huhu) I am gross (.)sometimes
 ⇒ S aw(.)jees(.)you're a nit wit=
 H =I'm NOT a nitwit

The frequent gyrating action in and out of playful and confrontational frames is highly prominent. First, speakers align in expressions of agreement and following laughter. The key shifts as Hannah issues the first negative evaluation relating to Sue's efforts at academic competence, *that's pathetic*. Not only does lexical repetition display Sue's close monitoring of Hannah's talk and reflect verbal displays of connection, but it is also upgraded to a personal insult and tossed back to the initiator serving to escalate the duelling frame. According to Heath (1998), this is particularly distinctive in the talk of youth. This sequence again demonstrates the speakers' overriding concern with talk-as-play in their employment of disagreement practices reminiscent of earlier childhood (Garvey 1977: 108) in off-task talk about chocolate in the next turns in the antonymy *I love it . . . I hate it*. Their contrasting views provoke a further insult exchange re-emerging in Sue's issue of a direct insult, *you're gro(huh)ss(huh)*, this time attenuated with embedded laughter. Hannah's initial response signals an overt rejection, but, following a brief pause, she attends to the contextual cues and switches the frame back to more playful negotiation in returned laughter in hedged agreement, (.) (huhuh) *I am gross (.)sometimes*, all of which cluster to key the interaction as playful. Unlike disagreement sequences between peers in earlier childhood, typically closed either by the withdrawal of the participants from the activity, change of activity, or by third party intervention (Vuchinich 1990), this sequence is

negotiated towards more cordial relations engineered by the injured party. Whilst this fragment demonstrates a link to earlier discourse practices of direct opposition, the closing provides evidence of older children's greater sophistication in their ability to manipulate language towards accord and simultaneously serve other conversational accomplishments such as the maintenance of friendly relations and identity construction.

In the following example speakers weave in and out of a series of directly confrontational insulting and name-calling practices: *you (h) idiot*; *num numbat* #; *#dingbat*; *foul face*, which follow bald directives: *you don't put them in the fridge*; *(.)↑stop it*; *stop being disgusting*. Name-calls and insults provoke similar face threatening behaviours from the recipient in forms of returned name-calls. Both participants' use of clustered format tying practices of wordplay, singing and laughter assist in mitigating face attacks:

Example (13)

- ⇒ S you don't put them in the fridge(.)you (h) idiot (.) # n (h) umbat [n (h)um num numbat#
- ⇒ H #[num num numbat (.)num num num numbat# (.)↑stop it (.) we're supposed to be doing homework
- ⇒ S what about (.) what about (.) #dingbat (.)ding ding dingbat#
- ⇒ H four plus four (.) stop being disgusting (.)foul face
- S huhuhuh (.) I'm not (.) fou:l face
- H four times four
- S Hannah can you open
- (.)
- ⇒ H ↑sue:: (.) start doing homework; (.) numbat
- S I a:m (.) doing homework (.) I'm eating my way through homework

Sue issues a bald directive immediately followed by a direct insult, *you(h) idiot*, unambiguously tied to Hannah (Goodwin 1990). Realising that the highly charged pejorative person descriptor is likely to breach the boundaries of friendship, in the same turn Sue attenuates her aggressive and threatening stance, first in laughter (Glenn 1991), next in downgrading the insult form, *idiot*, to a more playful address form, *numbat*,¹ and further by employing the sung modality, thus framing the act non-offensive (Goodwin 1990; Goffman 1974). Hannah, in overlap, returns a reciprocal non-face threatening response joining in and continuing the jocular action of singing, signalling that she has not taken the insult seriously. Tension is displayed and defused in a series of name-calling and insulting practices through which alignments are negotiated

turn by turn. These actions suggest that speakers are developing an awareness of politeness norms and face needs in which they recognise acceptable boundaries of friendly peer interaction and the need to observe and attend to transgressions beyond such boundaries for the sake of maintaining friendship bonds.

10. Discussion

In this analysis I have focused on the forms and the social functions of playful duelling in language use exploring the ways in which they serve to build alliances, negotiate interpersonal relationships and construct identities within one age cohort. I have suggested that girls' talk is marked by its playful nature as evidenced in a range of linguistic features which necessitate speakers' negotiation of reciprocal behaviours. That is not to say, however, that these reciprocal behaviours are always positively directed towards their addressee. Data show speakers playing with aggression, skilfully managed using non-serious keying, to reveal that alliance building and identity work for these speakers is not confined to positive affect strategies. As Norrick says:

Everyday conversation, as well as offering us a chance to play, switching from harmless forms to clearly aggressive ones in attacking the personal characteristics and errors of others" "... speakers convey positive politeness or solidarity by flouting negative politeness conventions, and hence showing the relationship need not stand on formalities. At the same time, apparently aggressive conversational joking enhances rapport by demonstrating co-participation in competitive play on an equal basis. (Norrick 2003: 1333)

These data show that playful duelling is a core component of girls' talk together in which speakers derive pleasure from switching roles back and forth, i.e. from being the instigator of the tease to being the recipient of the tease (Keltner et al. 2001). Duelling talk, adversarial in nature, where agreement is not the desired norm, where speakers make direct face attacks in forms of insults or thinly veiled verbal assaults in name-calls is prominent in these data. Verbal duelling episodes demonstrate similarities with sounding/ritual insulting practices (Labov 1972) and stand in stark contrast to the influential cooperative model associated with women's talk with its emphasis on supportive behaviours (Gilligan et al. 1990). Identity and alliance building is accomplished in part through verbal duelling which helps both to distinguish

talk and reflect the precarious, fragile and temporal nature of alliances at this life-stage. As Eckert (2003: 385) observes, "... girls can get quite mean and their friendships volatile. . . . A major activity among girls is the development of social toughness which can be evidenced through their language practices." We could therefore view verbal duelling in these data as something very necessary and distinctive at this life-stage.

The blurring of more innocuous teasing activities into more face threatening name-calls and insulting exchanges coupled with the multiplicity of conversational accomplishments that can occur within a single turn make it difficult to ascribe boundaries between duelling activities. As the data show, duelling episodes can signal hostility and playfulness, while humour and teases can blur into insults (Eckert 2003; Eder 1993; Goodwin 1990). Heath (1998: 231) reports that "young people are often in each other's heads – and mouths" so much that they "all talk alike, you know, finish each other's thoughts, sentences, and sometimes all say – or yell – the same thing."

In distinguishing boundaries between playful and confrontational duelling, contextual cues play a significant role. Playful practices evident in this corpus of inter-group talk include varied keyings, i.e. format tying, practices of re-use, repetition, partial repetition, both prosodic and syntactic, pitch shift (Goodwin 1990), revoicing (Heath 1998), direct oppositional stance in next turn position (Mendoza-Denton 1999), laughter (Glenn 1991), singing (Coates 1996a). All these resources are important in attenuating potential hostility/provocation and contribute to the unstable nature of the discourse in which elements of collaboration and aggression coexist.

Laughter plays a central role in accepting or rejecting a tease or impropriety, with reactions ranging from disaffiliation to uptake and escalation (Glenn 1991). Laughter's role in the sequential structure of the interaction can inform us about the people involved in these interactions. Understanding laughter as communication, i.e. the social sequencing of shared laughter, marks the bonding effect of sharing a tease.

It is significant that girls' talk frequently accompanies ongoing activities that serve the dual functions of 1) providing a departure point from which amusement through language derives, and 2) a frame to which they can return. Such a backgrounded frame may also assist in accounting for the lesser likelihood that episodes of playful duelling will escalate into extensive or protracted attacks on others – present or non-present. As Coates (1996a: 237) observes, "one of the key ways [girls] accomplish friendship is by playing with language. They flip in and out of subject positions, singing snatches of pop songs . . . mimicking the voices of mothers, friends and teachers. . . ."

People are mostly involved in doing many things simultaneously, and are never exactly sure of “what is going on” at any given moment. They must engage in moment-to-moment communicative work to inform themselves, and the co-construction of an interaction is articulated and embedded in the chain of activities in which participants are mutually engaged (Cicourel 1974). Alliance building and identity construction are thus emergent phenomena of the inherent instability of these interactive episodes. It is suggested that these speakers may be attending more to the momentary aspect of interaction in their exploitation of the “play potential” of language where aggression and rapport play complementary roles (Norrick 2003), rather than attending to more permanent goals of developing longstanding friendships.

Playful confrontation in these extracts from girls' peer talk has been identified in a range of forms of linguistic behaviours. It has been argued speakers revel in the highly visible, oscillating duetting–duelling nature of their talk as an enactment of alliance building and identity construction. It is suggested that specific practices mark girls' talk at this life-stage – language users, who are continuing to test, experiment, explore and exploit the play potential of language. It is further suggested that this gyrating quality of their talk reflects the instability and unpredictability often associated with this life-stage, emphasising its experimental and transitional quality (Eder 1993; Hey 1997). Talk is a promising arena for experimentation and challenge in which speakers test the boundaries of friendships.

11. Conclusion

This study has identified some ways that girls at this impressionable life-stage articulate their social and personal identities through collaborative verbal performances. Data show that playful duelling indexes interactions through which often fragile alliances are linguistically constructed. Findings show that early adolescent girls' talk simultaneously exhibits a range of strategies that can be linked both to childhood discursive practices (Garvey 1984; Corsaro and Rizzo 1990; Vuchinich 1990) and presage cooperative discourse practices associated with women (Coates 1999; Holmes 1995; Tannen 1994). A secondary objective was to understand how these collaborative practices help distinguish this life-stage. Like those who have explored teasing from the context of language socialisation (Keltner et al. 2001; Goodwin 1990; Heath 1998; Labov 1972; Miller 1986; Tannen 1994), this study of playful

interactive practices has emphasised the prosocial outcomes: affiliation, socialisation and conflict management. As older children become more adept at reading contextual cues, they are more likely to integrate attenuating or off-record markers in practices with their peers. To some extent, speakers orient toward solidarity and affiliation through establishing common ground, but significantly, speakers accomplish identity construction and negotiate friendship boundaries, often in highlighting their differences in episodes of verbal duelling.

Social identities tend to be situational not permanent, dynamic and interactively constructed (Duszak 2002), and language is a powerful tool for expressing social identity through which we align and/or distance ourselves. It has been argued that through frequent collaborative verbal duelling performances, speakers structure their social relationships, displaying their “connection” towards each other and their peers. These verbal performances are embedded in spontaneous interaction; they reflect their shifting affiliations and contribute to the creation of young adolescent social networks (Tetreault 2004).

12. Implications for future study

Whilst verbal duelling practices are salient in this discourse, it would be difficult to argue from these limited data that these activities distinguish girls’ talk at this life-stage. Still more studies of this age group from a range of cultural backgrounds (girls, boys, mixed sex talk) are needed to identify and explain the varied conversational accomplishments in early adolescent talk. Further studies of verbal duelling practices using a larger corpus would advance our knowledge and help to explain practices associated with the shift towards independence. Some investigations into boys’ teasing practices and how they differ have been made (Goodwin 1990; Eder et al. 1995; Kowalski 2000; Carlson Jones et al. 2005), but there is a paucity of research with respect to this age group. Future research could explore a greater range of duelling episodes to establish the boundaries between acceptable or playful teasing and cruel teasing and determine the dynamics of teasing. While Conversational Analysis rigorously analyses the minutiae of verbal and audial cues in interactions, visual signals (gaze, facial expressions), proxemics are typically beyond the constraints of this verbal analytic methodology. Future research could consider videotaped interactions as they would provide richer contextual cues.

Appendix. Transcription notation

The transcription system used is based on that of Jefferson (1984) with some modifications. The symbols used in the transcription are:

⇒	the turn in which the duetting/duelling activity occurs
[point of overlap in talk
<u>underline</u>	stressed syllables
CAPITALS	stress significantly marked by volume
=	immediate continuation, latching
()	no gap between intonation curves/breath groups
:	prior sequence lengthened
(.)	brief pause, less than 0.2 of a second
(0.3)	timed pause
((words))	non verbal behaviour
> <	talk that is faster than surrounding talk is enclosed in > <
↑	raised pitch

Note

1. *Numbat* refers to a cuddly Australian marsupial more likely to convey less negative affect.

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Chapter 6

Discursive construction of the JP II Generation in letters of Polish children and teenagers to Pope John Paul II

Urszula Okulska

Students: – *JP II, we love you!*

John Paul II: – *JP too, he loves you!*

(Catholic University of America, Washington, 1979)

1. Introduction: John Paul II – the Pope for people

Twenty seven years of John Paul II's (henceforward JP II) pontificate has had wide-ranging effects not only on the course of the world's (political) history, but also on the life of the whole Christian community. The third longest pontificate, carried out by a man of exceptional personal strength, morality and intelligence, has led Christianity to a point where the dynamic nature of its growth and, hence, also popularity have reached a level unprecedented at any previous stage of its history. The great devotion, charisma and enthusiasm with which the Pope approached his vocation as head of the Catholic Church materialized in concrete acts of institutional and ceremonial transformation that step by step reformed and modernized the Church, opening it for a cross-cultural dialogue towards its unification, and preparing it for a closer contact with other religions and denominations.

The modifications that JP II introduced in the Vatican soon after his accession to the post contrasted his pontificate with all the previous ones in history, changing the position of the Pope with respect to the believers and approximating him to common people. Like his immediate predecessor, he dispensed with the papal coronation, and received ecclesiastical investiture with a simplified inauguration. He was the first to give his first speech in Italian, the major language of his audience, thus breaking with the old tradition of delivering inaugural papal addresses in Latin. As a Pope-traveller, who made over one hundred pastoral trips to over one hundred countries covering all the continents, he introduced the custom of kissing the land of the host country,

and consistently attracted huge crowds, described by observers as the largest ever assembled in human history. During his travels (which were never paid by the Vatican, but by the inviting party)¹ he offered Mass to millions of believers on single occasions,² communicating with the participants in their languages, and often delivering whole services (or, alternatively, reading homilies) fluently in local vernaculars.³ At the meetings, his greatest desire was to establish direct contact with people, and he always persevered in meeting and talking to them personally, which he never suppressed or dropped even after the attempted assassination in May 1981. The humanistic approach that he took and consistently adhered to for the whole of his reign substantiated in the continuation of his regular priestly ministrations, the arrangement of frequent (private) audiences with friends and pilgrims, or attendance at artistic events, such as concerts, performances, or film shows. His spontaneity was manifest especially at meetings with young people, whom he treated with special care, and with whom he shared his sincerity, wit and sense of humour. The embodiment of his special relationship with and deep concern about youth was the World Youth Day, which he established in 1985 with the intention of gathering young Catholics from around the world to celebrate their faith. This tradition has grown over the years, and taken on the form of week-long gatherings that happen every two or three years, bringing together hundreds of thousands of people. The love the Pope had for the young was a reason why he was called “the Pope for the young”.

The dignity with which JP II treated each person was emphasized in his approach to social problems, which he always viewed from the vantage point of the individual, and whose resolution he saw in systemic changes in the way the individual should be treated in the socio-political world. His highest respect for the individual person was pronounced in the defence of human life in all circumstances and at all its stages, which he articulated, for instance, in his encyclical *Evangelium vitae* (1995), fully devoted to the inviolability of human life. He was a staunch supporter of the weak and defenceless: the poor, the ill, the old, the persecuted, whose life conditions, often caused by economic or political reasons, exposed them to humiliation and social degradation. He outspokenly condemned all acts that threaten human life directly, such as murders, suicides, genocides, abortion, euthanasia; those that run contrary to the person’s bodily and mental integrity, such as mutilations, tortures, exerting psychic or physical pressure; as well as everything that deprives people of their dignity, including inhumane living conditions, arbitrary arrests, deportations, slavery, prostitution, or human trade. All these and like practices, he stressed, subjugate the person to the power of “the

stronger", who today can be disguised, for instance, in ideologies, hegemonic systems, technocracies, or mass media, all capable of creating pernicious effects in the form of distorting people's world views, reverting value systems, or violating identities. As such they bring disgrace on the whole of human civilization, covering with shame, he said, not the victims but the perpetrators.

The high esteem with which JPII treated the individual also emerged in the respect that he had for human work (cf., e.g., *Laborem exercens* 1991) and for the family (cf., e.g., *Familiaris consortio* 1993), both these values, he purported, being tightly interconnected in the practice of social life. It is work, he held, that constitutes a fundamental dimension of human existence, as an ultimate source of material goods, indispensable for physical survival, and of intellectual achievements, indispensable for mental, spiritual and cultural progress. It is for these reasons that it frequently becomes, in his view, a motive for social or political tensions, conflicts and crises. One way to eliminate these problems he saw in the necessity to approach man not as an *object* of work, but as its *subject*, who is capable of creating, governing and controlling its process. Irrespective of the value or worth of the work, it is man who should be treated as the *only* aim of work, the latter lying at the foundations of his growth and self-fulfilment. This personal character of human work is tightly linked with and conditioning another (also personal) dimension of human existence, namely family life, which, on the one hand, requires maintenance through work, and, on the other, is each person's first "school of work". It shapes the individual's personhood through both effort and work, and so should be a point of reference or a guiding criterion for establishing socio-ethical orders of work. As a dimension that shapes the communal nature of man, and develops his engagement in social life, the family deserves support and protection by cultural, economic and legal means, so that it can maintain, according to its function, the humanizing role in the formation of both the individual and society (see also *Christifideles laici* 1989). Such a *personalist* stance⁴ emanated from most of the Pope's teachings, and he himself systematically put it into practice, reiterating it throughout the whole of his papacy.

The prominence that JPII gave to the value of interpersonal relations was expressed in his respect to people of all races, cultures and religions, which underlay the ecumenical dialogue that he conducted throughout the pontificate. In articulating the necessity to develop cross-religious and cross-cultural understanding, he maintained Pope Paul VI's view (from his encyclical *Ecclesiam suam*) that a fruitful dialogue is not only an exchange of thought, but also an exchange of gifts.⁵ Cross-religious relations condition a

peaceful symbiosis between different cultures, which should be cultivated as a basis for mutual solidarity, trust and enrichment. The sincere and unbiased cross-religious contact is a key to the brotherhood of men and a way to build a healthy world society, which lies within the responsibilities of each person. Such a position is subsumed especially in three of his encyclicals, *Redemptor hominis* (1979), *Redemptoris missio* (1995) and *Ut unum sin* (1995), where the Pope declares the Church's non-imposive stance in communicating its missionary message, and emphasizes its respect for other religions (resulting from the assumption of religious freedom), whose recognition must result from a deep esteem for man, for his intellect, his will and his conscience. The Pope's openness and readiness for the ecumenical dialogue and for the bringing together of nations were each year symbolically expressed by him in Christmas greetings. He directed them in over sixty languages to both Christian and non-Christian communities, and wished them mutual love and understanding, each time exhorting them to reconciliation and peace. To augment the force of this appeal, he tried to set an example of his own life, both as a man and as head of a church body. In the act of forgiveness he met to talk to his assassinator, Mehmet Ali Ağca, and in the act of apology he asked several peoples who were wronged by the Catholic Church or its believers at various stages of the world's history, for forgiveness.⁶

The search for cultural and religious unity – one of the central themes of JPII's papacy – materialized in his attempts to find common doctrinal and dogmatic ground with representatives of different faiths. Within the Christian denominations, he established good relations, for instance, with the Anglican Church, by receiving Archbishops of Canterbury and preaching in Canterbury Cathedral, and with the Eastern Orthodox Church (of Romania), becoming the first pope to have visited a predominantly Orthodox country since the Great Schism in 1054. Within the non-Christian religions, he improved relations with Judaism, devoting much of his (theological) work to Judeo-Christian relations, and condemning the holocaust and anti-Semitism as unacceptable from the point of view Christianity. He also became the first pope to have ever paid an official visit to a synagogue, arranged (in 1986) in Rome with the help of his close friend from school years, Jerzy Kluger, a Polish Jew living in Italy. Moreover, he tightened relations with the spiritual leader of Tibetan Buddhism, the 14th Dalai Lama, with whom he shared similar views regarding the painful consequences of communism. Finally, he was deeply engaged in reconciliation talks between Christians and Muslims, being the first pope to have prayed in an Islamic mosque (in 2001), where he gave a speech calling the believers of Christianity and Islam for mutual forgiveness.⁷

He is remembered today by many as the pope who kissed the Quran, brought to him as a gift by Muslim clergymen, and the one who hosted “The Papal Concert of Reconciliation” (in 2005), intended to bring together leaders of the Islamic, Jewish and Catholic religions.

Overarching the world’s diversity, embracing the multiplicity of human beings, races, socio-political orders or religions, the above-mentioned initiatives undertaken by the Polish Pope called for the brotherhood of the whole of the “world community”, a community tied together, as he underlined, with the common denominator of God’s Church. Its integrity, he affirmed, is shaped by the solidarity and fraternity of its natural entities, i.e. people, societies and nations, who are all complementary parts of the world’s multicultural mosaic. The accent that JPII put on the pluralistic dimensions and values of interpersonal relations has made people treat him as *their* Pope – “the Pope for people” – and assign him the cognomen *great*, which only three of his predecessors⁸ could boast.

2. The JPII Generation as a socio-cultural phenomenon

JPII’s humanistic stance, repeatedly pronounced by him in the philosophy of his papacy and life, has received a response from those to whom it was directed, i.e. from common people. The sincerity and devotion with which the Pope communicated and defended Christian morals made many openly admit their willingness to follow his footsteps, and to put into practice the truths that he preached. To emphasize the fact that they identify with the person of JPII, as well as with his overall attitude and dealings, they have started to name themselves the “JPII Generation” (Polish *Pokolenie JPII*). Difficult to define as the term is, it can be said to correspond to people of practically all ages, from (mostly) the youngest to the oldest, who agree with and accept JPII’s philosophy, wish to make it their life motto, implement it in their lives, and propagate it to future generations. They openly declare their sense of belonging to the JPII Generation, which they manifest not only in opinions expressed on religious and socio-ethical matters, but also in real initiatives aimed to maintain and enliven their community through concrete activities at the level of both interpersonal ties as well as in-group communication.

The idea of the JPII Generation (JPIIG) emerged in 1997 during the World Youth Day in Paris as a reaction of the young to the Pope’s words that they are “the hope for the world”. He encouraged them to focus on their spiritual growth and maturation, which will enable them to approach others (of

different religions and worldviews) with respect and understanding, and to attain unity with them in faith. The values were presented as determinants of the person's humane development, upon which (especially) the young should build, what he called, "the civilization of reconciliation", based on unconditioned brotherly love. These words were a replica of what JP II said two months earlier in 1997 at a meeting with Polish students during one of his pastoral trips, when he called on the young to build the so-called "civilization of love", words continuously repeated by him towards the end of his papacy. He expressed his trust in the young with the hope that they would take responsibility for the world and protect its future, using their whole strength and enthusiasm to "go against the current" when need arises.⁹ This appeal, as well as the invitation to the upcoming international event that was directed on this occasion to the young around the world, encouraged them to come to France to celebrate the World Youth Day together. Interestingly, the French meeting got a wide press coverage due to the fact that, as was reported, "it assembled participants from over 160 countries and from all parts of the world, in a number exceeding all estimates [transl. U.O.]".¹⁰ In the opinion of the French themselves, this was particularly striking in the light of the lay character of France as a country.¹¹ It is also in connection with this meeting, which was to a great extent a result of JP II's preceding encounters with the young, that the people who responded to the Pope's appeal (by their presence at the events and by their willingness to follow his guidelines) have started to be called, and also started to call themselves, "the JP II Generation".¹²

The late 1990s was a turning point in JP II's dialogue with the young, continued since the beginning of his pontificate, in that there were more and more voices spontaneously coming from different parts of the world as a response to the Pope's calling, and articulating people's outspoken identification with the JP IIIG. There are at least two reasons why this phenomenon emerged at this particular time. First, it was in the 1990s that the children born before and soon after his election, for whom JP II was the only Pope they knew, became a generation of mature people (in their twenties and thirties) reared on and attached to the values propagated by JP II. It will be shown later in this Chapter that it is mainly them that constitute the backbone of the JP IIIG worldwide. And second, the upcoming year 2000 and the Pope's pronounced dedication (accentuated throughout the pontificate) to the idea of "leading Christianity into the third millennium" may have started to bring much anticipated effects in the late 1990s. His appeal to Christians to prepare themselves spiritually for the 2000 jubilee prompted JP II's young followers to launch specific actions to celebrate the anniversary of two thousand years of

Christianity as one of the world's major cultural heritages. The 1997 meetings with young people, both in Poland and France, and especially the one in Paris as the last of this rank and scale before 2000, were thus prophetic of what would happen soon after the jubilee year and, more importantly, at the moment of the Pope's death five years later when we come to the fate of what is called today the JPIIG.

French young people were supposedly the first to mark in a formal way their identification with and membership of the JPIIG, followed largely (but not exclusively) by young people from Canada, the United States, and Poland.¹³ As Philippe Levillain, a French historian of the papacy, unequivocally admits, "In France John Paul II brought into being his generation [transl. U.O.]."¹⁴ Inspired by the atmosphere of the 2000 jubilee (celebrated in Rome during the 15th World Youth Day), the French decided to found officially the Society for the JPII Generation (*Génération Jean-Paul II*). As they report,¹⁵ it was inaugurated on 6th January 2001 (the closing day of the ceremony) in the basilica of Sacré-Cœur in Paris, and took as its motto the Pope's words (from World Youth Day 2000): "If you are who you should be, you will set the world ablaze!" On its official website,¹⁶ it defines itself as a result of JPII's appeal to the young during the jubilee year. The French were soon followed by young people in North America, where first in Canada, in December 2004 (still during JPII's pontificate), at the National Rise Up Conference in Toronto, hundreds of students from several Canadian universities¹⁷ representing the Catholic Christian Outreach (CCO),¹⁸ signed a letter to JPII¹⁹ in which they "affirmed their commitment to live out the values he had been inviting them to for the past many years". They named themselves "agents of change", whose priorities involved igniting the JPIIG "through small acts done with great love, humility and boldness".²⁰ The subsequent initiatives around the JPIIG that emerged in America coincided with or followed the Pope's death, which, on the one hand, enlivened the activities of all the existing movements on both the American and European continents, and, on the other, prompted the emergence of brand new JPIIG-directed undertakings. This is where the Pope's last words have clearly found their posthumous fulfilment:

I sought you out, and now you have come to me . . . And I thank you for this.

The pontifical legacy that JPII has left to his spiritual children materialized in their need to pass it on to subsequent generations in their joint communal effort. Apart from Canadian youth, the idea of cultivating this heritage also inspired young people in the USA, who in mid 2005 (hence soon after the

Pope's death) established Generation JP II, Inc.,²¹ as an offshoot of the pro-life Catholic organization the Kentucky Youth For Life (KYFL). Within its cardinal principles, the association (composed mainly of young adults) includes responding to "JP II's challenging call to the youth for personal sanctity" and for the protection of human life.²² Similar to the previous groups, they explicitly mention (in the first issue of their newsletter)²³ that their mission is inspired by JP II's love for the young.

When it comes to the JPIIG in Poland, it can be said to have reached the status of a noticeable and relevant social phenomenon today. Having grown steadily throughout the whole of JP II's pontificate, it gained a new light and impetus with the Pope's death. Even though it did not originally take formalized shapes, its signs have been observable since the very beginning of JP II's papacy, throughout which the majority of Poles steadily developed a sense of spiritual unity with their Pope, seeing in him their greatest authority and pride, as well as a source of strength, hope and support for the upcoming transformations of the 1980s and 1990s. JP II was someone with whom a large part of the Polish nation shared an inexplicable feeling of emotional closeness, which they visibly expressed in their joy, warmth and excitement each time they met him, both in the country as well as abroad. And this did not concern only the young, who nevertheless have always represented one of the strongest forces of the JPIIG movement in Poland, but also those from other age groups, as well as from different ranks and professions, both clergy and laypeople, for whom JP II was important, who have taken him as an example, and for whom he has always been and will remain a teacher, guide and spiritual father.²⁴ It is they who continued to respond to his papal call by spontaneous acts of everyday humanity inspired by the twenty-seven years of the pontificate, and who also reacted to his last call by coming to him in the final hours to pay tribute to him, and promise loyalty to and continuance of his legacy.

The 2nd April 2005 was a day when Poland went into mourning on a scale and depth the country had never before experienced, which was externally manifested in infinite numbers of candles in streets and windows, black (or white) ribbons on cars and people's clothes, and, most of all, the so far unprecedented week-long silence in the media. It seems that on this day millions of Poles suddenly realized that they were losing, as some of them confess,²⁵ the "obvious" and the "constant", i.e. a man who had always been a part of their lives, played a vital role in shaping their identity as individuals, and influenced the course of their history as a nation.²⁶ This was the time the effects of the Pope's life-long endeavours (to seek out his spiritual children),

whose spirit had for years accumulated in people, suddenly erupted in them as a desire to follow JPII and take responsibility for his heritage. This was also the time when Poles of all generations started articulating more loudly than ever before their identification with JPII and belonging to the JPIIG. This has given rise to concrete group and individual initiatives, as well as private and institutional actions undertaken (mainly by the young) to commemorate the great Pole, and to continue the mission that he inspired.

What is of particular importance for the present investigation is that the JPIIG members have developed certain interactive strategies that express their identity with the group, on the one hand, and constitute, shape and define the community itself, on the other (Okulska in prep.). The overall evidence of the JPIIG interaction, operating both at the level of social relations as well as discourse, indicates that the JPIIG is not only a medial phenomenon, but has become an important socio-cultural phenomenon. Recurrent patterns of social behaviour within the movement may support the claim that the JPIIG represents today a pan-continental, multinational and multigenerational community inspired by the primary goal of following and implementing JPII's ideals. Moreover, common linguistic and textual features altogether shape the JPIIG-specific communication, which may speak in favour of the fact that the JPIIG has also become an integrated and fairly homogeneous discourse community.

3. Constructing the JPIIG in Poland – towards the JPIIG identity of young Poles

The purpose of this study is to scrutinize the discursive construction of the JPIIG in Poland on the basis of personal letters by young Poles to JPII written during his lifetime as an expression of their identification with the Polish Pope and commitment to his ideals. The research is based on c. 500 texts written in the years 2002–2003 by children and teenagers, aged 5–16, of different social backgrounds, from regions of central and southern Poland. It will be shown how in their epistolary communication with the same addressee the young Poles articulate in independent messages their intimate ties with the recipient, and how in a joint voice they simultaneously compose a homogeneous profile of the younger part of the JPIIG in the country. Apart from focusing on the linguistic expression of the JPIIG as a community, the investigation reveals how the concept of “generation” itself is redefined by demarcating the age of its members not in biological terms (*viz.* the *etic*

approach), but according to a shared experience of time (viz. the *emic* approach; see Eckert 1998). In the case of the JPIIG, this time embraces the years of JPII's papacy and life, which have affected the informants' life courses, and, in consequence, their linguistic repertoires. The experience of meeting and being inspired by JPII can be treated as a symbolic indicator of the people's "generational age", marked by the fact of having or reaching a certain level of maturity that allows one to develop a sense of identity with the group. It will be argued that despite the diversity of chronological age inside the community, the informants represent a coherent discourse-based cohort that resorts to similar linguistic strategies in constructing their JPII-linked affiliations and JPIIG identities. The process of moulding the JPIIG is presented from the social constructionist perspective (see, e.g., Berger and Luckman 1967; Sarbin and Kitsuse eds. 1994; Burr 1995), in view of which the social reality and discourse stand in a dialectical relationship, where the processual nature of the socio-cultural world is reflected and constituted by discourse, which is in itself a socially constituted and socially constitutive factor (e.g. Gergen and Gergen 1984; Fairclough 1989, 1992, 1995; Gunnarson et al. 1997; Bargiela-Chiappini and Nickerson 1999; see also Kielkiewicz-Janowiak and Duszak this volume). In this approach discourse functions as an integral part of culture, both as its natural medium as well as its shaping force, and as such it is a consequence, carrier and motivator of interactive practices in socio-cultural space (e.g., Harré 1989; Fairclough 1992, 1995; van Dijk 1997a, 1997b; Okulska and Kowalski 2008). When it comes to the letters from our corpus, they represent one type from a myriad of the JPIIG social practices, or (in the Faircloughian sense) *discourse practices* (some of which were mentioned in the previous section), which altogether constitute the community's *discourse order*, as a network of formative and binding communicative strategies within the JPIIG.

More specifically, the discursive construing of the JPIIG by Polish children and teenagers will be presented in the light of positioning theory (Hollway 1984; Davies and Harré 1990; Harré and van Langenhove 1991; Harré and van Langenhove 1999; see also Bamberg 2005; and Seebus this volume), in view of which interactive activities are channels that generate social and psychological phenomena, including forms of social organization in the external world as well as the beings in which or by which they are realized. It also concentrates on and accounts for how discourse is able to produce and shape the social realm, perceived as "a network of interactions framed within some relatively stable repertoire of rules and meanings" (Harré and van Langenhove 1991: 11). The discourse practices emerging in various fields of

social communication can be treated as participants' "positioning activities", which redescribe the world, thus constituting it anew by modifying and redefining its composite domains. A position is thus a metaphorical concept that discursively collects a subject's social and personal attributes as both an individual and interactant, and that articulates his or her alignments with others, cooperatively negotiated and legitimized in a context-dependent and culture-specific order of speaking. What is stressed within the theory is that discourse activities transmit not only human thoughts, attitudes and feelings, by which they construct the person in psychological, mental, and emotional terms (see, e.g., Mills 1940; Coulter 1979; Averill 1982; Gergen and Davis 1985; Harré and Gillett 1994), but they also "make available positions for subjects to take up" in relation to other people (Hollway 1984: 236), by which they involve individuals in reciprocal relations with their parties, thus making them obtain, what Davies and Harré (1990: 45) call, the "product" of social interaction in the form of interpersonal relations. Such an approach draws attention, first, to dynamic aspects of positions (as opposed to the static quality of the Goffmanian "role"), which are constantly performed, relocated and adjusted by people in interactive encounters, and, second, to the processual, transactional and relational nature of (linguistic) exchange (see, e.g., Wertsch 1991; Schiffrin 1994; Bauman 2000; Wortham 2001), which "unfolds through the joint action of all the participants as they make (or attempt to make) their own and each other's actions socially determinate" (Davies and Harré 1990: 45). The former constitute individuals and groups, who constantly reshape themselves in the various discursive practices they realize through positioning, and the latter constitutes discourse-mediated *social action* (e.g., van Dijk 1997a, 1997b), through which interactants actively, collaboratively and progressively create and change the socio-cultural reality.

The fact that a position expresses the person's psychological and social conditions implies that it also linguistically conveys his or her individual and collective selves (e.g., Harré and van Langenhove 1999b; Moghaddam 1999; Sabat and Harré 1999; Berman 1999; Carbaugh 1999; Wortham 2001; Bamberg 2004; Tellers Ribeiro 2006; Moita-Lopes 2006; Wortham and Gadsden 2006; Baynham 2006), both having, as social psychology widely reports (see, e.g., Deaux 1992), their solid foundations in the social context. These selves form respectively the subject's personal and social identities, produced, instantiated and modified by discourse (e.g., Somers and Gibson 1994; Rubin ed. 1995; Schiffrin 1996; Duszak ed. 2002; Cortese and Duszak 2005; de Fina et al. 2006; Benwell and Stokoe 2006). They are composed of speakers' intimate self-concepts and public self-descriptions, all socially

derived, which represent the most salient criteria according to which people locate themselves and others in discursive positions. Individual and social variation in these generic qualities is a primary motive for all positioning activities enacted in discourse, and at the same time an ultimate driver of all interpersonal/intergroup as well as intrapersonal/intragroup action that finds its way out in communicative positions. The interpretability of both the “personal” and the “social” as referred to selfhood in terms of interpersonal/social similarities and differences as well as relational ties or group membership (cf., e.g., Tajfel 1981; Turner 1987; Hogg and Abrams 1988; Brewer 1991) indicates that (as social constructionists stress) the two types of identity in fact merge (see, e.g., Breakwell ed. 1992) to form some kind of continuum, incorporating both individuating and social-categorical values (cf., e.g., Tajfel ed. 1978, 1982). The complementary nature of these two kinds of self makes them relevant analytical criteria in positioning theory, which applies them to uncover the process of constructing personal and social meanings in discourse, and to grasp their shared constitutive role in structuring forms of socio-cultural life.

A closer insight into how personal and social identities are discursively positioned reveals some vacillation in the way they are enacted and disclosed in interaction, which results from their inherent specificities as well as situatedness in context. When it comes to personal identity, it is said to be composed of a singular, historically rooted and fairly stable self, the so-called *self1* (Harré and van Langenhove 1999a: 7), which expresses “the continuity of one’s point of view . . . in space and time”, and which also involves one’s self-concept as an individual “acting from that very same point of view”. When it comes to social identity, on the other hand, it consists of situationally revealed multiple, discontinuous and changeable selves, referred to as *personas* (or *selves2*), which are coherent clusters of traits “publicly presented in the episodes of interpersonal interaction in everyday world”. In other words, *self1* denotes “what it is to be one and the same person through a life course”, and *personas* – “what it is to be, and to be seen to be, a certain kind of person” (Harré and van Langenhove 1999b: 60) in more inclusive social units that make self not only a personal but also social entity. This may suggest that personal identity is a “relatively permanent residue of each assimilation to and accommodation of a social identity” (Breakwell 1986: 17), and that one’s self-perception actually hinges on which level of identity is salient in any given situation (Turner 1987). The psychological theory of personhood thus encompasses two apparently contradictory and simultaneously operative vectors that guide the process of establishing the individual–collective nature

of self, and that steer the way people constitute themselves through discursive positions locally as subjects in social space, and globally as communities in the cultural realm. The axes juxtapose singular, historically rooted and continuous personal identity on the one hand, with multiple, contextually grounded and discontinuous social diversity on the other (cf. Harré and van Langenhove 1999b: 61). On the individual plane, the vectors control one's self-unity by helping to maintain the sense of self against the multiplicity of personas, all positionally activated in the diversity of events in one's one and only life. On the interpersonal plane, however, they allow us to construct (through discourse practices) a "collective '*one true self*'" [emphasis – U.O.], hiding inside the many other, more superficial or artificially imposed 'selves', which people with a shared history and ancestry hold in common" (Hall 1998: 223) against some "points of *difference* [emphasis in the original] which constitute 'what we really are'; or rather – since history has intervened – 'what we have become'" (Hall 1998: 225). The collective stance in fact brings the essence of *cultural identity*, where, as Hall (1998: 227) purports, "[d]ifference . . . persists in and alongside continuity", and which actually amalgamates both types of identity, as fluid "psychohistorical formations that develop over a person's lifetime, populating intimate terrains and motivating social life" (Holland et al. 2001: 5; see also Helms 1990; Rubin 1995). At the more global level, the common historical experiences equip people (as unitary communities, societies and nations) with shared cultural codes, composed of traditions, systems of values, beliefs, styles of living or languages, which altogether form (fairly) stable and continuous frames of reference and meaning for people to rest on, beneath the discontinuities, ruptures and vicissitudes of their lives (cf. Hall 1998: 223).

Overall, as Nelson (2004: 106) tellingly argues, "to be fully a 'cultural person' in our society is to understand one's role within a variety of culturally determined institutions and milieus, thus broadening one's view of oneself in terms of a complex or hierarchy of identities". Since culture is not intrinsic to the universal human (Cushman 1990), but rather infuses people, structuring them in how they perceive themselves, others and the world (see also Kitzinger 1992), it can be said to shape all forms of human identity, which never arrive already made in people or in their immediate social milieus, but materialize in social practice, inscribed with culturally framed and socially structured discourse activities (Holland et al. 2001). In contexts of interpersonal exchange, the latter are transferred by diversified strategies of interactive positioning, which not only discursively reveal personal, social or cultural shades of individual self, but also dynamically construct culturally rooted

collective self, derivable from historically motivated recurrent patterns of social behaviour. As linguistic exponents of people's sharedness of cultural thought, interactive positions create communal codes of discourse practice, through which they generate social action as a discourse-mediated structuration process in social life. Because positions depict people "doing" things to each other in the world, they can be said to play a performative role in human communication (cf. Harré and van Langenhove 1991: 397; van Langenhove and Harré 1999a: 21), which in the surface layer of interpersonal exchange is exposed by discourse (see also Bazerman 1997; Danet 1997) as a primary mode of social practice (cf. also Moita-Lopes 2006: 294). Its perlocutionary effects in psycho-sociological space can be observed in processes of structuring various forms of individual self (see also Benwell and Stokoe 2006), both in its personal and social disclosures, which aside shaping the individual and collective dimensions of cultural identity (cf. e.g., Schiff and Noy 2006), construct large-scale social arrangements.

The research will demonstrate how, from a multiplicity of people's textual self-portrayals, a coherent profile of a community emerges which is discursively constructed through socially diversified interactive positions that the writers individually adopt in their epistolary writings to the same addressee. The process of construing the JPIIG in Poland will be presented from the vantage point of young Poles implementing in their letters to JPII simultaneously operative acts of tacit self- and other-positioning (Harré and van Langenhove 1991; van Langenhove and Harré 1999a), in which the authors enact their personal and social selves by positioning, first, the Pope with respect to themselves (other-positioning), and second, themselves with respect to the Pope (self-positioning), each time reciprocally locating themselves and their interacting party in diversified formats of social exchange. The children and teenagers provide the discursive descriptions of their identity in reference to specific socio-cultural values communicated to them earlier by the Pope, by which they not only reveal their world beliefs and life ideals as JPII followers, but also enter, as it were, into a dialogical interaction with their recipient. On the one the hand, they respond in it to his appeal, and on the other, they draw a linguistic portrait of the Pope, both as a paragon of virtue and as a person in the eyes of young representatives of Polish society. It will be demonstrated that through the JPII-inspired qualities that the authors invoke they formulate a set of recurrent "age-insensitive" JPIIG "universals", which altogether constitute the "JPIIG community code", consolidating the JPIIG members at all life stages. Not only do linguistic reflexes of this code represent characteristic features of the (age-universal) JPIIG discourse, but they also act as culturally

grounded discourse markers that structure the social practice of letter writing within the community, and – through this means – perform and bind the JPIIG itself as a larger arrangement in socio-cultural space.

3.1. Constructing the JPIIG identity through other-positioning

Similar to what can be observed in the JPIIG discourse in general (Okulska in prep.), the most evident linguistic sign through which Polish children and teenagers express their affiliation with the JPIIG is through foregrounding the person of the Pope in their texts, and composing their letters according to the JPII-oriented hyperthemes. The frequent references to JPII that the youngsters make invoke the person of the Pope in contexts of their life-worlds, by which the authors position JPII with respect to themselves, simultaneously revealing both their personal and social selves as shaped in the spirit of JPII's humanistic approach and his pontifical teaching. The instances of other-positioning in the letters studied involve two kinds of strategies in which the authors construct and reveal, by specific ways of JPII-positioning, their own identities as people inspired by and aligned with the Pope.

The first of the gambits gathers instances when JPII is discursively portrayed as a spiritual father and friend, in rapport-building forms of address as well as parent-related and friendship-focused topics, whereas the second encompasses those indexical markers that position JPII as a teacher and paragon of virtue, by pointing to his widely admired achievements, both as head of a church body and a person. The former constitute sites where the youngsters perform their identities as his spiritual children, members of the Church community, and friends, whereas the latter form a ground for the authors to construct their self-images as JPII's disciples and admirers.

3.1.1. Positioning JPII as a father and friend: Constructing the JPIIG identity as the Pope's spiritual children, members of the Church community and friends

One of the ways in which the children and teenagers express their JPIIG identity is by depicting the Pope as their spiritual father and friend. The first of the images is discursively realized through JPII-directed markers of address and endearment, as well as through parent-related topics as the texts' hyperthemes. When it comes to the former, the decisive majority of the structures used reveal the authors' need to establish close and intimate rapport

with the recipient, as opposed to infrequent cases of formalized address markers (normally used to refer to a person of this position and rank on official occasions), which in this context bring some flavour of institutional hierarchy and distance. When it comes to the latter, the topical units that invoke the Pope's fatherly positions all contribute to establishing intimate parent-child relations between the interlocutors. The intimacy of this contact and the youngsters' desire to approximate themselves spiritually to their Pope results also in positioning him as their friend, which additionally expresses the spontaneity and reciprocity of the relations between JPII and the young people.

The most typical way of presenting JPII through the epistolary markers of address and endearment is by positioning him as *Ojciec* 'Father' in the traditional solidarity- and respect-bearing formula *Ojciec Święty* 'Holy Father'. In its different realizations it can be pre-modified by polite determiners expressing various degrees of in/formality and interpersonal closeness. Starting with the most standardized and neutral polite modifiers *czcigodny* 'venerable' and *wielebny* 'reverend', the address marker can additionally be preceded by the positively evaluating epithets *drogi* 'dear', *dobry* 'good' and *miły* 'nice', as well as by the most frequent in the collection affectionate terms *umilowany*, *kochany*, *ukochany* 'beloved' (or its superlative *najukochańszy*), and *najdroższy* 'dearest'. What is interesting is that the expression *Ojciec Święty* is often reduced to its short form (*Drogi/Dobry/Kochany*) *Ojciec*, which in the light of the letters' spontaneity may indicate that the young authors perceive JPII as their spiritual father. This is especially evident in that the bare form *Ojciec* is sometimes preceded by the inclusive determiner *nasz* 'our', the possessive pronoun *mój* 'my', or the emotive adjectival phrase *bliski sercu* 'close to the heart'. On the one hand, they communicate the sense of collectivity in people engaged in matters of JPII's life (as in the case of the first), and on the other, underline a high level of affection that the authors express towards the addressee (as in the case of the last two), all pointing to an intimate character of relations that the senders try to establish with their addressee. By positioning the Pope as their spiritual father the youngsters simultaneously enact their own positions as his spiritual children, thus voicing their affinity directly with JPII and implicitly with the JPIIG.

Among the less frequent address formulae applied in the texts under scrutiny there are more official hierarchy-marking indexicals communicating the children's and teenagers' identification with JPII as a leader of the Catholic Church. Beside single occurrences of fully official and neutral address forms, by which the youngsters express deference to JPII's institutional rank, such as *Najwyższa głowo Kościoła* 'The highest Head of the Church', *Wasza/Jego*

Świątobliwość 'Your/His Holiness', or *Wysoka Ekscelecncjo* 'High Excellency', the collection includes stylistically blended formulae pronouncing the authors' feelings for JPII as their Pope and their affinity with the Church as run by its leader. Accordingly, the writers address JPII by the hybrid phrases *Drogi/Kochany Papieżu* 'Dear/Beloved Pope', (*Kochany/Drogi Janie Pawle (II)* '(Beloved/Dear) John Paul (II)', *Papieżu Janie Pawle II* 'Pope John Paul II'). Similar to the *Ojciec* phrases discussed above, they all communicate the youngsters' affection for JPII, especially through the semi-formal modifier *drogi* 'dear' or the affectionate *kochany* 'beloved', and additionally voice the people's respect for his rank, especially through the official function marker *Papieżu* 'Pope' or the Pope's taken name *Janie Pawle* 'John Paul'. Through positioning the Pope as head of the Catholic Church the informants enact their own positions as the Church members, by which they reveal their personas as representatives of the Church community, with JPII as its leader.

The closeness that the people feel towards JPII is not only expressed in the epistolary address formulae, but also in topics raised, which often articulate the authors' need to share with the Pope their intimate emotions, and to confide to him their personal problems. It is especially through these thematic motifs that the youngsters ascribe to JPII fatherly attributes, which can be observed especially in cases when he is positioned as their close relative and caregiver (1, 2 below), and as protector and supporter (3–5):

- (1) *Drogi Ojczy,*
*Wiem, że nie możesz do mnie przyjechać, ale **bardzo Cię kocham**. Śni mi się . . . , że **spaceruję z Tobą, przytulam się do Ciebie** i zbieram dla Ciebie kwiatuszki.* (Anna, 5)
 'Dear Father,
 I know you cannot come to me, but **I love you very much**. I dream . . . **I am taking a stroll with you, cuddling up to you**, and picking flowers for you.'
- (2) *Dobry Ojczy,*
*Chciałabym, abyś przyszedł do mnie i **przytulił mnie do swojego ciepłego serca**.* (Diana, 9)
 'Good Father,
 I would like you to come to me and **embrace me to your warm heart**.'
- (3) . . . *Kochany Ojczy, **mam do Ciebie wielką prośbę**. Proszę Cię, abyś pomodlił się za zdrowie męża mojej siostry, bo jest poważnie chory* . . . (Paulina, secondary school)

‘... Beloved Father, **I have a great request**. Please, pray for the health of my sister’s husband, as he is seriously ill ...’

- (4) *Drogi Ojcie Świąty,*
... *Chciałbym, abyś czuwał nad nim [bratem] i moją rodziną.* (Piotr, secondary school)

‘I would like you to **take care of him [my brother] and my family.**’

- (5) *Drogi Ojcie Świąty!*
Piszę do Ciebie w nietypowej sprawie. Nie dotyczy ona mnie, ale mojej najlepszej przyjaciółki Pauli. ... Przesyłam gorące buziaki i moc uścisków. (Agnieszka, 15)

‘Dear Holy Father,

I am writing to you because I have an unusual matter that I would like to share with you. It does not concern me, but my closest friend, Paula. ... I am sending you **lots of warm kisses and hugs.**’

The diversity of the authors’ ages in the examples quoted indicates that positioning JPII as a father is independent of this extralinguistic factor, and points to the fact that such an attitude is common with both the younger and older informants studied. As examples (1–5) above suggest, the picture of JPII as a father is frequently presented in, but not restricted to, letters marked by the affectionate address formulae already discussed *Dobry/Drogi/Kochany Ojcie* ‘Good/Dear/Beloved Father’ (see 1–3; cf., 4, 5), all these texts overtly marking the authors’ positions as the Pope’s spiritual children. In the first two cases, such a stance is discursively constructed by the children’s open expressions of their love for JPII (1) and their desire to experience direct and close contact with him (1, 2), typical of child–parent relations. In the three remaining instances, by contrast, the writers’ childlike positioning can be decoded from the Pope’s fatherly attributes of a caregiver, counsellor and protector, who (through his prayers to God) may intervene in familial problems (3, 4), and help or advise in matters of (inter)personal nature (5). The intimacy of these relations is additionally emphasized by informality markers, such as those in (5): *Piszę do Ciebie w nietypowej sprawie* (‘I am writing to you because I have an unusual matter that I would like to share with you’) or *Przesyłam gorące buziaki i moc uścisków* (‘I am sending you lots of warm kisses and hugs’). They bring into the writings a certain degree of confidentiality (in the former), and eliminate in them the sense of interpersonal distance. By these multiple positionings of JPII as a parent-like persona and by implementing the solidarity-raising linguistic devices, the young authors

create their own discursive identities as the Pope's children, who dedicate themselves to his fatherly love, care and protection.

The closeness of interpersonal ties between JPII and the youngsters, and their desire to approximate themselves to the recipient, supposedly in return for the warmth that they have received from him, make the children and teenagers additionally express his attributes of a friend:

- (6) *Ty kochasz wszystkich, ale szczególną miłością obdarzasz dzieci i młodzież.* (Mariola)
'You love everyone, but **you give special love to children and young people.**'
- (7) ... *Ty jesteś **przyjacielem wszystkich ludzi** na całym świecie.* (Bartek, 13)
'You are a **friend of all people** all around the world.'
- (8) *Masz doskonały kontakt z nami, czyli współczesną młodzieżą.* (Barbara, 16)
'**You have great empathy with us**, the young people of today.'
- (9) ... *jako największy przyjaciel młodzieży potrafisz z nią rozmawiać nazywając ją "nadzieją dla świata"* (Jarek)
'... **as the greatest friend of young people you can talk with them** referring to them as "the hope for the world"'
- (10) *Dziękuję Ci za ... słowo, które często było przepelnione humorem.* (Magdalena, 12)
'I thank you for your **words, which were so often filled with humour.**'

What the authors stress is that JPII is not only a friend of the young (6), but also of all people (7). They especially value his ability to empathize with them (8), talk with them (9), and share with them his sense of humour (10). By producing the Pope's discursive position of their friend, the writers simultaneously underline the affection that they have for him, thus figuring themselves also as his friends, which they articulate outspokenly in their desires to form with him a spiritual community (for a discussion see Section 3.1.2. below).

3.1.2. Positioning JPII as a teacher: Constructing the JPIIG identity as the Pope's disciples

By making use of the highly interactive mode of discourse practice such as letter writing, the authors have at their disposal plenty of linguistic means

and a variety of perspectives through which they can express their solidarity with their recipient. The examples above have demonstrated just two discursively constructed images of the Pope, positionally enacted by the youngsters as a result of the linguistic transmission of their cultural knowledge. This illustrates the way certain socially recognized clusters of personal traits and historical circumstances have allowed the people to perceive JPII as their father and friend, and, which follows from it, project their own self-images in reference to him. As Evangelisti Allori (2005: 213) purports in reference to the socio-cultural process of identity formation, a clue to the cultural identification and interpretation of the values and beliefs delivered by language lies in metaphor, which especially the concept of “father” corresponding to JPII in our case represents (see, e.g., [1–5] above). The culturally grounded qualities and socio-historically evolved attributes of fatherhood that it transmits through the interactants’ positions constitute specific cognitively structured social categories that attract the young to JPII, make them conceptualize him as their father, and – in consequence – consolidate them as a group of individuals who construct their personal, social and cultural identities in affinity with his person. A systematic observation of metaphor from the socio-cultural vantage point can thus be a relevant source of information on ways of being, thinking and interacting, since the trope triggers a kind of analogical thinking that operates through chains of associations, or multiple correspondences (cf. Levinson 1983: 159), intrinsic to a given culture (Bolletrieri Bosinelli 1988: 14). As a positionally invoked conceptualization of people’s life experiences and perspectives on reality (see also Berman 1999), metaphor constitutes a viable tool in the texts under scrutiny through which the authors produce diversified linguistic portraits of JPII as their addressee. It also uncovers sets of socio-cultural values that, on the one hand, align them with the Polish Pope, and, on the other, constitute points of reference around which they construct their individual selves as JPIIG members, and shape the collective dimension of their cultural identity as the JPIIG community. Accordingly, alongside presenting the Pope as their father and friend, the writers additionally convey the metaphorical image of JPII as a teacher, which they discursively produce by locating the Pope in a variety of “parallel positions” (Moghaddam 1999: 77) generated (on multiple levels at a time) through references to various religious, moral and socio-ethical values accentuated in the pontificate. Through acknowledging the educative value of these guidelines for their lives the youngsters simultaneously enact their own positions as JPII’s disciples.

3.1.2.1. JPII as an authority and guide

Among the various discursive projections that construct JPII's overall portrait as a teacher are those of an authority and guide, who explains the principles of the Christian faith, indicates life ideals, and shows how to realize the humanistic approach to other people. As is often reiterated in the letters studied, not only does the Pope do this explicitly in his preaching, but also implicitly by setting an example of his own life. What seems crucial to the children and teenagers on the religious plane is that JPII, as they frequently confess (see, e.g., [11–13]), approximates them to God by presenting Him to them (11), and by showing how to deepen one's faith, as a source of internal strength on the way to God himself (12) and to happiness and self-fulfilment (13):

- (11) *Dziękuję Ci za to, że tak dobrze przedstawiasz nam naszego Boga.* (Justyna, 14)
 'I thank you for how well you present our God to us.'
- (12) ... *dziękujemy, że uczysz nas wierności Bogu.* (Agnieszka, primary school)
 '... we thank you for teaching us how to be faithful to God.'
- (13) *Naucz mnie kochać Boga naszego
 I traktować jak przyjaciela swego.
 Naucz mnie mieć wiarę w Boga taką,
 By była zawsze moją Itaką.
 Bym mogła znaleźć w niej ukojenie,
 A także życiowe spełnienie.* (Katarzyna, 15)
 'Teach me to love our God
 And to treat Him as my friend.
 Teach me to have such faith in God
 That it may always be my Ithaca.
 That I can find comfort in it
 And my life's fulfilment.'

As the examples show, positioning JPII as a teacher of religious values frequently takes place in acts of gratitude (sometimes expressed in the form of lyrics, as in [13]), realized through thanking formulae, such as *Dziękuję Ci* 'I thank you' (11), *dziękujemy* 'we thank you' (12), and is discursively rendered through phrases communicating teaching-related activities, such as *przedstawiasz* 'you present' (11), *uczysz nas* 'teaching us' (12), or *naucz mnie* 'teach me' (13). The fact that the youngsters perceive the Pope as their guide

is emphasized in positioning him as ‘a living example’ (*żywy przykład* – [14]) of ‘love, wisdom, and goodness’ (*miłości, mądrości i dobroci* – [15]) which should be followed in terms of the maintenance of one’s faith and hope (14), and perseverance to realize one’s goals, propagate religious truths (16), and protect peace (16, 17):

- (14) *Ty wciąż dajesz nam żywy przykład tego, że nie należy tracić wiary i nadziei.* (Mariola)
 ‘You continue to give us **a living example** that **one should never lose faith or hope.**’
- (15) *... jesteś przykładem miłości, mądrości i dobroci.* (Damian, 8)
 ‘you are **an example of love, wisdom, and goodness.**’
- (16) *Tyle wytrwałości w dążeniu do celu, takiego serca czystego . . .
 Któż dla prawd wiary podróżuje tak po całym świecie, . . .
 Kto walczy nie czynem, ale i słowem także o pokój, . . .* (Ewelina)
 ‘So much **perseverance to reach one’s goal**, such a clean heart . . .
 Who else in search of **faith’s truths** travels around the world, . . .
 Who **fights** not with deeds but with words also **for peace** . . .’
- (17) *... jesteś dla mnie największym autorytetem moralnym i duchowym. W Tobie, Ojczy Świąty, widzę światelko, które oświeca nas wszystkich. Państwa toczą ze sobą wojny, ludzie się wzajemnie zabijają. Ty starasz się temu zapobiec . . .* (Sebastian)
 ‘. . . you are my **greatest moral and spiritual authority**. I can see in you, Holy Father, a **light that illuminates us all**. Countries fight wars against each other, people kill each other. You try to prevent this.’

The Pope’s image as an example is complemented by positioning him in (17) explicitly as ‘the greatest moral and spiritual authority’ (*największym autorytetem moralnym i duchowym*), and by producing in the next sentence his additional metaphorical picture of a ‘light’ (*światelko*) that illuminates all people (*oświeca nas wszystkich*). On the one hand, such discursive renditions of JPII once again paraphrase his representation as a teacher and guide, who leads his followers through life routes, and on the other, they confirm the authors’ self-perceptions as his disciples, who are willing to learn from him the religious and moral principles which they wish to implement in their lives. This is overtly emphasized and recapitulated in a letter by a ten-year-old, Kasia (in [18] below), for whom the Pope is a guide who knows ‘how to

show people the way that is best for them', a 'paragon of virtue', and most importantly – a 'way' (lit. 'road sign' *drogowskazem*) that can be relied on and trusted:

- (18) *Ty umiesz wskazać ludziom drogi, które dla nich będą najlepsze. . . . Twoja osoba jest dla mnie wzorem do naśladowania. Jesteś dla mnie drogowskazem.*
(Kasia, 10)
'You know how to **show people the way that is best for them**. . . . You are my **paragon of virtue**. You are my **way**.'

However, as the research material shows, and as has been signalled above, the informants describe JP II as a teacher, authority and guide not only in terms of conveying and explaining to them religious and moral truths, and generally leading them through their lives, but also in terms of instructing them how to put into practice the humanistic approach, which he so strongly verbalized throughout his whole pontificate. Accordingly, he is portrayed as a person who in the example of his own life showed how to love and say "thank you", how to forgive and ask for forgiveness, as well as how to respect and bring comfort to other people. Most of these attributes are voiced in (19) below, where the author expresses his identification with the Pope (similar to [11] and [12] above) in his gratitude for everything JP II has done personally to him and globally to the world. This is phrased in the initial formula *dziękuję Ci* 'I thank you', elliptically repeated in the subsequent lines, the fifth of which overtly communicating the Pope's parallel positions of a 'Father and Pastor' of the contemporary world:

- (19) . . . *dziękuję Ci* . . .
 . . . *że budzisz zaspany świat do miłości Boga i bliźniego!*
 . . . *że . . . prawdę rozżarzasz sumienia!* . . .
 . . . *że uczysz przebaczać i prosić o to samo!*
 . . . *że jesteś, bo jaki byłby ten świat bez Ciebie, swego Ojca i Pasterza!*
 . . . *że uczysz dziękować!* (Jarek)
 'I thank you . . .
 . . . for waking up the world to the love of God and that of one's neighbour! . . .
 . . . for **setting consciences ablaze!** . . .
 . . . for **teaching** to forgive and to ask for forgiveness!
 . . . for just being, for what would the world be like without you, without our **Father and Pastor!**
 . . . for **teaching** us to say thank you!'

It is through the macro speech act of thanking (realized by the whole text; cf. also van Dijk 1997a: 15), as well as through the acknowledgement (in the final line) of the educating character of JP II's mission, that the writer positions the Pope as his authority and teacher, and simultaneously performs his own self-disclosure as JP II's admirer and disciple.

The impact of JP II's pontifical and life achievements on the formation of the people's personal and social selves is not only reflected in the writers' confessions that they treat the Pope as their example, but also in their overt references to certain facts from the Pope's life that have influenced their ways of thinking and evaluating external reality. JP II's approach to his enemies and, especially, to his assassin is of serious relevance for the people – a theme recurrent in the texts studied, for whom, as some of the authors stress, he is able to pray (20), and whom he was able to forgive (21):

- (20) *Potrafisz modlić się za Twoich wrogów, za tego, który chciał Cię zabić. . . . Każdy powinien brać z Ciebie przykład.* (Celina, 15)

'You know how to pray for your enemies, for the one who wanted to kill you. . . . Everyone should take you as an example.'

- (21) *Ty przebaczyłeś człowiekowi, który chciał Cię zabić. Za to Cię podziwiam.* (Ula)

'You have forgiven a man who wanted to kill you. I admire you for this.'

The impression that such a stance has made on the youngsters has found its expression in their overt exhortations for others to follow JP II, as the exhortation in (20): *Każdy powinien brać z Ciebie przykład* ('Everyone should take you as an example'), as well as in their admiration for his attitude, as in (21): *Za to Cię podziwiam*. ('I admire you for this.'), both indicating the authors' willingness to become the Pope's disciples.

Finally, positioning the Pope as an authority and guide in humanistic philosophy is discursively realized in the emphasis the writers place on how and the extent to which he expressed love for other people. It materialized, as they report, in the respect he showed to each person, of any origin, age or race, which is accentuated, for instance, in (22) below, where the author draws attention to JP II's love for 'those who are small and those who are large' (*Kochasz małego i dużego*), irrespective of 'the colour of their skin' (*kolor skóry*):

- (22) *Kochasz małego i dużego. . . . Nieważny dla Ciebie jest kolor skóry* (Tomek)

**'You love those who are small and those who are large . . .
You do not care about the colour of their skin'**

Similarly, in (23) the writer accentuates a similar aspect of JPII's approach to other people, and expresses the view, shared by many JPIIG members, that it is supposedly this trait that makes people return to him the love that he gives:

- (23) . . . *traktujesz wszystkich ludzi jednakowo. Jednakowo kochasz każdego człowieka. Myślę, że ta cecha decyduje o tym, że ludzie odwzajemniają Twoją miłość.* (Beata)
'You treat all people as equal. You love each person alike. I think it is this trait that makes people return your love.'

Textual reflections of the warmth that the people have received from JPII, as well as of his educating role in their lives, can also be traced in how the youngsters speak about his homilies. As the author of (24) remarks, they 'bring comfort to human hearts, and teach what is most important, namely, the love of God and of one's neighbour':

- (24) *Twoje . . . homilie pokrzepiają ludzkie serca i uczą tego, co najważniejsze, czyli miłości Boga i bliźniego.* (Dorota)
'Your . . . homilies bring comfort to human hearts, and teach what is most important, namely, the love of God and of one's neighbour.'

It is through the reference to the educating influence of the Pope's preaching that the girl metaphorically positions JPII as a teacher and guide, and at the same time produces her own self-description as his disciple and adherent to the values that he popularized in his pastoral mission.

3.1.2.2. JPII as a supporter and mediator

Apart from the metaphorical pictures of the Pope as an authority and guide, who leads people on tracks of spiritual life, and shows ethical and moral values as prescribed by the principles of the Christian faith, the overall portrait of JPII as a teacher constructed in the writings by the young authors invokes some of his additional educating images, including that of a supporter in (inter)personal and social matters as well as a mediator in public affairs. As is often reiterated in the texts studied, his consistency in realizing the humane approach in these life milieus should be treated as a reference

point according to which people should evaluate and modify their own life conduct.

Positioning JPII as a supporter often takes place in reference to the way he treated those who are weak (in various spheres of human existence), and whose life conditions or circumstances have shifted them to the margins of social life. As examples (25–28) indicate, the values that the youngsters appreciate most in their recipient in this context include sharing his hope, faith and sympathy with the sick (25), the exhausted and the sad (26), as well as providing (spiritual) support for those who suffer from shortages (27), or those who struggle with evil (28):

- (25) *Jeździsz po całym świecie, by nieść ludziom nadzieję i wiarę. . . . podróżujesz do chorych, by ich cierpienie nie było daremne. . . . Zawsze współczujesz, pocieszasz, . . . Jesteś dla nas wzorem do naśladowania.* (Agnieszka)

‘You travel around the world to **carry hope and faith to people**. . . . you travel to **the sick so that they do not suffer in vain**. . . . You always **bring sympathy, comfort**, . . . You are an example to follow.’

- (26) . . . *podtrzymujesz wciąż nadzieję w umęczonych, smutnych ludziach.* (Natalia, 8)

‘. . . you keep **hope alive among those who are exhausted, sad**.’

- (27) *Jesteś tam, gdzie ludzie cierpią niedostatek* . . . (Artur)

‘You are there where **people suffer from shortages**.’

- (28) *Pomagasz nam przezwyciężyć wszelkie zło.* (Barbara, 16)

‘You help us **overcome all evil**.’

What is interesting is that the Pope is not only depicted as a supporter of certain groups of people (as in [25–27]), but also of individual persons (see, e.g., [28], [29]), who often share with him their intimate problems, and are convinced that he will come to them with comfort, help and advice:

- (28) *Mnie pewnie też byś powiedział jakimi ścieżkami mam chodzić. Pocieszyłbyś mnie w samotności, podźwignął z upadku i zawsze byś mi pomagał podejmować trudne decyzje.* (Kasia, 10)

‘You would no doubt tell me, too, **which ways I should choose**. You would **comfort me in my loneliness, lift me up from any downfall**, and you would always **help me take difficult decisions**.’

- (29) *Piszę ten list do Ciebie, ponieważ **nie wiem, co mam robić**. . . . Pewna osoba od półtora roku nie odzywa się do mnie, zresztą ja do niej też. Chciałbym się z nią pogodzić, ale nie wiem jak zacząć. . . .* (Marek)

'I'm writing this letter to you, since **I don't know what to do**. . . . For a year and a half a certain person has not spoken to me, nor I to her. I would like to bring about reconciliation, but I don't know how to start. . . .'

They frequently combine the Pope's image of a supporter with that of a guide, who will lead them on life roads, bring comfort in loneliness and downfalls, and accompany them in life decisions (28), as well as with that of a counsellor, who will help them solve interpersonal problems by offering his wisdom and advice (29).

The educating impact that JPII has exerted on the young Poles is not only reflected in how they figure him as a supporter in personal and social matters, but also in how they present him as a mediator in public affairs, both in local and global contexts. The former is illustrated in (30), where the author wishes that JPII could use his mediating skills to affect students' conduct at school:

- (30) *Bardzo bym chciał, żebyś był na uroczystości nadania Naszej Szkole Twojego imienia. Może wtedy **moi niezbyt dobrzy koledzy staliby się lepsi, miłsi, bardziej uprzejmi**.* (Michał, 12)

'I would love you to be present at naming ceremony of our school to be named in your honour. Maybe then **my not very good schoolmates would become better, nicer, and kinder**.'

The latter is subsumed in (31–34) below, where the writers express their identification with the Pope as a person of great moral integrity and righteousness in his approach to large-scale problems of an (inter)national, cross-religious and political nature. As example (31) implies, the attributes that the young people seem to admire most in their addressee, and wish to implement in their own lives, include courage and willingness to fight, as well as the ability to attract and reconcile people of different worldviews and religions. The author's desire to learn these skills from JPII can be read from her statement that everyone would like to have them (*Każdy chciałby mieć* . . . 'Everyone would like to have'), from her evaluation of these qualities in terms of the Pope's great achievements (*To dzięki Tobie* . . . 'It is thanks to this'), and from her admiration of the effort that he puts into everyday dealings (*Bardzo Cię podziwiam* . . . 'I admire you very much'). By condemning corruption and mendacity in public life, she constructs her own discursive position as a

defender of the ethical and moral values that were strongly accentuated by JP II in his pontificate:

- (31) *... Ty dodajesz ludziom nadziei i odwagi na lepsze jutro. ... W naszych czasach ludzie tracą zaufanie do autorytetów politycznych i religijnych z powodu korupcji i zakłamania. Najwyższym uznaniem cieszą się jedynie ci ludzie, których postępowanie jest zgodne z głoszonymi słowami. Najwierniejszym przykładem takiego człowieka jesteś właśnie Ty Ojciec Święty. Każdy chciałby mieć tak ogromną wolę walki i umiejętność pojednania ludzi jak Ty. To dzięki Tobie wiele religii i ich wyznawców stało się dla siebie sprzymierzeńcami. Tylko Ty potrafisz zjednać ze sobą wyznających różne poglądy. Bardzo Cię podziwiam za trud i modlitwę jaką wkładasz w codzienną pracę.* (Elżbieta)
 ‘You give people hope and **courage** for a better tomorrow. ... These days people are losing trust in political and religious authorities as a result of **corruption and mendacity**. The greatest respect is given only to those who conduct themselves in accordance with what they say. The most faithful example of such a man is you, Holy Father. Everyone would like to have such a strong will and your ability to reconcile people. It is thanks to this that many religions and their believers have become allies. Only you can reconcile those who hold different views. I admire you very much for the effort and prayer that you put into your everyday work.’

A similar stance is represented in the three remaining examples (32–34), which jointly produce the Pope’s metaphorical image of a teacher of mediating skills and of moral conduct in socio-political life:

- (32) *Dziękuję Ci za Twój płomień ... czysty. Za to, że niesiesz wszędzie dobroć i wielki zapal. ... Twoja miłość zbliża ludzi.* (Mariusz)
 ‘I thank you very much for your **clean ... light**. For the goodness and enthusiasm that you take everywhere. ... Your love brings people together.’
- (33) *Ostatnio słuchałem Twojej prośby, by przerwano działania wojenne w Iraku.* (Michał)
 ‘Recently I was listening your **plea to stop the military action in Iraq**.’
- (34) *... przesyłam Ci ... słowa wdzięczności ... za szczególną troskę o losy Ojczyzny i rodaków ...* (Monika)
 ‘... I’m sending you words of gratitude ... for your special **concern for the fate of the Motherland and compatriots** ...’

Accordingly, in (32) the writer projects, in the metaphor ‘clean ... light’ (*płomień ... czysty*), JP II’s discursive position of a guide, who should be

followed in the way he shows love, goodness and enthusiasm in bringing people together. In (33), in turn, the Pope is portrayed as a mediator in the war in Iraq, whose peaceful undertakings are traced, recorded and supposedly memorized by people from the young generation. Finally, in (34) he is presented as a man whose mediation has altered the fate of his own country and compatriots, the latter outspokenly communicating to him their gratitude for what he did for Poland. They additionally give testimony to the lesson that they have learned from his contribution to Polish history, thus expressing their awareness of the responsibility that they should take for protecting and cultivating national values, which their Pope taught them. By adopting such discursive standpoints the authors construct their self-images as JP II's followers and disciples.

3.2. Constructing the JP IIG identity through self-positioning

Parallel to revealing their selves as JP II's disciples in the JP II-directed discourse, the Polish children and teenagers also construct their JP II-inspired self-disclosures by foregrounding themselves in the texture of their letters. The bulk of the remaining self-oriented positions that they invoke in the light of the Pope's pontificate create their metaphorical images as defenders of JP II's ideals and active continuers of his pastoral mission. In search of a common ground with their addressee, the youngsters additionally activate their positions as individuals who are spiritually united with JP II, and who undertake a conscious effort to approximate themselves to the image of an "ideal Christian" as propagated by JP II.

3.2.1. Self-positioning as defenders of JP II's ideals and continuators of his mission

The impact that JP II's pontificate has exerted on the young Poles reverberates in dialogic relations that the writers establish with their addressee by touching upon the most significant points of JP II's papacy and responding to the Pope's words directed to them in his teachings. When presenting their viewpoints, comments and opinions on specific socio-political problems, the children and teenagers position themselves discursively with respect to the values promoted by JP II, by which they uncover their personal selves as outspoken opponents of the evil encountered in the contemporary world, and, what follows from this, as protectors of the ethical and moral principles that they

have learned from their teacher. Moreover, in the epistolary declarations of spiritual help for JP II they take up the positions of both the Pope's supporters and defenders of his ideals, who are ready to join their guide in his endeavours. Finally, the testimonies of the authors' specific dealings aimed to put into practice the truths that they have learned from JP II position them as the Pope's active followers and dedicated continuers of his work.

One aspect in which the youngsters invoke their personal images as JP II's followers is their support for the papal calling to eliminate violence and injustice, and for his struggles to avert conflicts. The manifestation of such a stance in letters to the Pope may be read as their response to the emphasis that JP II laid on these problems in his teaching. Examples (35–38) voice the youngsters' opposition to pernicious phenomena, such as poverty, hunger and homelessness (35), hostility, indifference, and malice (35, 36), violence-driven death (37), as well as sects (38):

- (35) *Chciałabym, żeby na świecie nie było przemocy i żeby ludzie byli dla siebie mili, aby nie było biednych, głodujących i bezdomnych.* (Natalia, 8)

'I wish that there were no **violence** in the world, that **people were nice** to each other, and that there were no **poor, hungry or homeless**.'

- (36) *... ludzie **powinni** sobie pomagać. ... Znam dużo osób, które zamiast pomóc potrzebującym, ... jeszcze się z nich **wyśmiewają**.* (Karolina)

'... people **should** help one another. ... I know many people who, instead of helping those in need, only **mock** them.'

- (37) *W tych okrutnych czasach **należy** się dużo modlić o pokój i wzajemną miłość. Modlitwa jest teraz bardzo potrzebna wszystkim ludziom po to, żeby **zakończyć konflikty**, aby więcej ludzi nie umierało fizycznie i duchowo.* (Sebastian)

'In these cruel times **one should** pray a lot for peace and mutual love. Prayer is now very necessary for all people, so as to **bring to an end conflicts**, and so that **no more people die in vain physically or spiritually**.'

- (38) *... **trzeba** się modlić zwłaszcza za tych ludzi, którzy są w **sektach**, żeby do nich dotarło, że **błądzą** ...* (Michał)

'... **one should** pray especially for those people who are in **sects**, so that they can realize that they err ...'

The need that the children and teenagers see in implementing the JP II-promoted ethical principles is discursively phrased in the deontic modals *chciałabym* ('I wish' – [35]), *powinni* ('they should' – [36]) and *należy, trzeba* ('one should' – [37], [38]), which articulate the authors' appeal to

improve the world's current situation. Such a way of verbalizing their attitudes substantiates the youngsters' positions as defenders of JP II's ideals, and unveils their self-images as the Pope's followers.

This is additionally augmented in overt requests for the addressee's intervention in the problems (see [39–43] below), either personal (39, 40) or through his prayers (40–43). In this way the writers construct, on the one hand, the Pope's (already-mentioned) image as a mediator in socio-political matters, and, on the other, disclose their own self-displays as active supporters of his mission:

- (39) *Proszę Cię, Ojczy Świąty, abyś pomógł biednym, głodującym i bezdomnym . . . , żeby nie było przemocy i ludzie stali się dla siebie miłsi.* (Karolina, 11)
'I ask you, Holy Father, to help the poor, the hungry and the homeless . . . , to eliminate violence, and to make people more friendly to one other.'
- (40) *Ludzie się zmieniają i stają się bardziej chciwi, zaczynają kraść i oszukiwać, pomóż im się nawrócić . . .* (Student, 12)
'People change and become greedier, they begin to steal and lie. Help them to convert . . .'
- (41) *Proszę Cię o modlitwę o pokój na ziemi . . .* (Agnieszka)
'I ask you to pray for peace on earth . . .'
- (42) *Proszę Cię, abyś pomodlił się o pokój dla Irakijczyków . . .* (Kamil)
'I ask you to pray for peace for the Iraqis . . .'
- (43) *Wiele słyszymy o złych stosunkach palestyńsko-izraelskich. Bardzo poruszyło mnie to, że dwie religie w imię jednego i tego samego Boga prowadzą ze sobą zacięte walki. Bóg każe nam miłować nieprzyjaciół i wrogów, dlatego proszę Cię, módl się za biednych i skrzywdzonych.* (Martyna, 11)
'We learn much about poor Palestinian-Israeli relations. I was moved by the fact that two religions are waging war with each other in the name of one and the same God. God asks us to love our opponents and enemies, that's why I ask you to pray for the poor and the wronged.'

The problems that absorb the young people most, and whose resolution they see in the Pope's arbitration include restoring peace on earth (41), settling conflicts in Iraq (42), Palestine and Israel (43), and putting an end to religious wars (43). However, more than in requests for the Pope's mediation, the informants reveal their self-images as JP II's active followers in their own reciprocal offers of spiritual help:

- (44) *Mogę Ci pomóc swoją modlitwą o to, aby ludzie na całym świecie zrozumieli, że zło i nienawiść do niczego nie prowadzą, mogą [sic.] jedynie zniszczyć to, co najpiękniejsze.* (Paulina)
 ‘**I can help you with my prayers**, so that people all around the world can understand that evil and hatred are worthless, and can only destroy what is most beautiful.’
- (45) *Moim postanowieniem . . . jest gorąca modlitwa za wszystkie ofiary wojny w Iraku i za tych, którzy zabijają, aby w porę się opamiętali i wrócili na dobrą drogę.* (Agnieszka, 16)
 ‘**My resolution is to pray** for all casualties of the war in Iraq and for those who kill, so that they realize their wrongdoing and **return to the way of righteousness.**’
- (46) *My też się modlimy, by wszystkie narody stały się jedną chrześcijańską rodziną, by ludzie nie kłócili się, nie życzyli sobie źle i pomagali sobie w trudnych sytuacjach.* (Aneta i Łucja)
 ‘**We pray, too, for all nations, so that they become one Christian family**, so that people do not fight, do not wish each other evil, and help each other in difficult situations.’
- (47) . . . obiecuję, że będziemy wraz z rodziną **wspierać Cię modlitwą i dobrymi uczynkami.** (Klaudia)
 ‘. . . I promise that my family and I will **support you with our prayers and good deeds.**’

As examples (44–47) illustrate, the subjects declare their support mainly in forms of prayers, in different intentions, including, for instance, people’s “return to the way of righteousness” (44, 45) or restoring the Christian unity (46). They additionally offer their help to JP II by praying for the Pope himself and doing good deeds (47). In all these cases they position themselves discursively as adherents of JP II’s humanistic philosophy, and construct their self-images as defenders of his ideals.

However, as the research material shows, not only do the children and teenagers express their readiness to continue JP II’s work by declaring their spiritual unity with their guide, but they also do so in performing specific activities in the light of the JP II-ignited tradition, and in making resolutions to live their lives in the JP II-inspired way. When it comes to the former, the youngsters frequently mention charity work that they undertake to fulfil their mission, such as, for instance, collecting material goods for the poor or visiting the old and lonely. When it comes to the latter, the texts often carry the

people's testimonies of how they implement JPII's teaching in their own lives:

- (48) *Podczas Twojej ostatniej pielgrzymki . . . powiedziales, że liczysz na nas. Prosiłeś, żebyśmy byli krzewicielami [sic.] wiary i nadziei chrześcijańskiej. Bardzo głęboko w sercu utkwily mi te słowa i staram się żyć według nich.* (Ilona, 16)
 'During your last pastoral visit . . . you said that you are counting on us. You asked us to be propagators of the Christian faith and hope. Your words have stayed with me, and made a deep impression, and I am trying to live according to them.'
- (49) . . . ja . . . postaram się być dobrym chrześcijaninem. (Kuba)
 ' . . . I . . . will try to be a good Christian.'
- (50) *Jednym z moich . . . marzeń jest stać się chociaż trochę podobną do Ciebie.* (Beata)
 'One of my dreams is to become at least a little bit like you.'
- (51) *Pragnę naśladować Cię w każdym Twoim zachowaniu. Chcę być potężnym wiara, bo wiara jest największą wartością w naszym życiu.* (Kamil)
 'I would like to follow you in all your actions. I want to be powerful in my faith, since faith is the greatest value in our lives.'
- (52) *Ty Ojcze, liczysz na dzieci i młodzież, mówisz, że jesteśmy przyszłością świata. . . . wszystkimi siłami będziemy starali się, abyś nie tracił w nas pokładanych [sic.] nadziei.* (Student, secondary school)
 'You, Father, are counting on children and young people, and you say we are the world's future. . . . we will do our best so that you don't lose the hope you pin on us.'
- (53) *Postaramy się, Ojcze, nie zawieść Twego zaufania.* (Mariola)
 'We will try, Father, not to betray your trust.'
- (54) *Postaramy się jej [pokładanej nadziei] nie zmarnować.* (Gabriela, 14)
 'We will try not to waste it [hope].'

The evidence that the youngsters' endeavours derive from the impression that the Pope has generally made on them comes from the intertextual links to his words, such as, e.g., *powiedziales, że liczysz na nas. Prosiłeś, żebyśmy . . .* ('you said you are counting on us. You asked us . . . ' – [48]), or *mówisz, że jesteśmy . . .* ('you say we are . . . ' – [52]), which in a dialogic way frame

the authors' replies to JP II's appeal. Examples (48–54) provide the writers' confessions of their fidelity to JP II in response to the words of hope and trust that the Pope kept directing to the young. This loyalty translates into their pronounced perseverance to live according to JP II-promoted values (e.g., [48]), be good Christians (e.g., [48], [49]), and become similar to the Pope in all spheres of life (e.g., [50], [51]). The people's efforts to shape their identities as JP II's dedicated followers additionally emanate from their promises to do their best so as not to disappoint their guide (e.g., [52–54]).

The youngsters' active approach to developing and propagating the JP II-inspired tradition is reflected in their willingness to take responsibility for the fate of their own and future generations, and in their desire to influence and change the surrounding world:

- (55) *... najlepszym darem dla Ciebie będzie moja praca nad sobą, by śladem naszych ojców krzewić wiarę, by czasy, w jakich żyję nie osłabiły jej i by pokusy nie oddalały mnie i mojego pokolenia od Boga.* (Mateusz, 13)
 'My best gift to you will be **my working on myself**, so that I can, following our ancestors' footsteps, propagate faith, so that during my lifetime that faith isn't weakened, and so that temptations don't distance myself and my generation from God.'
- (56) *Składam Ci również dar duchowy, jakim będzie moja dobra nauka i posłuszeństwo rodzicom.* (Zuzia, 7)
 'I also give you a **spiritual gift** in the form of **my studying diligently** and **being obedient to my parents**.'
- (57) *W szkole idzie mi słabo, ale próbuje dostawać jak najlepsze oceny.* (Paweł, 13)
 'I have poor results at school, but **I try to get as good marks as I can**.'
- (58) *... my będziemy się pilnie uczyć, by w przyszłości zastąpić Cię z godnością.* (Kamil, 14)
 'We will be **diligent students** in order to **become your worthy successors** in the future.'
- (59) *Chciałbym za Twoim przykładem zwyciężać złó dobrem . . . Jako młody Polak pragnę zdobyć dobre wykształcenie, aby starannie i dobrze wykonywać swój zawód, tak bym mógł być autorytetem dla innych.* (Kamil)
 'Following your example I would like to **overcome evil with good**. . . As a young Pole I wish to **acquire good education**, so as to **do my work diligently and professionally**, and **become an authority to others**.'

- (60) . . . *staram się postępować według Twoich pouczeń. Zwłaszcza teraz, gdy stoi przede mną decyzja o wyborze drogi życiowej. Dlatego jako wzór wybrałam Ciebie* . . . *Chcę, aby to Twoja osoba była przewodnikiem mego życia.* (Dorota)
 ‘ . . . I try to **follow your teaching**. Especially now **when I’m facing the decision of choosing my life way**. This is why **I have chosen you as my example** . . . What I want is for you to be **the guide of my life**.’

One way to realize it they see in working on themselves (55), respecting their parents (56), and studying diligently (56–58), so as to become, as the author in (58) argues, JPII’s ‘worthy successors’. With such goals in mind, the young construct their own life policies that will help them fulfil JPII’s priorities. More specifically, they put emphasis on using good to fight against evil, becoming authorities to others through education and efficient work (59), and making one’s life decisions and choices according to the Pope’s teaching (60).

All these testimonies corroborate the people’s desires to protect JPII’s ideals, and to continue his work by substantiating the values in everyday practice. At the individual level, both the qualities and the multiple interactive positions that these ideals inspire orchestrate a specific “code of personhood” (cf. Carbaugh 1999), which presupposes, implicates and promotes a certain model for a person. It materializes in adopting specific historically grounded, socially differentiated, and culturally bound ways of being, which in our case involve acting simultaneously as JPII’s spiritual children, friends and disciples (encompassing the first three self-images of our informants), as well as his followers and supporters. Such behaviour patterns predicate the application to one’s life of the JPII-propagated value system and mode of conduct, both representing the code’s principles and elements of its composite structure. In our letters they are textually rendered in the multi-vocal conceptualization of the self (cf. Moghaddam 1999), emerging from the panoply of voices (cf. Bakhtin 1981; Todorov 1981) uttered in multiple positions employed by individual authors. The different timbres articulate various shades of the subjects’ selves, all producing the youngsters’ unitary identities of persons attached in some ways to JPII. At the collective level, in turn, recurrent patterns within the writers’ personal codes produce a unified “JPIIG community (viz. cultural) code” (cf. Hall 1998), which is observed in clusters of the JPII-inspired socio-psychological traits that the people develop. Their discursive reflexes in the material examined can be found in the polyphonic transfer (cf. Bakhtin 1973) of multiple voices from several authors, who in their diversified positions, parallel self-disclosures, and numerous epistles jointly weave one JPIIG storyline of their alignment with the Polish Pope.

3.2.2. Self-positioning as community members with JP II

The dedication that the children and teenagers feel towards JP II is also observed in their expressed desire to enter into and form a spiritual community with their Pope. They accentuate their ties with JP II in the fields of mutual friendship and emotional engagement, as well as on the ground of some common biographical facts that bring the interacting parties together. The search for the unity with JP II that the young Poles expose in their letters reveals a process of forging communal links within the JP IIG by means of correspondence. This uncovers the constitutive role of discourse in the lives of the JP II followers, and generally presents epistolary exchange as a mode of social practice in JP II-inspired culture.

The friendship and warmth that the children and teenagers get from their Pope, and which they frequently report on in their texts (see Section 3.1.1 above), is returned in the emotional engagement that they evince when raising topics related to the Pope's life. Moreover, the authors try to seek the common communicative ground with their addressee by emphasizing some shared facts from their own and JP II's biographies. In this way they establish points of contact with their recipient, which, on the one hand, produce the feeling of interpersonal closeness between the interactants, and, on the other, facilitate the growth in the writers of the sense of community with their addressee. For instance, in order to approximate themselves to JP II, the informants (especially younger children) refer to their favourite leisure time activities (e.g., fishing, playing games), to which they invite the Pope as a proof of their friendship. More importantly, however, the youngsters communicate their emotional engagement with JP II by sharing with him their empathy in reference to his traumatic life experiences and health problems:

- (61) *Wiem, że miałeś bardzo . . . trudne życie. Zmarła Ci mama, tata i brat. **Bardzo Ci współczuję i kocham Cię.*** (Magda)
 'I know you had a very difficult life. You lost your mother, father and brother. **I sympathize with you, and I love you.**'
- (62) *Piszę ten list do Ciebie Ojczy, **bo mnie zmartwiło, że boli Cię kolano.*** (Adrian, 7)
 'I'm writing this letter to you, Father, **because I am concerned that you have pain in your knee.**'

The sympathy and concern that the children express in (61) and (62) not only position them as the Pope's close friends, who support him in mental or

physical suffering, but additionally activate their personas as individuals who in the discursive renditions of their emotions dynamically shape the intimacy of their relations with JPII. Their need to tighten these bonds is also interactively transferred and extended to other parallel or completely different domains of the interlocutors' lives, including their families, physical conditions, hobbies, and interests:

- (63) *Niedawno temu nie miałam siostry tylko braci, a teraz już ją mam i jestem szczęśliwa. . . . Ty chyba też byłeś szczęśliwy, że miałeś brata.* (Magda, 10)
 'Not long ago I had only brothers, and no sister, and now I have her, and I am happy. . . . **I guess, you were also happy having a brother.**'
- (64) *Dziękuję Panu Bogu za to, że żyję wtedy, kiedy Ty . . .* (Marcelina)
 'I thank the Lord for that **I live in the same time as you . . .**'
- (65) *Fascynuje mnie to . . . jak dajesz sobie radę z bólem kolan. Ja nie jestem święty . . . i też mnie bolą kolana.* (Marek)
 'I admire you for how you manage with the pain in your knees. I am not a saint . . . and **I also have problems with my knees.**'
- (66) *. . . moją pasję, podobnie jak Twoją, są górskie wycieczki.* (Ewa, 16)
 '. . . **my passion, similar to yours, is hiking.**'
- (67) *Uwielbiam śpiewać, tak jak Ty. Należę do scholi i gram na instrumentach. . . . Jestem dumna, że papieżem jest Polak.* (Justyna, 12)
 '**I love singing, just as you.** I sing in a choir, and I play instruments. . . . **I am proud that the pope is a Pole.**'

As examples (63–67) illustrate, the young people use the strategy of quoting some parallel facts from their own and JPII's biographies in order to construct the common interactive platform on which they can forge community links between themselves and their addressee. For instance, they report on the happiness of having siblings and living at the same time as JPII (63, 64), on experiencing the same kind of physical pain (despite age and status differences) (65), or having the same passions (e.g., hiking and singing; [66], [67]). It is noteworthy that the confession made in (64) reflects a voice of many JPIIG members, also those from outside the group of youngsters, for whom experiencing JPII's pontificate in their lives constitutes an important criterion on which they build their JPIIG identities (see also p. 148). Altogether the tactics help the authors, first, to equate their discursive positions

with those of the interlocutor, and second, to reduce the distance between themselves and JP II, which enables them to create the sense of both interpersonal closeness and of community with the Pope.

Another aspect in which the writers build their JP II-affiliated identities and communal bonds with the recipient is by transmitting in discourse the sense of sharing with him similar experiences of familiar places and the same nationality. In order to underline their spiritual proximity with the Pope, the authors (especially those coming from southern Poland) refer to some places that were important for Karol Wojtyła, such as Kraków or Wadowice, as in (68) and (69). They also mark them as important for themselves on the ground that these are the sites that they know, where they live, or that they often visit:

- (68) *Mieszkam w Twoim ukochanym mieście Krakowie.* (Magda, 13)

‘I live in **your beloved city, Kraków.**’

- (69) *Na pewno tęsknisz za Krakowem, Wadowicami . . . Ja mam niedaleko i często tam bywam.* (Michał, 12)

‘**You surely miss Kraków, Wadowice . . .** I live not far away, and I often go there.’

As a sign of their empathy with the recipient they additionally reveal their awareness of his great attachment to these places (*Twoim ukochanym mieście* ‘your beloved city’, *Na pewno tęsknisz* ‘You surely miss’). Finally, to emphasize their unity with the Polish Pope the informants frequently stress their common national origin with him, which they discursively render by positioning both their addressee and themselves as compatriots, who share great love and respect for their motherland, Poland.

As example (67) above illustrates, they take immense pride in the fact that JP II is a Pole, and speak about it with great joy and enthusiasm (see [70] below). They highlight their spiritual bonds with the Pope by prefixing the JP II-directed label *rodak* (‘compatriot’) with the possessive modifier *mój* (‘my’), as in (70), or with the inclusive marker *nasz* (‘our’), which both underline their sense of community with JP II, and at the same time position them as its members. Interestingly enough, the latter strategy is also employed in reference to *Polska* (73), or *Ojczyzna* (‘motherland’ – [72]), which discursively transforms Poland into a ground where the people strengthen their JP II-aligned identities by forging their nationality-based communal bonds with the Polish Pope. The fact that the ties are transferred and established through the discourse of the epistolary exchange corroborates the

constitutive role of correspondence as an interactive medium within the JPIIG, and confirms its status of social action, which organizes forms of social life inside the community:

- (70) *Cieszę się niezmiernie, że jesteś moim rodakiem.* (Ewelina, 12)
 ‘I’m extremely happy that you are my compatriot.’
- (71) *Włochy są pięknym krajem, ale nasza Polska jest piękniejsza.* (Michał, 12)
 ‘Italy is a beautiful country, but **our Poland** is more beautiful.’
- (72) *Chciałabym, żebyś jak najszybciej odwiedził naszą Ojczyznę.* (Justyna, 14)
 ‘I would like you to visit **our Motherland** as soon as possible.’

The examples additionally show how the growth of one’s individual identity as a JPIIG member is incorporated into and depends on one’s conceptualization of a broader historical and cultural context, reflected in one’s sense of local or national identity. The way the different shades of the youngsters’ JPIIG selves encapsulate the different aspects of their local, national, and hence also cultural, selves, testifies to the fact that, as Ricoeur (1992: 161) remarks, “the life history of each of us is caught up in the history of others”. This, in turn, may support the claim that “collected resonances of the social world are functional in our subjective understanding of self” in that “[i]n the process of bringing meanings found in the social stock of knowledge into our subjectivity, we create an individualized version of the larger historical and cultural world, which is both similar to that of others in our family and community but it is also unique to our life and identity” (Schiff and Noy 2006: 424).

3.2.3. The journey of self towards the JPIIG identity

The impact that JPII has had on the formation of individual identities of the young people in Poland emanates from the transformations of the youngsters’ personal and social selves that can sometimes be traced in the correspondence studied, and that the children and teenagers undergo in specific circumstances when writing their epistles to the Pope. All of the shifts of self observed in the material collected happen in situations when the informants notice some shortcomings of their identity that they cannot accept or are dissatisfied with, which they most often verbalize as their desires to modify one’s self towards its equivalent in a model of an “ideal Christian” propagated

by JP II. The internal clash between the “imperfect self” and the “model self” results in the authors’ attempts to extricate themselves from the former in favour of the latter, in order to attain the “ideal self” as their goal. The corollary of such transformations is the “journey of self” (cf. Carbaugh 1999), which in the case of our letter writers is caused by the tension between certain symbolic resources of identity, including *inter alia* thoughts, feelings, emotions or conscience. It is the awareness of both these resources and the internal clash that are the conditions and motives for the journey of the self (Carbaugh 1999: 167–168). In the context of our correspondence the person who triggers these changes is the letters’ addressee, JP II, who through his own example has challenged the young people to highest ideals, which they now try to incorporate in their lives by conscious modifications of their behaviour and ways of being. They position him as a transformer, who can affect people’s selves by influencing their consciences, which, as the writer in example (19) above claims, he ‘sets ablaze with the truth’ of communicated words.

In the discourse of the letters studied, the voyage of self can be traced in the movement of interactive positions, from those reflecting one caught up in one’s constraints and historical entanglements to those producing one striving for self-improvement and self-perfection. As Davies and Harré (1990: 47) note, the experiencing of contradictory positions as problematic requires reconciling and remedying them, which stems from the way being a person is done in our society. This is also necessary for people to understand themselves as historically continuous and unitary individuals. The data examined show that the process can operate through at least two types of positioning strategies. The first consist in applying by the writers “reflexive positioning” (cf. Harré and van Langenhove 1999b; Moghaddam 1999), performed in their internal authorial dialogues in which they contemplate with themselves their own wrongdoings and misdemeanours, trying to establish their new amended selves individually by evaluating the consequences of their past behaviours. The second, in turn, consists in combining by the authors reflexive positioning, through which the subjects observe their internal deficiencies, with other-positioning, in which they implement in a parallel way specific positions by JP II in order to construct their own improved selves with the help of the addressee. In the former case, illustrated in (73) and (74) below, the individuals’ experience of the journey of self can be observed in the fact that they figure themselves simultaneously as wrongdoers (*przeszkadzam nauczycielom* ‘I obstruct teachers’ – [73]; *ile ja zła wyrządziłam* ‘how much harm I had done’ – [74]), and as subjects who distance themselves from their vices by evaluating critically their weaknesses (*potem w domu*

myślę dlaczego tak postąpiłem ‘then back at home I wonder why I have done so’ – [73]; *zastanawiałam się, ile . . . zła* ‘I wondered how much harm’ – [74]).

- (73) *Nie jestem za bardzo dobrym uczniem. Czasami, gdy mi się coś stanie, to przeszkadzam nauczycielom w lekcji, a potem w domu myślę dlaczego tak postąpiłem.* (Krzysztof)

‘I’m not a very good student. Sometimes, **when something happens to me, I obstruct teachers** during our lessons, and **then back at home I wonder why I have done so.**’

- (74) . . . *zastanawiałam się, ile ja zła wyrządziłam kłócąc się z rodzeństwem . . .* (Sylwia)

‘. . . **I wondered how much harm I had done** quarrelling with my sibling.’

The rejection of the ‘bad’ self is discursively performed through the self-rebuking formulae *gdy mi się coś stanie* ‘gdy mi się coś stanie’ (73), or *ile ja zła . . .* ‘how much harm’ (74), and the self voyage is manifested in the cognitive verbs *myślę* ‘I wonder’ (73) and *zastanawiałam się* ‘I wondered’ (74), both indicating the authors’ conscious efforts undertaken to transform their unwanted qualities into their amended variants in the spirit of JPII’s teaching.

The examples of the latter case, on the other hand (75–78), all demonstrate the way the individuals experience the journey of self under the influence of the JPII-promoted values, with support from or under the inspiration of their addressee:

- (75) . . . *zdarza mi się rozrabiać w szkole i poza nią, a ostatnio coraz częściej. Nie wiem, co począć i zwracam się do Ciebie Ojciec o radę.* (Marcel, 14)

‘. . . it happens that I am mischievous both in and out of school, and recently I have been doing so more and more often. **I don’t know what to do, and I ask you, Father, for advice.**’

- (76) *Chciałabym, abyś . . . otworzył moje serce, bym pomagała innym ludziom* (Diana, 9)

‘**I would like you to . . . open my heart,** so that I can help other people.’

- (77) *Nie potrafię tak jak Ty pomóc biednym . . . , ale postanowiłem zbierać pieniądze do skarbonki, . . .* (Łukasz, 12)

‘**I’m not able to help the poor as you do . . . , but I have decided** to put money aside into a money box.’

- (78) *Nie wiem, czy potrafiłbym przebaczyć tylu ludziom, ilu Ty przebaczyłeś. Jesteś moim idolem.* (Paweł)
 'I don't know if I could forgive so many people as you have forgiven. You are my idol.'

Similar to the preceding instances, in voices of their internal dialogues the writers position themselves reflexively as people who are aware of their deficiencies or inabilities that hinder their spiritual growth, or that make this growth difficult. In the positions adopted they construct their self-images as individuals who are dissatisfied with themselves due to certain inner or outer limitations, as in (75, 77, 78), or as subjects who mute their subjective or objective constraints, as in (76, 77), by pronouncing in more or less direct ways their desires to perfect themselves. The youngsters' consciousness of the clash between the rejected selves and the idealized ones that they strive for makes them launch the self voyage towards the JP II-inspired ideals. The aim of the shift in (75), for instance, is to improve one's (school) conduct, in the case of (76) and (77) – to become useful and helpful to other people, and in (78) – to attain the ability to forgive, all these transformations illustrating a natural human drive towards dropping one's inner or outer constraints on the way to self-fulfilment and happiness. The authors communicate their awareness of the clash by mental process markers (*nie wiem*, [*co począć*] 'I don't know [what to do]' – [75]; *nie potrafię . . . , ale postanowiłem* 'I'm not able . . . but I decided' – [77]; *Nie wiem, czy potrafiłbym* 'I don't know if I could' – [78]; *chciałabym* 'I would like' – [76]), and they release their internal tension by invoking the person of the addressee. The multiple positions of JP II that they enact at this stage involve that of a counsellor (75), whom they ask for advice how to change themselves (*zwracam się do Ciebie Ojczy o radę* 'I ask you, Father, for advice'), that of a transformer (76), whom they request to carry out an internal change (*Chciałabym, abyś . . . otworzył moje serce* 'I would like you to . . . open my heart'), and that of an inspirer (77, 78), whom they take as an incentive to and reference point for a change of self (*Nie potrafię tak jak Ty pomóc biednym . . . , ale postanowiłem . . .* 'I'm not able to help the poor as you do . . . , but I have decided'; *Nie wiem, czy potrafiłbym przebaczyć tylu ludziom, ilu Ty przebaczyłeś*. 'I don't know if I could forgive so many people as you have forgiven'). All these examples testify to the authors' deliberate attempts to respond to the challenge given them by their Pope, and demonstrate their willingness to accommodate themselves to the JP II-inspired way of being in the spirit of the JP II G.

4. Conclusions

The linguistic portrait that the Polish children and teenagers draw of themselves in their letters to Pope JPII reveals the young people aligned with strong community bonds with the Polish Pope. The parallel discursive positions that they individually enact in communication with their recipient unveil different shades of their multiple selves, which altogether form a consistent picture of the JPIIG identity. It is substantiated in the diversity of the subjects' self-disclosures that convey their metaphorical images of individuals spiritually and emotionally attached to JPII. The common way in which the informants present themselves in the epistles is by activating their interactive positions as the Pope's spiritual children, friends and disciples. Moreover, they uncover the JPII-affiliated identities in discursive projections of themselves as the Pope's active followers, supporters, defenders of his ideals, and dedicated continuers of his humanistic attitude. The dynamic nature of identity production is especially visible in the process of the journey of the self, where the individuals consciously transform their personal profiles to adjust them to the model of "an ideal Christian" as created and propagated by JPII in his pontifical dealings. In the textual construction of all these images, the youngsters simultaneously depict a metaphorical portrait of JPII, composed of a series of his parallel disclosures as a father, teacher, authority, paragon of virtue, mediator and friend, demonstrating typical ways in which the young people in Poland conceptualize the Pope.

As the analysis has shown, the discursive embodiments of both the interacting parties in the letters studied are inspired by the impression that JPII has generally made on the children and teenagers through the charismatic approach to his papal mission, and by the consistency with which he implemented his life ideals in his pastoral work. Both the youngsters' attributes, as well as the religious, ethical, moral, and socio-cultural values that constituted the basis for JPII's philosophy and preaching, form the "JPIIG cultural code", which shapes patterns of social practice inside the community, consolidates its members, and provides them with guidelines of life conduct. What is noteworthy is that the qualities and principles that the code subsumes recur in the texts explored, irrespective of the informants' chronological age, including both the smallest children (beginning with the youngest informants) as well as the teenagers (ending in the oldest informants) from the group studied.

Additionally, as it has been signalled, the discourse of the letters by young JPIIG members evinces similar traits to those observed in other JPIIG texts by adult JPIIG representatives, in terms of, for instance, the JPII-focused

themes, general topical skewing and similar JP II's images invoked by the authors. On the one hand, this may indicate the universal nature of the JP II-inspired values in the life of the JP IIIG, and on the other, may point to the symbolic "crossing of age" inside the community, where the subjects' biological age is amalgamated into their common "JP IIIG age", marked by the shared experience of the JP II's lifetime and pontificate, sense of identification with JP II, and willingness to cultivate his legacy. Overall, the multi-generational (in biological terms) and also multi-cultural (in social terms) composition of the JP IIIG redefines the contemporary concept of "generation", which, as the structure of the JP IIIG shows, can extend beyond the boundaries of different age cohorts, to cut across (viewing its pan-continental scope) national, ethnic or socio-economic boundaries.

Notes

1. See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pope_John_Paul_II
2. During the 10th World Youth Day (15 January 1995, Luneta Park, Manila, Philippines), he gave a service to an estimated crowd of between four to eight million people, considered the greatest single event in Christian history (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pope_John_Paul_II).
3. For instance, he is remembered to have said a whole Mass fluently in Kiswahili in Nairobi, Kenya (1995), and in Indonesian in East Timor (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pope_John_Paul_II).
4. The philosophical approach of *personalism*, qualified as a sub-branch of *humanism*, was the Pope's favoured stance, which he articulated repeatedly in most of his theological and doctrinal writings.
5. In John Paul II's encyclical *Ut unum sin* (1995); cf. also Second Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution *Lumen gentium* 13.
6. For a shortened list of John Paul II's excuses to various nations see, for example, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pope_John_Paul_II.
7. Address at the Omayyad Mosque in Damaskus (6 May 2001).
8. Before John Paul II, there are only three popes in the history of Christianity who have acquired the cognomen *The Great*, i.e. Leo I, Nicholas I, and Gregory I (<http://pl.wikipedia.org>).
9. Homily directed to Polish youth, Adam Mickiewicz Square, Poznań (03.06.1997); similar thoughts are also included in JP II's *Roman Triptych*, esp. his poem "The source".
10. MS (2007) "Nauczycielu, gdzie mieszkasz? Chodźcie, a zobaczycie" (J1, 38–39). [Teacher, where are you staying? Come, and you will see. (J1, 38–39)], *Nasz Dziennik* 77 (31.03.2007), available at www.naszdziennik.pl

11. Magdalena Zawadzka (2005), "Pokolenie Jana Pawła II – generacja zwiastująca wiosnę Kościoła" [John Paul II Generation – the generation foreshadowing the spring of the Church], *Nasz Dziennik* 98 (27.04.2005), available at www.naszdziennik.pl
12. See articles in *Nasz Dziennik* 98 (27.04.2005) and 77 (31.03.2007), as well as in *Milujcie się!* 3 (2005).
13. Data from May 2008 based on the Internet and press search.
14. As quoted by Magdalena Zawadzka (2005) in "Pokolenie Jana Pawła II – generacja zwiastująca wiosnę Kościoła" [John Paul II Generation – the generation foreshadowing the spring of the Church], *Nasz Dziennik* 98 (27.04.2005), at www.naszdziennik.pl
15. "Z Sandrą Lachesnez, paryżanką, jedną ze współzałożycielek Stowarzyszenia 'Pokolenie Jana Pawła II', rozmawia Magdalena Zawadzka" [Magdalena Zawadzka talks with Sandra Lachesnez from Paris, one the founders of the Society for the JPII Generation], *Nasz Dziennik* 98 (27.04.2005), available at www.naszdziennik.pl
16. See www.generationjpII.org
17. For examples, see the CCO newsletter *Grapevine* (esp. Spring 2005), available at the CCO website www.cco.ca
18. See www.cco.ca
19. The letter was received with enthusiasm by JPII, which was expressed by the Pope by signing the copy of the pledge in his own hand, and sending it back to the authors in January 2005, two months before his death.
20. "Igniting the JPII Generation. John Paul II personally encourages CCO two months before dying", *Grapevine* (Spring 2005: 1).
21. See www.generationjpII.com
22. See <http://www.generationjpII.com/about.htm>
23. *Generation JPII* (Spring 2007), 1/1:1; available at <http://www.generationjpII.com/newsletter/NL0701.pdf>
24. See also Magda Sakowska (2006) "Biały ślad" [A white trace] (17.01.2006); Izabela Domańska (2005) "Relacje pielgrzymów" [Pilgrims' reports] (09.04.2005), available at http://www.reporter.edu.pl/gora_gory/pokolenie_jpii, as well as Fr. Marek Dziewicki "Pokolenie wychowawców JPII" [Generation of JPII teachers], at http://www.opoka.org.pl/biblioteka/I/ID/pokolenie_wychowawcowjp2.html
25. See, e.g., Radosław Wiśniewski (2006) "Żeby teraz On mnie miał" [So that now He can have me], *W Drodze* 3 (391), available at <http://mateusz.pl/wdrodze/nr392/08-wdr.htm>
26. For personal testimonies of the Poles see, e.g., Katarzyna Woynarowska "The generation of JPII", available at http://sunday.niedziela.pl/artikul.php?lg=gb&nr=200409&dz=jpii&id_art=00006, as well as http://www.reporter.edu.pl/gora_gory/pokolenie_jpii

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Chapter 7

Articulating male and female adolescent identities via the language of personal advertisements: A Malaysian perspective¹

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1. Introduction

We live in a society where the concepts of self, community and “what is right and wrong” are constantly being modified, contested and renegotiated. This makes it particularly challenging for young people to construct a sense of identity and belonging, and to identify their interpersonal needs and most cherished values. The age group between 12 to 20 years of age – commonly referred to as adolescents – is particularly susceptible in this context. Adolescents are frequently underestimated and discriminated against by dominant adult discursive practices. They are regarded as neither children nor adults, frequently portrayed as a problematic group of human beings – anti-social, secluded, rebellious (especially against authority), constantly confused and ambivalent with respect to their personal identity, i.e., being in a constant search for who they are. Coupled by physiological and psychological changes, adolescents are at a stage between childhood and adulthood. As such, they are naturally eager to disassociate themselves from the behavioral patterns of childhood, and while they want to embrace adulthood, they want to do so on their terms. This is why misunderstandings come into play. Freedom is what adolescent males and females strive for and they manifest this in a variety of ways, for instance, by dressing differently or listening to music that contains offensive language and, according to Kluz (2003), when adolescents behave in such a manner they are simply seeking an element of independence and freedom.

The above observations need to be justified and supported by empirical research and findings that come from firsthand evidence, i.e., the discourse of the adolescents themselves. More specifically this discourse needs to include a description of the adolescents themselves – how they perceive themselves, i.e., their own identities, how they want others to consider their identities and

what attributes they consider important in the construction of their identities – namely through personal advertisements. While there have been some studies carried out to investigate the behavior of individuals through linguistic means or by investigating what individuals are willing to disclose about themselves and what they are seeking in others via personal ads, such studies have primarily targeted adults seeking, for example, a partner through matrimonial advertisements, or a partner in heterosexual or gay personal ads. There have also been comparative studies carried out to reveal the behavior of adult heterosexuals and gay personal advertisers seeking partners. However, not much is known about adolescent linguistic behavior in seeking friendships through personal ads even though there is an abundance of this kind of advertisement all around us. Furthermore, mainstream discourses largely describe and explain adolescence and adolescent behavior as universal phenomena regardless of the social and cultural conditions of the society and there is therefore a lack of studies focusing on adolescents from different countries/cultural backgrounds seeking friendship via personal advertisements.

This chapter is based on the findings of a research project that was completed in late 2005 (Kesumawati Abu Bakar and Bahiyah Dato' Hj. Abdul Hamid 2005). The study was conducted to answer the following research questions:

1. What linguistic features, specifically, textual forms, linguistic strategies and schematic genre structures, are used by Malaysian female and male adolescents in a corpus of personal advertisements from *Galaxie* magazine to construct their gender and other identities in order to gain the attention of target readers?
2. What kinds of personal attributes are considered important to Malaysian female and male adolescents in personal advertisements?
3. How do the Malaysian female and male adolescents present these personal attributes by way of language usage in personal advertisements?
4. What can we learn about the identities of female and male adolescents via their language use in personal advertisements?

The aim of this chapter is to discuss the construction of adolescent identities in a corpus of adolescent personal ads compiled from the publications of *Galaxie* magazine in Malaysia from September 2001 to December 2003. Working within the framework of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and Coupland's (1996) schematic genre structure for personal ads, this chapter

looks at textual micro-structures, as well as the form and content of 1,000 personal ads, written by male and female adolescents in *Galaxie* magazine. We will explain the ways in which these work together as a discourse in constructing not only the adolescents' gender identities but also in creating other social identities and relationships/bonds with target readers. We will also examine how norms of the production and interpretation of text highlight different aspects of the social identity of the advertisers, and how they draw upon various cultural resources and different generic combinations to construct such ads.

2. Personal ads, self-identity, and adolescence

Coupland (1996: 188) asserts that the personal ad is a "discursive construction of self-identities within a set of fairly narrow textual frameworks, which yields insights into the advertisers' idealizations of self-identities – for example in terms of physical attributes, age, personalities and interests." Linguistic strategies are employed within a set of fairly narrow textual and generic constraints to express uniqueness, which will, in turn, create an association with the readers. Its structure and language renders it a form of self-commodification in which the self is textually reduced to a small set of newspaper or magazine print text and "floated" onto the public market-place for the initial process of textual display and target audience evaluation (Coupland 1996: 187). She further states that the self-promotion that occurs in dating advertisements is becoming part and parcel of self-identity. Therefore, personal ads are perceived as a rich source of data for revealing perspectives, construction, voices and issues pertaining to identity.

For over twenty years researchers have used personal ads to study what people are willing to disclose about themselves and what they are seeking in others. Some of the earliest findings of this research (Cameron et al. 1977) showed that people tend to make requests that are congruent with their sex-role stereotypes. For example, women are more likely to express interest in the financial security, sensitivity, and sense of humor of a prospective partner, while men are more likely to seek an attractive partner with whom they can have a sexual relationship. This research has been expanded over the years to compare adverts of heterosexuals and homosexuals (Shalom 1997). In cases where personal ads are used to measure the supposed desirability of certain attributes, findings have revealed that in general physical characteristics are more important than personality characteristics for men than women (Shalom

1997; Jones 2000; Hogben and Coupland 2000). From the linguistic point of view, Nair (1992: 250), in her comparison of Indian and American "matrimonial ads" insists that "uncovering social ideologies must follow the discovering of linguistic structures." The differences she points out between Indian and American ads are that the former tend to be more formal, indirect and grammatically complex, while the latter tend to be more informal, more direct and grammatically simpler.

Adolescent personal ads are an area that has rarely been researched as researchers of previous personal ad studies have mostly been interested in analyzing ads authored by male and female adults of various sexuality with the aim of exploring the desirability of certain traits of a physical and socio-psychological nature that might best describe gender and sexual orientation. The features that have so far been tackled include physical attributes (e.g., height, body size, facial features, etc.), material attributes (e.g., gender, age, etc.), mental attributes (e.g., intelligence, brightness), as well as social and relational attributes (e.g., humor and honesty). As a result there is a dearth of empirical work on the adolescent group, in Malaysia specifically, that exploits personal ad columns in magazines for the purpose of establishing personal ties. We have been able to find only two accounts of research on adolescents' personal ads. The first (Hatala et al. 1999) is a content analysis of 100 internet ads placed by American college students which reveals that a sizeable proportion of advertisers (who are white, male, and either at the beginning or end of their college careers) fail to provide any information on salient attributes such as their own gender, ethnicity, or sexual orientation. The second (Smith 2002) is an analysis of fifteen personal ads written by young adults in three different newspapers, which aims to investigate the structure, form, and content of dating advertisement and the functions of language presented in the genre of personal ads.

Past research has shown the following: first, "self advertisement for the purpose of meeting a partner has, since the early 1980s, gained acceptance among a wide set of users" (Coupland 1996: 187); second, based on observation, the popularity of personal ads is higher among Malaysian adolescents than Malaysian adults; and third, previous research has shown how the simple and highly interactive text of the personal ad can reveal personal information about the participants involved in it (i.e., the advertiser and the target group). This study, in contrast, focuses on the area of adolescent personal ads and reports on a critical discourse analysis of the relationship between linguistic forms and the formation of adolescents' social identity following the view that identity is a concept which is socially constructed, created, and

re-created in personal ads for the purpose of (1) their consumption by and (2) bonding with readers.

3. Personal ads and personal ads in Malaysia

While the use of personal ads for the purpose of making and meeting new romantic interests and lifetime partners has long been the trend in Western countries such as the United States and Britain, self-advertisement is perceived, partly due to the stigma attached to it, as an unconventional and improper way of meeting people in Malaysia. It is therefore less popular than the conventional one-to-one, face-to-face meeting and introduction. However, when it comes to finding new friends to share common interests, it has been found that there is an abundance of personal advertisements or special friendship columns in local entertainment magazines where adolescents and young adults form the majority of their readership. One such publication is *Galaxie* magazine, which encourages adolescents to establish personal ties with one another through a special friendship column.

First published in October 1974, *Galaxie* is a light-reading fortnightly English entertainment magazine that has become a hit with teenagers and young working adults in Malaysia. This magazine costs RM3.00 and is available by subscription and for sale in bookstores and at newsstands. It is one of the major bi-weekly publications by *The Star*, the second largest newspaper publisher in Malaysia. The annual circulation of the magazine reaches approximately 42,900 copies (data for the year 2000; <http://www.business.vu.edu.au/bho2250/Mags/Asianmags.htm#Malaysia>) and covers both urban and rural cities in Peninsular and East Malaysia. In terms of content, *Galaxie* focuses on pop culture by providing the latest movie reviews and updates, television program synopses, profiles of local and international artists, as well as announcements and accounts of local and international music events. The data for this chapter come from a corpus gathered from a column called "Get Personal", specifically designed for *Galaxie* readers to seek friends and pen pals. One thousand personal ads placed by readers from all 13 states were randomly selected for close textual analysis.

4. Research methods and materials

The data were processed by Wordsmith Tools 4, which was used, firstly, to generate a frequency list of words and, secondly, to find word collocations in

the data. The program enabled us to compare the ads lexically. In addition, the Concord Tool in the software was used to create lists of words in context and to show the environment in which the words occur. It also found collocates of the words in question, identified common phrases, and displayed a graphical map with the location of the words in the corpus. This assisted us in classifying words in terms of their importance and significance to the authors of the personal ads. The above together with the Keyword Tool, which identifies key words whose frequency is unusually high in a particular type of discourse, assisted us in characterizing words/phrases/texts according to genres. Thus, the use of the software complemented the CDA carried out on the written discourse of the Malaysian adolescents studied.

The corpus of the adolescent personal advertisements was subjected to CDA (Fairclough 1989), which generally views language use as social practice, shaped by and shaping social identities, social relations and systems of knowledge and beliefs of individuals. In the first stage, an analysis of formal textual features was performed to facilitate formal text description. Coupland's (1996) schematic genre structure of personals was also used. The interpretation of the relationship between text and social interaction was carried out in stage two. This enabled us to analyze norms and mental standards of socially accepted behavior in specific roles/relationships (i.e., adolescents as advertisers and consumers of personal advertising) used to produce, receive, and interpret the text. The last stage helped us to explain the relationship between social context and cultural context, i.e., in Malaysian settings where adolescent personal ads tend to occur, each with a set of conventions specifying what an adolescent is allowed and expected to do in a particular context and culture.

Fairclough (1989, 1992, 1995a, 1995b) defines CDA as discourse analysis which aims to systematically explore often obscure relationships between discursive practices, texts, and events and wider social and cultural structures, relations, and processes. By focusing on how social relations, identity, knowledge, and power are constructed through written and spoken texts in communities, schools, the media, and the political arena (McGregor 2003), CDA strives to explore how these non-transparent relationships are a factor in securing power and hegemony, and it draws attention to power imbalances and social inequities in the hope of creating linguistic and social awareness in people. As Fairclough puts it

CDA works around three central tenets that discourse is shaped and constrained by (a) social structure (class, status, age, ethnic identity and gender), (b) culture, and (c)

the assumption that discourse helps to shape and constrain our identities, relationships, and systems of knowledge and beliefs. CDA aims to make transparent the connections between discourse practices, social practices, and social structures, as well as the connections that might be opaque to the layperson, via a three-level analysis: (a) the description of text (analysis of formal textual features) (b) the interpretation of the relationship between text and social interaction (i.e. the norms and mental standards of socially acceptable behavior in specific roles/relationships used to produce, receive, and interpret a text), and (c) the explanation of relationships within the social context (i.e. the settings where discourse occurs, each with a set of conventions that determine what is allowed and expected in a particular social context). (Fairclough 1989)

4.1. Malaysian male and female adolescents' self-categorization/perception

In our corpus of personal ads, the advertisers have identified and described themselves through a range of attributes that belong to several criteria. These criteria have been divided into the following 10 classifications for self-categorization: (1) social-relational characteristics, (2) ethnicity/race, (3) gender, (4) interests and hobbies, (5) first person pronoun, (6) physical appearance, (7) academic background, (8) age, (9) religion, and (10) marital status, e.g., *Good-looking, simple, understanding Chinese guy from Ipoh, studying in K.L.* (Kesumawati Abu Bakar, Bahiyah Dato' Hj. Abdul Hamid and Tan Kim Hua 2006: 148). The frequency of occurrence for the above attributes are presented in Table 1 below.

In the next sections, we will briefly discuss five salient attributes used by the advertisers in their personal ads to construct their identities. These attributes are gender, ethnicity/race, social relational characteristics, personal interests and hobbies, and first person pronoun plus copula. The last attribute, first person pronoun plus copula, will be discussed in Section 7.

4.2. Gender identity

What is gender identity? What are the elements that go into the construction of gender identity? And how salient is gender in the formation and construction of adolescent identity? Gender identity is a subjective, but continuous and persistent, sense of ourselves as male or female. It is shaped by many different factors: individual and collective as well as biological and social (Woodward

Table 1. Frequency count of self-attributes

Attributes	Descriptors	Total number of occurrences	Total frequency of occurrence
Gender	<i>girl</i>	329	78%
	<i>gurl</i>	20	
	<i>gal</i>	162	
	<i>guy</i>	191	
	<i>boy</i>	65	
First person pronoun + the copula <i>am/'m</i>	<i>I am/I'm</i>	653	65%
Interests and hobbies	<i>I like/love/enjoy;</i>	672	67%
	<i>loves/luv/luvs;</i>		
	<i>hobby/ies</i>		
Ethnicity/race	<i>Chinese</i>	624	62%
	<i>Malay</i>		
	<i>Indian</i>		
Social-relational characteristics	<i>open-minded</i>	258	25.8%
	<i>simple</i>	230	23.0%
	<i>friendly</i>	202	20.2%
	<i>happy</i>	63	6.3%
	<i>happy-go-lucky</i>	63	6.3%
	<i>crazy</i>	62	6.2%
	<i>easygoing</i>	58	5.8%
	<i>funny</i>	55	5.5%
	<i>sincere</i>	50	5.0%
	<i>cool</i>	46	4.6%
	<i>understanding</i>	44	4.4%
	<i>lonely</i>	35	3.5%
	<i>caring</i>	27	2.7%
	<i>nice</i>	22	2.2%
	<i>funky</i>	19	1.9%
	<i>cheerful</i>	16	1.6%
	<i>honest</i>	16	1.6%
	<i>bored</i>	15	1.5%
	<i>loving</i>	15	1.5%
	<i>shy</i>	11	1.1%
	<i>loyal</i>	9	0.9%
	<i>humorous</i>	8	0.8%
	<i>naughty</i>	7	0.8%

Table 1 (continued)

Attributes	Descriptors	Total number of occurrences	Total frequency of occurrence
Physical appearance	<i>cute</i>	58	5.8%
	<i>pretty</i>	19	1.9%
	<i>handsome</i>	15	1.5%
	<i>sweet</i>	15	1.5%
	<i>sexy</i>	12	1.2%
	<i>slim</i>	12	1.2%
Age	<i>young</i>	20	2%
Marital status	<i>single</i>	10	1%
Academic background	<i>Student, e.g., I'm a</i>	22	2.20%
	<i>UiTM Shah Alam</i>		
	<i>student/I'm a</i>		
	<i>Maldivian studying</i>		
	<i>in Malaysia/</i>		
	<i>teenage guy</i>		
	<i>currently studying</i>		
	<i>in Cochrane Road</i>		
	<i>School/cute,</i>		
	<i>charming, mature</i>		
Religion	<i>Chinese guy</i>	20	2%
	<i>studying in college</i>		
	<i>I am an Indian</i>		
	<i>(PreM) guy (HN)</i>		
	<i>who is now a</i>		
	<i>Muslim</i>		

2004). This awareness normally begins in infancy and is reinforced during adolescence (see, e.g., www.hyperdictionary.com). Sometimes, gender identity can be revealed through our names. For example, Malaysian Muslim names are gender-indexed via the particle *bin* (meaning 'son of', indicating a male person) or *binti* (meaning 'daughter of', indicating a female person) conjoining the first name and the surname (actually the name of the father), e.g., *Shafinaz binti Abdullah* or *Musa bin Mohamad*. The awareness of gender differences comes early, and since birth we have been taught how significant gender is in determining which codes of cultural and social conduct one should adhere to. Therefore, when we interact with others, either orally or in

writing, gender stereotypes are often activated, which in turn shapes and guides the way we perceive others and behave towards them.

Despite the fact that the name of the advertiser is displayed at the end of every ad, gender is found to be a key attribute articulated in 78 percent of the ads highlighting the pervasiveness of gender as a differentiating social dimension in categorizing these adolescents. This means that gender, which is a basic-level and highly naturalized category, is perceived to be more important (78 percent) than any other attributes (e.g., ethnicity 62 percent and social-relational characteristics 57 percent) that define who the adolescents are. This finding reveals how gender is seen as an anchor for identity even in a context where the advertisers can depart from their physical characteristics. Gender identity in our data is a socio-psychological quality described by an individual through the use of common nouns, phrases and sentences that (1) clearly categorize the individual as male or female and (2) may or may not conform to gender stereotypes.

In total, 78 percent of the advertisers demonstrate gender identity through the use of a complex noun phrase (NP) within a declarative sentence structure (see examples [1–4] below). A gender-indexed common noun as a Head Noun (HN) of the phrase tends to be preceded by several pre-modifiers (PreM) (the most prominent and frequent ones referring to ethnic origin, e.g., *Chinese, Malay, Indian*, followed by social-relational attributes, e.g., *simple, friendly, coolest*, etc.) and is complemented by post-modifiers (PostM) in the form of prepositional phrases and relative clauses, e.g., *from Penang* and *who is now a Muslim*:

- (1) I'm a Chinese (PreM) girl (HN) seeking friends (PostM) . . .
 - (2) I'm a Malay (PreM) girl (HN) looking for pen pals (PostM) . . .
 - (3) Hi! I am an Indian (PreM) guy (HN) who is now a Muslim (PostM) . . .
 - (4) I'm the coolest (PreM) gurl (HN) in the hope of seeking friends (PostM)
- . . .

The nouns used by the adolescents strongly suggest a binary male–female system of gender differentiation. Genetic force is clearly at work in the adolescents' perception of their gender, and this biologically evolving factor generates unconscious (i.e., gender-typical) behavior, and also shapes the conscious perception of gender identity, e.g., through labeling oneself as *guy* or *girl*. Interestingly, while gender takes precedence in the articulations of adolescents' identity, there is a preference by both male and female adolescents to be nonspecific when it comes to their target readers, with the advertisers

preferring to use “*Any age/sex/race . . . from all over the world*”. This is likely due to the nature of the relationship (i.e., platonic and pure friendship) that these adolescents are seeking.

Gender in our corpus of personal ads is indicated via common nouns, such as *girl*, *gurl*, *gal*, *guy*, *man*, and *boy*. Coupland (2000: 16) maintains that the use of such gender labels along with their gender-qualifying devices may be interpreted as “discursive strategizing to acknowledge one’s own gender and, at the same time, to reiterate one’s own age and personalities.” Out of the total of 486 ads by female adolescents, 68 percent of the advertisers present themselves as *girl*, while 25 percent prefer the word *gal*, and other 4 percent describe themselves as *gurl*. Of the 514 male advertisers, most (79 percent) show a clear preference for presenting themselves as *guy*, as opposed to only 62 (12 percent), who describe themselves as *boy*.

While *girl* may emphasize the qualities of being female, young and lively, *gal*, which is an American colloquial word, besides indicating the idea of youth, also portrays sociability and playfulness and carries a certain level of negative connotation in the West. *Gurl*, in turn, is a phonetic rendering of the American pronunciation. In light of Asmah’s (2000) observation that language choice is triggered by an effort to conform to the social context, such a usage may indicate a linguistic differentiation strategy at work contrasting the user with others through the Americanized version of the common noun *girl*.

As for the word *guy*, it is colloquial (Leech 1981: 20; Maalej 1997: 12) and does not have the connotations of “age”, “maturity”, and “responsibility” associated with *man*, which may be seen as appropriate gender descriptors of our male adolescent advertisers. The word *boy*, on the other hand, suggests a male with youthful qualities. However, it also conveys a sense of immaturity which may be the reason why only 62 out of 514 male advertisers chose the word as their gender marker.

It was stated earlier that gender identity is constructed via common nouns functioning as heads of complex nouns. In the majority of cases, these nouns are not used independently, but rather are intricately linked with other attributes resulting in heavily pre- and post-modified noun phrases by means of adjectives and a variety of clauses. We shall only focus on pre-modifiers, as their positioning and categorization render them vital tools for revealing attitudes and perceptions in self-categorization (Fowler and Kress 1979; Maalej 1997; Quirk et al. 1985: 1338–1339). We will classify the pre-modifiers into four categories, i.e., pre-central, central, post-central and pre-head. The pre-central category involves intensifying peripheral adverbs such

as *very, so, extremely*. The central category includes emotive, evaluative or subjective adjectives (e.g., *simple, friendly, cool, kind*, etc.). Next, the post-central class involves participles and colors, and, finally, the pre-head category includes denominal adjectives denoting nationality and ethnic background (e.g., *Malay, Chinese, Indian*).

Of all the advertisers, 62 percent chose to highlight their ethnicity as a part of their identity construction qualifying the noun by an ethnicity marking pre-modifier (e.g., *a friendly **Indian** guy*) in a gender-indexed noun phrase. The choice and positioning of this pre-modifier are indicative of its “visually observable and objectively recognizable” property (Quirk et al. 1985: 1243), with the adjective appearing on the immediate left of the head noun tending to be the most significant and meaningful for the advertisers (Maalej 1997: 1–19).

4.3. *Ethnic/racial identity*

The ethnic/racial attribute provides an answer to the question “where do I belong?” in the matrix of Malaysian ethnic identities. Ethnicity seems to be a salient feature in Malaysian adolescent ads, with 62 percent of the advertisers describing their own race through forms such as *I’m a Chinese gal, I’m an Eurasian-Indian girl*, and *I’m a simple Malay guy*. Conversely, there is a tendency to avoid specifying ethnic or racial attributes in these ads when it comes to their target readers. Such observations stand in contrast to those in Coupland’s (1996) study of British dating advertisements, where of the eight dimensions isolated, ethnicity is least prominent in the corpus, used there to describe the author in only 7 percent of the ads, and the target in only 5 percent. It would appear that where positive in-group attitude identification with higher-self esteem is present, less stress and less delinquent behavior is evident (Beale-Spencer and Cunningham 2000; McCreary, Slavin and Berry 1996). In such cases, ethnic identity creates a sense of belonging to a specific group of people, i.e., a sense of rootedness (Oyserman and Harrison 1989), which, in turn, reduces the feeling of isolation and of being alone.

4.4. *Social-relational characteristics, affective behavior and psychological traits*

A survey by Montemayor and Eisen (1997: 317; in Yavari 2002: 314–319) reveals that older youths tend to use more abstract descriptions, such as

emotions, beliefs, motives and personal/psychological traits, e.g., when they are asked to give an answer to the question “who am I?”. Having acquired a capacity for self-reflection, i.e., the ability to reflect on their private (inner thoughts/feelings) and public selves (the adolescents’ behavior with others around them) adolescents are able to select psychological attributes as self-descriptors (Selman 1980). This seems to explain why affective/psychological attributes describing personality seem to dominate in the majority of the ads in our corpus.

The fact that they act as verb complements in sentences highlights (1) their structural importance and (2) the advertisers’ awareness of traits that may attract readers when reading and scouting for acquaintances, as well as define them as individuals. The analysis of our corpus reveals that nearly half (45 percent) of the advertisers from both groups used the adjectives *simple*, *friendly*, and *open-minded* in categorizing and presenting themselves to the readers. As opposed to adult advertisers, who tend to utilize gender-appropriate characteristics to define themselves (Jones 2000; Shalom 1997; Thorne and Coupland 1998), these three top traits may be considered gender neutral, in the sense that they cannot be categorized as belonging to either feminine or masculine stereotypical characteristics (Woodward 2004).

The word *simple* is commonly used as a pre-modifier of the nominal head words *guy/girl*, as in the sentences *I’m just a simple guy/I’m a simple girl/I’m a simple, friendly and open-minded guy*. It is a neutral word, implying neither a positive nor negative emotional state. Superficially, the modifier is easy to interpret, but when related to a specific attribute, e.g., physical or psychological, its meaning becomes vague and open to various interpretations. Closer inspection reveals the all-encompassing function of the word – its ability to refer both to the personality and to the appearance of the advertiser. When referring to personality, the word *simple* describes a state of being uncomplicated, humble, and unpretentious. When referring to physical appearance, it reveals an image of a person wearing basic, no-fuss garb, such as a t-shirt and jeans. What it precisely means depends on the social and psychological profiles of the readers. Shalom (1997: 97) in her analysis of gay male and female ads asserts that this strategy of using words open to interpretation is employed by authors of personal ads. She purports that ambiguous words, such as *simple*, are unrestricted in scope and their open-endedness functions “as a hook to draw in the reader”.

When it comes to *friendly*, its usage hints at a common trait among adolescents. At this stage in their life friends play an important and influential role for adolescents, so being warm and open to others appears to be a

prerequisite for attracting more acquaintances. It is not surprising, therefore, that in examples (7) and (8), *friendly* is collocated with traits such as *easygoing*, *understanding* and *open-minded*:

- (5) I'm very friendly and I have a **sense of humour**.
- (6) **Funny, open-minded**, Indian guy.
- (7) I'm an **easygoing, understanding, open-minded and friendly** Chinese guy. I like to have fun and I promise I'll be the best I can.
- (8) **Easygoing, friendly, open-minded** football fan. I love chatting, am always smiling and making friends around the world.

The American psychiatrist, Harry Sullivan (<http://www2.cedarcrest.edu/academic/mus/cmcanall/jbrozen/honors/people/sullivan/sull.htm>), stresses the fact that adolescents build their sense of self and self-esteem through interactions with a variety of personalities and through conveying stimuli that expand and deepen one's knowledge of self and of the external world. We can hence observe a preoccupation with traits that suggest tolerance and objectivity towards a range of issues, which in the examples is expressed through such attributes as *sense of humour* (5), *funny* (6), *open-minded* (6–8), as well as *easygoing*, *understanding*, and *friendly* (7, 8), which are all salient traits for the advertiser/writer. This sense of openness is a prerequisite to a fulfilling interaction in an interpersonal relationship with peers. The inquisitive and active nature of youths results in their involvement in various indoor and outdoor activities where new experiences are gained and new acquaintances are made. It is natural for the interaction among adolescents to center around similarities and differences in terms of experience, and it is open-mindedness that can enhance the interaction among them and their understanding of one another, thus creating the common sense of support and intimacy.

Finally, the adjectives high on the list of occurrence are *funny* and *easygoing*. They create a favorable impression of the adolescents, and indicate their sense of enjoyment and delight, as well as of being relaxed, light-hearted, untroubled, and even-tempered (see examples 6–8). Our observation are parallel to the result of a survey of 440 middle school students by Wentzel and Erdley (1993, in McNamara and Wigfield 2002), who have found that adolescents have a clear idea and understanding of interpersonal relation strategies and of what one should or should not do when it comes to making

friends. Some of the positive traits they seek in others include being considerate, cooperative, honest, showing respect to others, while those that should be avoided include being self-centered and selfish.

4.5. Personal interests and hobbies

Another dimension of self-disclosure important from the point of view of advertisers is their interests, likes, and dislikes. These features are present in nearly all of the ads in our corpus, allowing readers to gauge the degree of similarity between them and the advertiser.

As Subrahmanyam et al. (2004), Yavari (2002) and Wentzel and Erdley (1993) have shown, when adolescents leave their pre-pubescent years, they spend an increasing amount of time with their friends, who play an important role in their lives. During adolescence friendship is based, firstly, on mutuality, loyalty and security, and, secondly, on common activities and experiences. Friends are thus chosen on the basis of their personality, which is gauged in the personal ads through attributes used as self-descriptors (e.g., *open-minded, simple, friendly*) and through their imagined contribution to a mutually rewarding friendship. This contribution is phrased in expressions of shared interests (e.g., *I'm very interested in music esp. Hitz.fm, movies and writing letters; I'm into music and motor sports*) and in offers (e.g., *I can be a good guy if you want; I like to have fun and I promise I'll be the best I can. This I promise you*).

Self-representation in the personal ads of these adolescents seems to adhere to several common constraints in which only respectable, fun, and non-sexual (therefore, culturally and socially acceptable) qualities and goals are mentioned. The strategies for self-representation vary from ambiguously down-to-earth (e.g., *simple*) and stereotypically positive, but modest (e.g., *friendly, open-minded*), to ironically humorous (e.g., *I am a handsome and macho guy; people call me handsome*) and self-deprecating (e.g., *smiley face and a giant body*).

5. Hybridized adolescents: globalization and glocalization in the personal ads

Globalization and glocalization of the ads are observed to operate at two textual levels. The first level concerns the schematic genre, while the second

concerns the syntactic structure of personal ads. This section examines the process of homogenization via conformity to the schematic structure of personal ads and the creation of heterogeneity through intertextuality and code-mixing resulting in the hybridization (or glocalization) of the genre. Quantitative and qualitative analyses of the ads will demonstrate how adolescent advertisers stretch the boundaries of the personal ad genre, negotiate normative constraints of their communicative task and manipulate other forms of discourse to express identity and establish a bond with the readers.

5.1. Genre structure of personal ads

Genre is perceived as “a description of texts across a wide range of dimensions, including not only formal features, such as structure and tense, but also social and cultural setting, assumed knowledge, and so on” (Laurence 2000: 1). Bhatia (1993: 16) affirms that each genre is “an instance of successful achievement of a specific communicative purpose using conventionalized knowledge of linguistic and discoursal resources”, exhibiting “various patterns of similarity in terms of structure, style, content, and intended audience” (Swales 1990: 58).

The content of the ads is guided by a form provided by the magazine consisting of a list of basic information headings, i.e., ‘name’, ‘I/C no’ (Identity Card number), ‘age’, ‘sex’, ‘address’, ‘tel. no’ and ‘about myself’. There is no column for descriptions of the target/goal. A survey of the corpora, however, shows that this does not prevent the advertisers from specifying their targets and goals. Despite the given format, the structure of most ads conforms to the pattern observed by Coupland (1996), i.e., it consists of such components as: (1) advertiser, (2) seeks, (3) target, (4) goals, (5) comment (optional), and (6) reference, which points to their structural homogenization. Below are some examples conforming to the generic pattern discussed above:

- (9) (1) I’m a Chinese girl (2) who is looking for (4) friends (3) aged between 15–25. I’m open-minded, friendly and (5) won’t let my friends be lonely when there is a problem. Letters in English/Malay/Mandarin/rojak (Code mixing of Malay, English, Chinese, Tamil or any dialects). 100% replies. (6) Cheryl Leong (15), Blok 5-8-30, Lintang Pulau 1, Taman Bendera Relau, 11400 Bayan Lepas, Penang.
- (10) (1) An open-minded gal who’s into 3rd Eye Blind, Savage Garden and Match-box Twenty (2) is seeking (4) friends (3) of any age. (5) Replies guaranteed.

(6) Lim Al Ling (17), No. 258, Kampung Baru 43950 Sungai Pelek, Sepang, Selangor.

In the next section, the generic processes will be discussed in relation to the concepts of globalization and glocalization.

5.2. Intertextuality and hybridization

Intertextuality refers to the merging of many different genres within one genre, where the different genres are clearly identifiable through their structural make-up, whether lexical, phonological, or syntactic (Goddard 2003: 51). However, some authors depart from the conventional structure of the personals to come up with modified versions of the schema as illustrated in the examples below:

- (11) <0093>
<1-15/9/2001>
<Femaleadvertiser>
I've got you, who? Yah, you the one who is reading this right now! Want to know more about me? If you're into conventional letter-writing, please send me a snail mail Michelle (16), block 18-09, 3A Tingkat Paya Terubong 2, 11060 Penang. e-mail: LEE_SAN_QONG@hotmail.com.
- (12) <0073>
<1-15/9/2001>
<Femaleadvertiser>
Kuek, kuek, kuek. It was **16.9.1984**. there was a birth of a lovely baby girl. That's me. They call me Yanti. When I was a kid, **I wanted to be a postman** because my father works as one. I live in a small town and love listening to 'grandmother stories' told by my friends. Interested? Call me. Suryanti binti Sohor (17), Lot 177, Jalan 5, Taman Ampang Indah, 44000 Kuala Kubu Bharu, Selangor.
- (13) <0197>
<1-16/10/2001>
<Femaleadvertiser>
Wherever you are, whatever you be, you are all welcome to be my friends. Do not just stand outside on the rainbow, come closer and I'll share my life with you. What you need to do is just prepare your pen, and let us colour our lives with only the pen. Just feel free to be my friends, ok? Letters in English/

Malay/Chinese. A girl who need friends-Siew Way (15), 3598A, West Road 8, Jinjang Utara, 52000 Kuala Lumpur or email her at: salter_fish@hotmail.com/ kongyue@pd.jaring.my.

(14) <1602>

<M>

<17-31/5/2003>

A kiss of patience soothes the raging heart. Muchos (17), 52, Jalan AU1C/4J, Taman Keramat, 54200 KL.

(15) <1144>

<M>

<1-16/3/2003>

Hi there, all the youths of my nation. Accept me as your friend. I'm into Kid Rock and Sugar Ray. Letters in English/Malay/rojak (Code mixing of Malay, English, Chinese, Tamil or any dialects). Replies confirmed. Mohd Elias (19), Dorm A-5, Spot Repair And Painting Skill (KMSC P75), National Youth Skill Institute Dusun Tua, 43100 Hulu Langat, Selangor.

(16) <0067>

<M>

<1-15/6/2004>

I'm not as cute as Gareth Gates, not as sweet as Mandy Moore, not as talented as Michelle Branch and not as yummy as Orlando Bloom, but i have something special to share with you all. I'm open minded and understanding. Everybody welcome. Mohd Flordaush Jaafar (16), 20 Blk Q, Palong 7 3470, Gemas, Negeri Sembilan.

(17) <0710>

<M>

<17-31/12/2002>

Hear my words, hear my cries; cause unseen across the skies; come to me who summon thee; come to me and settle here. Hey! The charmed one is casting a spell to summon friends of all race/age/sex! Joshua, the Hunter (18), 39-10-52, Lintang Delima 14, Island Glades, 11700 Penang.

Examples (11–17) reveal the merging of discourses that are manipulated in order to attract readers' attention and create an impression of their authors' distinctiveness. Example (11), for instance, is a combination of infomercial (i.e., an informational and commercial text) and conversational discourse (marked by the presence of the discourse marker *Yah*). An adjacency pair

with a (persuasive) rhetorical question as its first part (*–I’ve got you, who? –Yah, you the one who is reading this right now!*) is used by the writer/advertiser as an ice-breaker to initiate the “interaction”. Example (12), in turn, is akin to a biography that provides the advertiser’s date of birth, and reveals her childhood ambition to become a postman. This advertiser starts her ad with the onomatopoeic expressions *kuek, kuek, kuek*, imitating a baby’s (here supposedly the writer’s own) cries, which work as attention-grabbing devices to further emphasize the text’s communicative uniqueness. When it comes to examples (13) and (16), they fuse the discourse of greeting cards with formal spoken discourse. In (13), for instance, *Wherever you are, whatever you be* resembles the discourse of greeting cards, whereas *you are all welcome to be my friends* represents more formal discourse. Similarly, in (16), *I’m not as cute as Gareth Gates, not as sweet as Mandy Moore, not as talented as Michelle Branch and not as yummy as Orlando Bloom* follows the discourse of greeting cards which is fused with the more formalized *but i have something special to share with you all*. Furthermore, example (14), with merely 8 words, is reminiscent of a *haiku*, a Japanese three-part poem usually of 17 syllables. However, in this ad, the writer/advertiser has chosen to use 10 syllables to compose a single sentence message. Next, in example (15), the first two opening sentences (*Hi there, all the youths of my nation. Accept me as your friend.*) are very much like a script from a speech because of the use of the imperative to focus readers’ attention on what is being said. Finally, example (17) is a creative spin on a witch’s incantation. The expressions *summon* and *come to me* in the first sentence, and *casting a spell* in the second sentence, convey the ad’s aim to cast a spell. The NP *the charmed one* in the second sentence gives a clue where the idea of the witch’s incantation came from. It may have been inspired by the popular television series *Charmed*, whose main characters (three sisters) are called “The Charmed Ones”.

To conclude this train of thought, through their use of intertextuality (the merging of one genre into another), which capitalizes on the strengths of different discursive conventions, the adolescents signal, first, the writers’ awareness of different text types and, second, their understanding of how language can be exploited in many ways for different purposes. In this context, the text of the ad becomes more like small talk. The creation of such a conversational tone, signaled by the usage of questions, first person pronouns and presupposition, is typical of much advertising discourse (cf. Cook 1992), and it has the effect of directly involving the addressee by appealing to his/her knowledge, interests and emotions. Globalization has diversified the sources and

resources available for writers/advertisers to construct their identities, which are articulated by hybridized texts incorporating elements of various discourse types, such as, for instance, greeting cards, television series, speeches, and poetry.

6. Code choice and code alternation

In addition to being an ethnic identity marker (via the use of Chinese, Malay, Tamil and other indigenous codes, e.g., Iban, Kadazan-Dusun,² etc.) code alternation is a salient feature of adolescent personal ads in Malaysia. In the corpus it usually occurs in the form of code-switching (e.g., English–Malay, English–Chinese, English–Malay–Japanese, English–Iban) realized as insertions of phrases from various codes into greetings (e.g., *vanakam* – Tamil, *nee how*, *xie xie* – Mandarin, *bonjour* – French, *aloha* – Hawaiian, *moshi moshi* – Japanese, *sawadeekap* – Thai). This phenomenon can be interpreted in Auer's terms (1995: 116) as “the juxtaposition of semiotic systems . . . [where] the appropriate recipients of the resulting complex sign are in the position to interpret this juxtaposition as such.” In line with Auer's (1998: 116) and Gumperz's (1982: 59) definitions, code-switching can be described as (part of) a verbal interaction where two or more codes are used alternatively and where this alternation between codes is employed as a resource for the construction of interactional meaning (Bahiyah Dato' Hj. Abdul Hamid 2003: 35).

Malaysian adolescents who are bilingual or multilingual are able not only to affect code choice and code alternation in speech but also in writing, as can be seen in examples (18–23):

- (18) *Konichiwa* ('hello' – Japanese), *kawan* ('friend' – Malay language). Don't misunderstand. I'm not a mix blood. Just drop me a letter or email me. I'll be with you, you be with me. *Arigato* ('thank you' – Japanese), thank you, *terima kasih* ('thank you' – Malay).
- (19) Hi guyz n galz out there! Gonna be my frenz. *Sesape je* ('anybody can' – colloquial Malay) mail your letter to Emillia Ryana Aizanurani.
- (20) *Konichiwa*, *O-genki desu ka?* *Watashi munnie san* ('Hello, How are you? My name is Munnie' – Japanese), anyone feeling lonely, just drop in. I like fashion, crazy, fun, new stuff. If you are Chinese, just write to me. Letters in English.

Jiak nee . . . ('bye, bye, see you' – Japanese) Munnie San (19), 128, Jln Belibis 5, Tmn Perling, 81200 Johor Bahru, Johor.

- (21) *Bonjour* ('good day' – French). I'm an open-minded, handsome and very notty boy seeking cute2 gurls of any race/age/sex and also those who are notty like me, ok. I'm from Negeri Sembilan and am now studying in IPT. *Jom share cerita 'panas' dgn saya*. ('Come and share "hot stories" with me' – colloquial Malay). Mohd Fahmi B. Ibrahim (19), Email: fbi_cobain@yahoo.com.
- (22) *Aloha* ('Hello' – Hawaiian), I'm a simple Iban girl from Sarawak. Prefer macho man who is cool and understanding. I'm the biggest fan of Linkin Park, Eminem & Anak Manok' Too Phat. Those aged between 15–19 are welcome. *Agik idup Agik Ngelaban*. ('Never give up hope until you achieve what you dream of' – Iban). Letters Malay/English/Iban. Ivy Viviana (15), BBF-3-S, Pandan Indah, Jalan 5/20, Pandan Indah, 55100 Kuala Lumpur.
- (23) *Konnichiwa* ('hello' – Japanese), *kawan* ('friend' – Malay). Don't misunderstand that I'm a mix. Just a drop me a letter or email me. I'll be with you, you be with me. Letters in English. *Arigato* ('thank you' – Japanese), thank you, *xie, xie* ('thank you' – Mandarin) and *terima kasih* ('Thank you' – Malay). Candycahn123 (18), Pusat Kerjasama UTM-Kolej Lagenda 9 (Campus 1), Jln Sri Lagenda, 07000 Langkawi, Kedah.

First of all, code-switching seems to be a resource for the teenagers to construct interactional meaning as can be observed in the ad openings and closings (18 and 20–23). In these examples the openings can be likened to greetings which to a large extent resemble speech acts produced in face-to-face interaction. They serve to attract attention and acknowledge the interlocutor's presence. Code alternation in the closings, on the other hand, is rendered mostly through expressives in the form of thanking and leave-taking formulae, as in (18) (*Arigato* 'thank you' – Japanese, *terima kasih* 'thank you' – Malay), (20) (*Jiak nee* 'bye, bye, see you' – Japanese), and (23) (*Arigato* 'thank you' – Japanese, *xie, xie* 'thank you' – Mandarin, *terima kasih* 'thank you' – Malay). The cultural practice of politeness in thanking is exercised in these examples as a way of showing the advertiser's/writer's appreciation to the target readers for taking the time to take note of/read their ads. The code alterations in the leave-taking expressions cue the target readers to the act of closing the ads. Interestingly, code-switching is also a practical strategy for the adolescents to establish a relationship and common ground between the writer and target readers. For instance, the use of Korean, Mandarin and

Japanese may be cueing to the fact that the writer/advertiser and the target reader have a rudimentary knowledge of these codes whose source lies in watching Korean, Mandarin, and Japanese television series popular with teenagers. The popularity of these programs has also sparked interest in some pop groups/singers from Korea, Hong Kong/China/Taiwan and Japan.

The adolescents seem to be aware of the social principles of language use. They switch from one code to another in the belief that there is a sufficient amount of shared knowledge between themselves and their recipients to create a bond and convey a sense of informality. This again highlights the adolescents' linguistic maturity, which indirectly signals a wholesome knowledgeable attitude towards representatives of different ethnic groups.

7. Foregrounding the advertisers: the 1st person pronoun *I*

One thing that is strikingly similar and frequent in all the examples cited above, but uncommon in adult personal ads, is the use of the pronoun *I* to represent the self. The use of the first person pronoun instead of the more common third person singular, as in *A simple guy seeks . . .*, leads to the foregrounding of the advertisers. The first person reference of *I* refers to the person who is speaking or writing. *I* used as a pronoun will always appear as the subject of the sentence; otherwise the form that would occur is *me*. Examples (24–27) illustrate the position of *I* in the sentence structure, *I would like to have friends from all around the world/I'm a simple Chinese gal looking for penpals of any race around the world/I am a Chinese girl seeking friends to make a wonderful life/I'm a big friend of Michael Schumacher; interested?*. The positioning of *I* in the initial position of an active sentence structure automatically gives textual prominence to the writer, i.e., the pronoun occupying this slot. The writer/advertiser is portrayed as the agent or doer initiating the interaction, while the readers are rendered as recipients of the written act of communication:

- (24) I would like to have friends from all around the world aged between 13–17. I'm into Westlife, BSB, M2M and more. Letters in English. Photo/phone no. appreciated. Replies assured. Sarah Hoong (12), No. 18, Taman Raub Jaya 3, 27600 Raub, Pahang or email: S2S_13@hotmail.com.
- (25) I'm a simple Chinese gal looking for penpals of any race around the world aged between 20–25. I'm an LMF fan, Westlife, A1, BSB, etc. Letters in Eng-

lish. Replies 100%. Elaine Yap(20), No. 157, Jalan Naga, Taman Sri Hijau, 34000 Taiping, Perak.

- (26) I am a Chinese girl seeking friends to make a wonderful life. I hope everyone can be my pal. Hellen Tee (16), No. 1574, Bt 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ Sg. Terap, 45500 Tg. Karang, Selangor or email: Hellen119@hotmail.com.
- (27) I'm an Indian girl seeking friends from all over the world. I'm a big friend of Michael Schumacher, interested? Write to me. Letters in English. Shubashini (17), 1485, Jalan Fasah, 70300, Seremban, N. Sembilan.

In essence, the first person pronoun *I* in the ads personalizes the message encoders, subjectivizes the whole text, and evokes a sense of proximity between the advertiser and the readers. This works in opposition to the use of the third person, which creates a sense of objectification (Shalom 1997) and emotional distance. The positioning and function of *I* seems to be in accord with the three top psychological attributes, i.e., *friendly*, *open-minded* and *simple*. While *I* creates and establishes proximity between the interlocutors, the three attributes describe favorable and uninhibited ways of behaving towards someone that you like. The combination of the first person reference and the social relational characteristics highlights the importance of social relationships among these adolescents and how these contribute to the construction of youth identities.

8. Conclusions

The age, gender, and ethnic group values that the discourse of Malaysian personal ads articulates convey information about the teenagers' identities, which reflect the way the individuals perceive and evaluate their self-image.

Firstly, in their personal ads the Malaysian adolescents depict their hybridized self by using resources available to them both globally and locally, for instance, those from the media and ICT. They understand that globalization offers an opportunity to engage in intercultural interaction and transformation that will not result in culture loss, but rather in the amalgamation of various cultural patterns of a more global form (cf. Razali Ismail 2000: 4). The ability of the Malaysian adolescents to juggle different genres and merge different text types to attain specific communicative goals shows their maturity in and awareness of language use for strategic purposes (see Tagliamonte [2005] with regard to linguistic innovation in the conversations of young

Canadians and Subrahmanyam, Greenfield and Tynes [2004] for linguistic innovation in online teen chat rooms). In the case of personal ads, motivation is derived from the intention to narrow the gap between the “self” as adolescent advertisers and ‘others’ as the texts’ adolescent consumers.

An interesting aspect of personal adolescent ads in Malaysia is the use of code alternation in the forms of code-switching and insertions of foreign expressions. Not only do these function as identity markers, in that they can signal the ethnic identity of the advertiser through his/her use of the first language, but they also act as signals of a distinctive discourse that differentiates its author from others. More importantly, it can be argued that code switching and insertions create a sense of dynamic, global, as well as dynamic glocal identity. By using codes other than their own, such as Japanese, French, Italian, Korean, and so on, adolescent advertisers identify with a global identity. When they use these global codes together with their own ethnic or local codes, such as Malay, Chinese, Indian, Iban, etc., they identify with the glocal identity.

Secondly, while we agree that adolescence as a collective phenomenon is almost universal in the modern world (Sebald 1968: 37), we acknowledge that adolescence and adolescent behavior should not be described or explained exclusively as a universal phenomenon as is done in much mainstream discourse. This means that in discussing adolescence and adolescent behavior, we must take into account the diversity of adolescent experiences being a natural outcome of social and cultural conditions of the society in question.

As the findings show, rather than remain passive or anti-social, Malaysian male and female adolescents recognize the importance of belonging to a group and the need to be accepted in it, which they view as a source of social security, attention and dignity (see Subrahmanyam et al. 2004 with regard to this in online teen chat rooms). It is through personal ads that the teenagers can formulate the profiles of the peer groups to which they want to belong, and which define their expectations, tastes, and preferences. The texts reciprocally convey members’ recognition of themselves as part of a group, and at the same time, their being recognized as members of that group by others.

The findings of this study also show that Malaysian adolescents are not constantly confused by or ambivalent about their personal identity, i.e., in constant search of who they are. In many cases, they have a clearly defined down-to-earth sense of “self” revealed in the self-categorization/description part of their personal ads. In the Malaysian personal ads studied, six identity determinants, i.e., gender; interests and hobbies; ethnicity; positive social-relational characteristics, affective behavior and psychological traits; physical

appearance and religion were deemed important to the sense of “self” for the Malaysian teenager. Where mainstream discourses on adolescents highlight adolescents’ preoccupation with and acute sense of physical appearance as paramount to their sense of self (because of heightened physiological and psychological changes), this study shows that it is gender as well as interests/hobbies that seem to be more salient identity markers than any others so far claimed for this stage of life.

Notes

1. This chapter presents an outcome of a study (SK/005/2004) which was made possible by a grant from the Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, University Kebangsaan Malaysia.
2. Malaysia, with a population of approximately 26 million people, is a country with a diversity of cultures, languages, and ethnic groups. The latter comprise the Malays, Chinese and Indians although there are smaller groups including the Sikhs, Eurasians and members of various indigenous groups, such as the Ibans, Kadazans, Dayaks, Muruts, Bajaus, and Melanaus. The codes (languages) that Malaysians speak are as diverse as their ethnic backgrounds. The Malay language (Bahasa Melayu), which is a common code of Malaysia, is by no means the only one. The Malays have retained the Malay language as their mother tongue, but they can speak other dialects of this code as well. The Chinese, in turn, in most cases speak some Mandarin, but have retained some southern Chinese dialects as their mother tongues. The most widespread ones include Cantonese, Hokkien and Hakka. The Indians, on the other hand, representing various regions of the subcontinent, have retained various dialects as their mother tongues, for instance, Tamil, Telegu, Singhalese, Malayalam, Bengali, Hindi and Urdu. In the East Malaysian states of Sabah and Sarawak, thirty odd dialects are spoken, and the lingua franca used there is the Malay language. English is officially recognized as the second language, and is regarded not only as a lingua franca, but also as a code for international and regional contacts in the spheres of science and technology, international and regional finance, trade, diplomatic, and economic affairs (Bahiyah Dato’ Hj. Abdul Hamid 2003: 3–4).

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Part III. Age in inter-generational communication

Chapter 8

Elder abuse and neglect: A communication framework¹

Howard Giles and Jill Helmle

1. Introduction

There has been a burgeoning interest recently in the communicative worlds of older people as they increase in numbers and live longer (e.g., Nussbaum and Coupland 2004). People (all-too-suddenly, perhaps) find themselves crossing age boundaries in their language use and cultural practices. Unfortunately, and despite modes of successful aging and positive stereotypes attending later stages of the lifespan (Pecchioni et al. 2005), the intergenerational burdens that elderly people have to manage is an incontestable feature of communication, language, and aging research internationally (see Nelson 2002). For example, there are a plethora of studies documenting the psychologically harmful (if not abusive) effects on elder people of not only being the recipients of patronizing and demeaning talk, but also having to interactionally manage it by means of passive, humorous, assertive, etc. responses (see Hummert and Ryan 2001). Given that elder abuse is largely *intergenerational* in that perpetrators are typically (albeit far from always) younger than their victims (Pillemer and Moore 1990), it is perhaps surprising that there is virtually no allusion to this phenomenon in the communication and sociolinguistics literatures on aging.

2. Elder abuse: concepts and demographics

Although this field of social research and endeavor is new, there are indications that elder abuse has existed throughout human history (see Reinharz 1986). Nonetheless, and in the USA, elder abuse only became recognized as an offense in the early 1970s (Stannard 1973) and saw the coining of the term, “granny battering” (Baker 1975). However, it was not really until the 1990s that it attained a criminal status in the USA (see Wolf 1996) and a number of States legislated against it in their own specific ways, interestingly building (and arguably over-dependent) on existing tenets of child abuse (Loue 2001).

In general terms, and without engaging conceptual controversies and the lack of consensus about its complex natures and defining criteria (e.g., Daly and Jogerst 2005), elder abuse refers to any knowing, intentional or negligent act by a caregiver or any other person that causes harm or a serious risk of harm to someone over 65 years of age (NCEA 2004). The actual lower boundary of what constitutes “elder” depends on life expectancy in a particular culture and, hence across Africa, elder abuse can be inflicting pain or suffering on someone 55 years of age or older (Ferraira 2004).

2.1. Forms and prevalence of elder abuse

As alluded to above, harm directed at older people appears in different forms, such as emotional abuse, itself manifest by verbal and nonverbal acts which can inflict distress or anguish on an elderly victim. Examples are ridiculing the victim’s attitudes, beliefs, and values, violating basic rights (i.e., obstructing religious freedoms of practice and reading an elder’s mail), withholding everyday necessities such as false teeth or glasses, and threats or intimidation (Brandl 2000). Indeed, there is evidence that psychological distress caused by others’ attacks on one’s personal and/or social identity can over time be more disturbing than actually enduring physical pain for many people (Leets and Giles 1999). This may be particularly so when elder victims are actively and socially isolated from the support and counsel of friends and family who are, ironically in turn, blamed by the abuser for their disinterest and even abandonment (Singer 1992). In tandem, a reduction in the nature and size of social relationships that is often associated with elderliness, and the disempowerment that can follow a lack of valued communication, is a significant factor in decreasing subjective health (Query and Wright 2003).

Physical abuse includes such mistreatments as meting out bruises and fractures, breaking eyeglasses, and over- or under-using prescribed medications to calm the victim. Dimah and Dimah (2003) showed that this kind of abuse was more prominent among American rural than urban women, the latter suffering more from passive neglect. Precise national statistics are not available in the USA – and hence the actual prevalence of elder abuse is quite difficult to gauge. Elsewhere, Australian estimates point to about 6 percent of older women being abused (Schofield et al. 2002), while Canadian figures for those referred to as geriatric psychiatry services for abuse are at 16 percent of elderly females over 65 years of age (Vida, Monks and Des Rosiers 2002).

In some ways paralleling an increase in intergenerational abuse directed at parents from adolescents in recent years (e.g., Gallagher 2004), there has been an alarming increase of 150 percent in *reported* elder abuse from 1986 to 1996 (see National Elder Abuse Incidence Study 1998). In 1986, the number of cases reported was 117,000 and, by 1996, it had grown to 283,000 when an estimated 1.01 million elderly Americans suffered some form of abuse. The California Protective Services alone received 92,000 complaints, 64.2 percent of which were substantiated. By 2000, reports of abuse had exceeded 472,000 (Bonnie and Wallace 2003), a large number itself that could be *underestimated* in that there is an overwhelming consensus that less than 50 percent of elder abuse is *ever* reported (e.g., Kurrle et al. 1997). Part of the reason for this in some cases may be, as with other forms of abuse, that the elder victims hold onto a belief that it will just stop (Quinn and Tomita 1986). These days, crimes against the retired and elderly (CARE) have emerged in many large North American cities, such as in Philadelphia, Toronto, New York, and Los Angeles.

Across different States, there is variation in the ways in which elder abuse is judged (Payne and Berg 2003). For instance, in Louisiana, any crime against an older person commands a five year minimum sentence without parole. In Nevada, the very same crime committed against an older rather than by a younger person will insure that the defendant's sentence be doubled in the former instance while, in Illinois, damages incurred by an elder in financial exploitation are tripled if the defendant is convicted. In California, if the elder victim is over 70 years of age, then there is an enhancement of the sentence although, typically, unless gross bodily harm or worse has been documented, the offense is determined a misdemeanor; additionally, it would be considered a felony if \$400 or more had been embezzled. In contrast, in many parts of Africa, "... violations result in few cases reaching the courts. Law enforcement agencies often fail older complainants. Older victims' attempts to report violence to law officers may be dismissed. 'They will see you are old,' they will say. 'Your case will not go forward'" (Ferreira 2004: 26).

As indicated above, there are many ways of abusing older individuals besides in a physically and violently overt manner, two other major (and more covert) ways being as follows. First, financial abuse – which is a tempting crime for some given that 70 percent of the wealth in the USA is in the hands of those over 50 years of age. Rather disturbingly, it is estimated that only one out of every twenty-five elders monetarily exploited report the episode to the police (Wasik 2000). Moreover, this kind of abuse can be instigated over

a period of years, be well-hidden, and not easily recognized by the victim (Quinn and Tomita 1986). Included within this category of abuse (see Rabiner, Brown and O'Keefe 2004) are theft and disappearance of material possessions (e.g., jewelry, art), door-to-door scams (e.g., roof-, driveway-, yard-, car-repairs), lottery swindles, fraudulent changes to bank accounts (e.g., forged signatures, unauthorized or unexplained ATM withdrawals, even when the victim is not ambulatory), and sudden amendments to legal documents in favor of even seeming strangers (e.g., trusts, wills, deeds, power of attorney). One particular pernicious form of financial abuse that Nerenberg (2000) considers has reached epidemic proportions are "sweetheart scams" – situations in which lonely older people are courted by unscrupulous 'suitors' intent upon exploiting them". One instance of this was Orville Scott, a fairly frugal yet financially-blessed 72-year-old who met a younger woman (dressed in a nurse's uniform) at a Denny's restaurant. In brief, this supposedly chance encounter occurred in January 1994, they then married in July, and the elder died of neglect in December *that same year* (Feledy 2005). Tellingly, the lack of a social network for an elderly person is a key factor implicated in the increased risk for financial abuse (Rabiner et al. 2004). Indeed, perpetrators of financial abuse will often expend effort in determining the extent of an elderly target's social isolation from the local community.

A second major form of elder abuse is neglect. This has been defined as "the negligent failure of any person having care or custody of an elder to exercise that degree of care which a reasonable person in a like position would exercise" (Mosqueda 2005). Such "reasonable care" would include assisting with hygiene and the provision of food, clothing, and medical care, preventing malnutrition and dehydration, and protecting against safety hazards. The consequences of neglect (which with deliberate intent, rather than passive inattention, can be desertion or abandonment) can result in an elder having bed sores, lice, living in unsanitary and unsafe conditions, and even becoming comatose.

2.2. Reporting of and attitudes toward elder abuse

According to the National Center on Elder Abuse (<http://www.elderabusecenter.org>), the proportions of various forms of elder abuse are as follows: neglect (55%), physical abuse (14.6 percent), financial/material exploitation (12.3 percent), emotional abuse (7.7 percent), other types (6.1 percent), unknown (4 percent), and sexual (0.3 percent). Although the abuse

happens to the elder, the actual victim is one of the least likely persons to actually report it. The breakdown of those who do report is as follows: physician/health care provider (22.5 percent), family member (16.3 percent), private/voluntary service provider (15.1 percent), other (13.4 percent), friend/neighbor (7.7 percent), social worker (6 percent), anonymous person (4.9 percent), law enforcement (4.7 percent), elder victim (3.8 percent), unrelated caregiver (3.3 percent), and unknown (1.1 percent). It is now a requirement in more than forty States in the USA that those caring for older people are legally mandated to report, in variably-specific ways, any inkling of elder abuse and neglect to law enforcement (Bergeron 2004). In this regard, it is important to refer to a survey of American emergency treatment room physicians by Jones et al. (1997). They showed that while 87 percent and 63 percent of physicians had been trained on child and spousal abuse respectively, only 25 percent had any training on elder abuse. Payne and Berg (2003) also contend that police officers lack sufficient training in the dynamics of elder abuse as well as in its criminal nuances.

Other studies of this genre have shown that characteristics of the abuser and abusee are important in attributing severity to the crime and interpreting the evidence at hand. For instance, Bell et al. (2004) found that social service workers were more likely to take formal action against male than female perpetrators. In a mock trial of an elderly neglect case, Golding et al. (2004) found that individual undergraduate jurors rendered significantly fewer guilty verdicts when the victim had a cognitive deficit (that is, seemed confused in other situations) than when they had a physical disability. Many abused older people suffering ill-health beforehand are traumatized by the event as well as courtroom proceedings, especially when vigorously questioned by a reputed defense attorney. Hence, it is important to understand the circumstances and potential social stereotypes that can foster skepticism about a victim's testimony. Nonetheless, Golding et al. (2004: 38) contend that "... by bringing cases . . . to court, the criminal justice system may serve as an effective means of intervention, helping to stop or deter ongoing maltreatment and promoting the elderly victim's mental well-being when abuse has occurred."

Sometimes, and perhaps building on age schemas of cognitive and communicative decline that many older people believe younger people attribute to their age group (see Hummert et al. 2004), older people may not help their own cause when requesting assistance for being abused. Take, for instance, a 911 call from an 87-year-old woman who had been the victim of a brutal attempted murder by an unknown assailant (ultimately found to be her caregiver) in her own home late at night.² The following extracts emerged in the

first two minutes of talking to the dispatcher. It would appear from her frail and nervous voice that she anticipates not being received as credible:

"I am sorry, but someone is trying to kill me and I don't know what to do"

"Nobody is going to listen to me"

"This is real"

"Really, I'm not kidding"

"I am not just making this up"

"I am not kidding this is real"

"They are not going to believe me when they come out"

"They are not going to find anything; they are going to think I am crazy"

Now it is an empirical question as to what effects these defensive hedges would have. Would they slow down or speed up the dispatcher's actions, and negatively or positively influence the investigating officers arriving on the scene? Such a communicative stance by this victim – and especially if judged commonplace – does provide an insightful backdrop into our later discussion as to why elderly people typically do not report abuse. Similarly, many college women who have been sexually assaulted fear that law enforcement will not be empathic, minimize their ordeal, and or not believe them (Filipas and Ullman 2001). This can be a very distressing precursor for them as to what will unfold as future criminal proceedings are anticipated (Bachman 1998).

Other data suggest that many elderly people may not be well-placed to respond effectively to ill-treatment. Wood and Stephens (2003: 756) had residents in an assisted living facility watch and respond to videotaped scenarios of common forms of elderly abuse. In particular, questions were posed about their ability to manage comparable situations. They found the residents "... were poorly informed about protective services and uncertain about options if care were not optimal ... that ... [they] ... would have difficulty reporting abuse if it occurred and would have difficulty making alternate arrangements without assistance from family members."

In our cross-disciplinary review of this topic that is unique for the communication discipline, we have attempted to provide a brief, coherent backdrop to the heterogeneity inherent under the generic label of elder abuse, its pervasiveness, as well as variable reactions to it. We move now to a major feature of what can be regarded as major causal factors in the etiology and diagnosis of elder abuse and neglect, namely the social characteristics and personal traits of the abuser-abusee relationship. As we shall see, these form the cornerstone of emergent theory in this literature.

3. Profile of victims and perpetrators: towards a viable theory

3.1. Victims of elder abuse

Low levels of reporting elder abuse and neglect notwithstanding, the typical elder abuse victim is in their late 70s and predominantly female (Weeks et al. 2004). They are mostly Caucasian, have few social ties or visitors (Menio 1996), can be homeless, and possess some physical or cognitive impairments, such as dementia or depression (e.g., Schofield and Mishra 2004); percentage figures for those abused are 18.7 percent African Americans, 10.4 percent Hispanics, and less than 1 percent Asian/Native Americans respectively (see again <http://www.elderabusecenter.org>). Although no data are apparent vis-à-vis the USA, with regard to multicultural Australia, it has been found that non-English-speaking older women appear more susceptible to abuse than Anglophone women (Schofield et al. 2002). Frequently, elders diagnosed as having been abused can appear very fearful, withdrawn and non-responsive (see discussion of model below), timid, tearful, depressed, agitated, and can display little eye contact. As mentioned earlier, in most cases an elder victim will not report abuse and, understandably, has a sense of vulnerability as they may be dependent on the abuser for essential help, care, or support. Indeed, they can outright deny the existence of abuse, thereby inviting the perpetrator to construe such abuse as even acceptable (see Eckstein 2004).

There are many possible reasons why elder victims choose not to report the violation, not the least of which is fear of violent reprisals from the abusers and their networks. Alternatively, the abuse may be forgiven as “caretaker stress” or a lack of training, and the victim may fear abandonment or being alone; often the “better the devil you know . . .” folklore has real meaning for abusees. Today’s victims anecdotally relate to us that they claim to perhaps come more from a “generation of trust” than the present generation, and may not be able to so easily imagine someone being dishonest to them (Cater 2005). Victims may feel proud and/or embarrassed (i.e., “*why did I fall for that scam?*”), ashamed, or may blame themselves; indeed, they may want to protect their family from any upset that a report would cause. More poignantly, victims may fear institutionalization, retribution or loss of autonomy if they disclose to others and agencies beyond as the loss of personal control, privacy, independence, and being able to remain in one’s own home can be among the greatest stressors for older people.

If the victim is demented and or very dependent on their caretaker for healthcare and other assistance as is often so in abuse cases, they may be

unable to recognize elder abuse as such (see Stones and Bédard 2002), be unable to confidently and convincingly communicate it, or anticipate sheer incredulity from unknown others given prevailing age schemas of cognitive decrement – as just noted above. Moreover, victims may feel they have deserved the harm, it being conceived by them as not being at all atypical treatment toward some of their age. This would be particularly so had they been conditioned over time by their abuser that it was their fault and, if they had only been better people, they would not have received such discipline and mistreatment (Brandl 2000). Quinn and Tomita (1986) report on an incident of a son who felt it was his right and duty to hit his mother – whom he deemed deserved the action – given his father (her prior abuser) had passed on. Unfortunately, the effects of abuse on elders can persist and gather momentum well beyond the immediacy of the offense itself. A number of studies have shown, other things being equal, that abusees subsequently report more medical and mental problems and live shorter lives than non-abusees (e.g., Schofield and Mishra 2004).

3.2. *Abusers of elderly people*

Moving to a prototype of the elder abuser, typically the malevolent acts are carried out by a relative, caregiver, or a professional predator; the latter sometimes having a colluding network, as in the case of financial abuse (Rabiner et al. 2004). Interestingly, as the numbers of elderly requiring care increase, so do the number of caregivers (often untrained and highly stressed volunteers such as family members and friends) required to service them; the American Association of Retired People estimated there were 44.4 million such volunteers in 2004. As the numbers of people requiring volunteer care escalate, this places overwhelming demands and burdens on those providing it.

Perhaps surprisingly, according to the National Incidence Study on Elder Abuse (1998), 90 percent of abusers are *family* members. Although females are not immune from inflicting abuse on elders, Weeks et al. (2004) found that male spouses and sons, together, are the largest group of offenders. Moreover, this is particularly acute (and not uncommon in these economic times) when an adult child feels they have unexpectedly “failed” to find fitting housing and or a desired profession by a mature point in the life cycle and becomes a reluctant, if not resentful, dependent on parental support. Equity-rich elders can be preyed upon by their live-in (or not) adult children. In this sense, the latter can try as best they can to take their assets while the

parents excuse their actions due to circumstances such as their child's drinking dependency. The resultant embarrassment and feelings of guilt could be one of the reasons that aging parents do not choose to notify the police or prosecute them.

Most cases of elder abuse fit the traditional domestic-violence model with abusers holding rigid stereotypes about those they abuse and often feeling that they have a moral right to control them (Brandl 2000). Sometimes the abuse of elderly women by their husbands, and especially when it has had a lengthy relational history, can be appropriately understood, analyzed, and intervened from the more general position of domestic spousal abuse (see Lundy and Grossman 2004).

A consistent finding across studies is that abusive care-givers are socially-unskilled, have personality disorders, and relational backgrounds of conflict (e.g., Reis and Nahmias 1998). In addition, there is growing qualitative and quantitative evidence across Canada, Britain, and the USA that very large amounts of alcohol consumption are a prominent predictor of physical as well as emotional abuse (e.g., Bristowe and Collins 1989). Abusers are also frequently dependent on their victims' resources (Brandl 2000), such as for housing, repairs, financial assistance, cooking, and cleaning, and often (as above) deliberately yet surreptitiously isolate the victim from family and friends. When a caregiver, the abuser may often claim the victim is unavailable (e.g., the elder is sleeping) when social services or other public services wish to interview the elder. Apart from professional criminals, there are those abusers who are opportunistic. They may have no criminal history, "good intentions" but, eventually, come to feel they deserve or are owed something. Other characteristics of elder abusers include experiencing overriding stress (financial and caregiving), and having been involved in familial patterns of the intergenerational transmission of violence. As an anonymous 74-year-old victim of physical abuse remarked: "*My father used to beat me, My husband used to beat me, Now my son beats me. I guess I'm used to it*" (reported by Case 2005). Prior abuse as a wife and/or child may make it difficult for abusees to recognize that they, somewhat passively, have been victims of abuse all throughout their lives (Quinn and Tomita 1986).

Finally moving to abusers who have supposedly more "normal" characteristics (e.g., health and stability) are nurses' aides in homes for elderly people. Interview studies in the USA and Sweden with nurses' aides (as well as home care workers) have shown a surprising percentage of them not only report witnessing elder abuse from among their colleagues, but also concede such actions themselves (Saveman et al. 1999). Fully 40 percent of a large sample

of nurses' aides in one study admitted to psychologically abusing elder residents by threatening, using profanities, and verbally demeaning them (Pillemer and Moore 1990). Nerenberg (2002) underscores the point that "most studies assume that abusive nursing home employees are not acting in a malicious, premeditated manner, but rather, are responding to the highly stressful nature of the work, which is attributed to insufficient staffing and time to complete tasks. . . ." Importantly in this regard, Shaw (1998) suggests that those caregivers who have not resorted to abuse have developed robust, and more person-centered styles founded on flexibility, tolerance, and compassion. Rather than these attributes merely being internal psychological states, it is feasible that it is the very *communication* of these valued traits by these nurses' aides that fosters responsive, appreciative postures in many elderly people under their care. This pattern thereby establishes a positive and rewarding cycle of mutual and reciprocal interpersonal accommodations.

3.3. *Theories of elder abuse*

Overviewing and organizing various theoretical positions on elder abuse, Biggs, Phillipson, and Kingston (1995) argue that there are a limited number of influential theories on offer. For our purposes, we are inclined to reflect on the potency of a variant of just one of these, others seemingly providing contextual embellishments to it. We contend that a *dependent victim-caregiver stress* model as it focuses both on the physically and emotionally reliant elder person on the one hand, and the strained caregiver undergoing various life-crises on the other, is a convincing *situational* framework (see Biggs et al. 1995). Certainly, data are equivocal regarding the predictive value of the caregiver stress as the sole pathway to elder abuse and neglect (e.g., Pillemer and Wolf 1986), but we believe adding victim dependency into the equation increases the interpretive power; it is a volatile potion for igniting abuse and neglect as much research has underscored (e.g., Carp 2000; Quinn and Tomita 1986).

In line with the other theoretical options referred to in Biggs et al. (1995), notions of social exchange can be incorporated into the theoretical frame. Abuse from this perspective would occur when caregivers, who perceive their losses are greater than their rewards (or are experiencing an unacceptable loss of rewards), would try and restore control and act aggressively against the elder. Similarly, elder neglect could arise when a caregiver feels in a seemingly intolerant situation, accompanied by feelings of entrapment,

and might avoid the elder in order to restore a sense of equilibrium. In tandem, socially-constructed ageist stereotypes of marginalized older people are endemic to western (and other) families, institutions, and political economies (Nelson 2005a). These symbolic representations and interactions are readily accessible for both abuser and abusee, making them potential, susceptible – and even legitimate – contributors to this offense. These latter theoretical positions are important for social policy as they suggest that affording attention merely to the internal dynamics of “deviant” care relationships – which themselves may thrive if not receive their impetus from these ill-conceived images of elderly people – is not in and of itself sufficient to ameliorate elder abuse and neglect. We need to look at the broader context, and the multiple levels of micro- and macro-social factors are continually evolving in ways that determine the malleable relationships between communication and health (see Fitzpatrick and Vangelisti 2001).

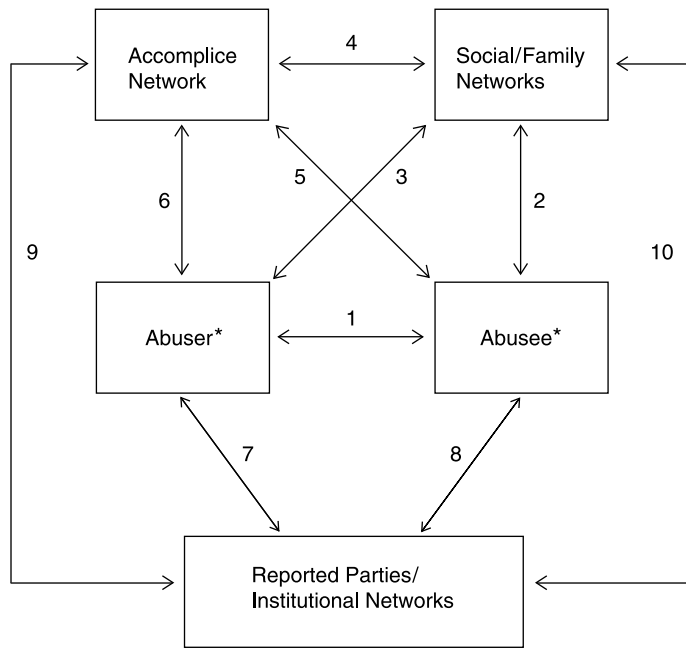
Yet as Nadien (cited in Carp 2000: 22) argues, “one cannot rely on any one theory” to analyze generic elder abuse, however promising it may be for certain (actually restricted, yet critical) forms of it. Put another way, no single model can likely accommodate the intricacies of stranger fiduciary abuses as well as family neglect, let alone self-neglect (Dyer et al. eds. 2006). In any case, this newly-emergent field “. . . needs much more empirical attention directed toward a better understanding of the incidence rates, the factors that give rise to the various forms of abuse, and prevention and treatment models that effectively address the problem” (Nelson 2005b: 213).

4. A communication framework

Before we continue gathering more descriptive (albeit valuable) data in the future, attention to the communication parameters of the different forms of abuse may be emancipating for a trans-disciplinary research agenda. Although such dynamics have never been highlighted in the past – apart, that is, from proposed communication campaigns to bring elder abuse to the public’s attention (Faccinetti 2002) – readers may have noted that extant research is actually replete with allusions to *communication* phenomena and processes. Prime amongst these are: communicative characteristics of both abuser and abusee, including self-presentational practices of the latter; the abusee’s difficulties in recognizing and reporting abuse to relevant others, including police, family and friends, and the court; the communicative dynamics of diagnosis and screening; and the very fact that many forms of elder abuse are, in

essence, crimes where language is a major and critical component (see Solan and Tiersma 2004), such as in psychological abuse and scams.

In our heuristic model below (see Figure 1), we advocate attention to the bi-lateral communicative pathways indicated. Prime amongst these is obviously the mutual influences existing and developing between abuser and abusee (links 1 and 2; see also Rabiner et al. 2004), together with the schemas they bring to, and that emerge from, this relationship. Communicatively connected to each of these are their separate networks and companions or accomplices. Not only can these networks send messages to each other, but the abuser and abusee can convey and receive messages from the alternative social ties, too. Finally in Figure 1, all four of these entities can have connections with institutional parties and networks such as law enforcement, attorneys, social services, the courts, etc.



*schemas (e.g., criminal, relational, age, & cognitive)

Figure 1. The communication pathways model of elder abuse and neglect

At the moment, we suffer from a lack of naturalistic (or other) data regarding the communicative constituents of these paths, although clearly many of

them may not provide elder people with “safe ground” in which to communicate (see Morgan and Wilson 2007). Understandably, more attention has focused upon the communicative strategies – again, not in any detail – of the abuser towards the elder victim. However, scholars (e.g., Nahmiash 2002) have pointed to caregivers’ feelings of powerlessness. In some senses, they do have control in satisfying the needs of older people yet, at the same time, are dependent on the latter for authorizing financial remunerations and other payoffs. This can lead to anxious degrees of uncertainty, exacerbated when the caregiver endures other life stresses. In addition, sometimes aggravatingly, and with the best will in the world, a caregiver can never seem to satisfy the needs and demands of a particular elder.

4.1. Implications from other kinds of abuse and social support

Interestingly, these dynamics can also be a dominant feature of *child* abuse situations and, moreover, many other dyadic situations where a power differential exists. Adults who have low perceived power (as measured by the Parent Attribution Test; Bugental et al. 1989) when they are placed in positions of authority (e.g., teachers, parents, and caretakers) often use a response style that is coercive, and especially when they feel their position is being challenged or threatened. The use of force or psychological abuse – as well as derogating and patronizing those cared for – can function to repair highly anxious states of low esteem, leading further to precipitous escalation in an effort to preserve their nominal authority. They become hyper-vigilant and exhibit exaggerated reactivity to the power dimensions of their relationships. “In the process, the powerless ‘teacher’ makes increasing use of a nonfluent communication style that is typically seen as unclear, untrustworthy, and potentially condescending” (Bugental and Lewis 1999: 62). Such nonfluency is manifest by oddly-placed smiling and pausing that result in ambiguous signals such that caregivers’ influence attempts and assertive actions are construed by recipients as embarrassment and apprehension; “a message that limits the listener’s ability to predict their future behavior”, too (Bugental et al. 1999: 214). This kind of strategy can induce the recipient to self-attribute incompetence leading to *non*-responsiveness, thereby possibly further igniting the caregiver’s ire. All this, of course, can exacerbate frequent cycles of confrontation and conflict.

Obviously, there are distinct problems and dangers inherent in simplistically applying models of children’s behavior to the circumstances of elderly

people. Nonetheless, whether the adoption of this powerless communication style could be prominent among those who abuse – or ultimately abuse – elderly people is an intriguing question worthy of empirical exploration. Indeed, this might be particularly the case among those who have negative communication schemas about interacting with elders (Lin et al. 2004). But what could it be about the elderly victim's communicative behaviors that trigger such an intense coercive response style in others? Possibilities here include caregivers suddenly "snapping" when much-needed sleep has been continually interrupted by elders' chronic crying or moaning, or when the latter repeatedly act as, or are attributed as appearing, overly-demanding (Quinn and Tomita 1986).

A growing body of literature also shows that young adults retrospectively report older people in general (both strangers as well as family) as being generally "nonaccommodating" in past encounters (e.g., Giles et al. 2003). By this it is meant that older people are judged as complaining, being antagonistic, stereotypical, and not listening. This not only engenders a dissatisfactory intergenerational communication climate for younger adults, but one they also intend to avoid wherever possible. This profile has been observed in cultures differing widely in their value systems, religions, and social philosophies (e.g., McCann et al. 2004). Moreover, to varying degrees, some elders express resentment in regard to their dependence on others for assistance which may lead to a difficult caring situation. Indeed, it could even be that some abusees are reluctant to divulge victimization not so much because they are unwilling to acknowledge the abuse *per se*, but more so (for them) as it draws attention to their failed state of social dependence (Quinn and Tomita 1986). Add to this Goodridge et al.'s (1966) finding that, over the course of a year, 84 percent of nurses' aides in an elderly facility reported that they had been verbally abused, while 70 percent had been physically assaulted, and we have the communicative breeding ground for caregivers to feel their authority being threatened.

Nonaccommodation from the abusee interlaced by coercion from the abuser is a powerful communicative potion for emergent harm to the elder. Moreover, this suggests that an elder's communicative style and strategies can at least contribute to an unwitting collusion in a destructive relational spiral. Creatively devised elicitation procedures for procuring retrospective accounts of relationships between those reporting abuse and those charged with it might determine not only the merit of this communicative mix, but also flesh out its dynamic attributes further. Indeed, it would be interesting to determine whether the same phasic patterns of intergenerational conflict

(viz., the “asking parents’ permission” and the “requesting adolescents compliance” patterns) that can often lead to actual abuse in adolescent–parent dyads would also be evident in some form in elder abuse (see Eckstein 2007).

Returning to Figure 1, we have seen, from earlier sections, how abusers and their accomplices (links 3 and 4) can attempt to dilute or relinquish abusees’ communications with their social and family networks; in addition, the latter’s messages to victims (link 2) can be intercepted and silenced. A significant body of research on social support and elderly people underscores how important informal ties with the family and friends are – as well as the perception of them (Cohen and Willis 1985) – for older people’s informational and emotional well-being (Wellman and Hall 1986). Although social networks can provide their own source of irritations and problems (e.g., Rook 1995), studies have shown that – even more so than family ties – having solid and lively friendships with those of one’s peer-age group, electronic as well as physically-present, can be associated with cognitive stimulation, an elevated positive mood state buffering stress, and general feelings of zest (e.g., Nussbaum 1994), as well as promoting survivability itself (Giles et al. 2005).

Put another way, having one’s social networks severed by an abuser, or even opting for this course of action of one’s own volition, constitutes a significant loss of many kinds of valued social support. Clearly, the stronger the ties the abusee has with his or her network (link 2), the less likely offenses will take place and, if they do, can be ameliorated. That said, members of the victim’s social network may become perpetrators over time if resources that the victim could provide become a focal point to heirs prematurely or to relatives (or others) in dire financial straits (Rabiner et al. 2004). Perceptions by the abusee of an abuser’s resourceful and accessible network (see link 5), and their observed social connections with it (see link 6), can inhibit attempts by the victim to report to institutional networks, such as the police or adult protective service (link 8). Furthermore, abusers and their networks can stymie attempts by or quell fears of law enforcement in pursuing an investigation (links 7 and 9). Indeed, in rape cases, the fear of reprisal, and hence future safety, is the prime reason for not reporting the event (Tjaden and Thoennes 2000). Alternatively, the network may be an intervening factor in protecting the elder from abuse or stopping abuse by informing critical others if the abuser’s network contains some of the same individuals as those in the victim’s network (see link 2 again). Obviously, link 8 is activated to the extent that abuse *is* reported on occasion – and this usually being, in accord with Stiles’ (1987) fever model, the most serious and traumatic of kinds. Yet it is the reporting versus *non*-reporting of elder abuse and neglect in Figure 1 to

either law enforcement or the family (links 8 and 2, respectively) that is fascinating from a communication perspective.

4.2. *Disclosing and avoiding*

Focusing now on link 2 when it is indeed accessible, research on intimate self-disclosures to others has been characterized as a dialectal tension between being forthright and open, on the one hand, and keeping everything under covers on the other (e.g., Dindia 2000); in other words, a privacy dilemma (Petronio et al. 2003). While the “communication predicament model of aging” (e.g., Ryan et al. 1986) laid out some of the dilemmas facing older people when managing communication with age stereotypic younger people, this framework could usefully be extended to embrace the predicament facing elders in deciding whether or not to report having been abused.

In line with communication privacy management (CPM) theory, the victim here has to engage in a form of “mental calculus” (Petronio 2002) to weigh up the anticipated benefits vis-à-vis liabilities of, as well as risks from, reporting the abuse. This calculus, which hinges on the dialectic between wanting to tell and wanting to preserve privacy and personal boundaries, can sometimes involve so-called “social dilemmas” (Petronio et al. 2003). An example would be when the abusee courageously inclines toward making the affair public, regardless of potential negative personal repercussions that might accrue, for the benefit of other anticipated (or known) victims and or to bring the crime *per se* more into the community’s consciousness. It would be interesting to determine in future research the extent to which the privacy rules that older people have constructed for themselves to manage everyday happenings and hassles bears any resemblance to the complex and emotional decision-making that undergirds the concealing or revealing of elder abuse. Victims’ own accounts of their mental calculus – and their discursive means of relaying this when they feel they should – would seem important to access as would how others in the network judge and react to an elder’s ultimate decision (if indeed the abuse episodes are even known). Clearly also we need to explore systematically the implications for the victim of divulging elder abuse – a unique form of painful self-disclosure (Coupland et al. 1991) – as these can vary depending on whether it was a stranger scam or a physical assault from a close family member.

Research suggests at least four conditions why people avoid discussing certain topics with familiar others (e.g., Afifi and Guerrero 2000). This is

arguably rational as conditions proposed for keeping issues secret are met in the case of not reporting elder abuse and neglect. The first of these conditions relates to topics that are just too socially sensitive, taboo, and/or downright awkward to talk about; elder abuse and neglect is, indisputably, one of these. Second, elders (as alluded to above) usually want to protect their confidantes, local community, and family from aversive reactions, such as shame, to the self-disclosure of their having been abused. This could be manifest by overburdening and stressing already busy people who have to respond appropriately to the alleged offense, irritating or even angering them as well. Furthermore and for reasons of family loyalty, it could be particularly distressing to the network if an otherwise valued and respected member of it – that is, a relative of the victim – is the perpetrator (Quinn and Tomita 1986). Additionally, non-disclosure could also be rational from the victim's perspective who does not wish to relive the traumas, experience humiliation, and feel stigmatized by the very mention of it, particularly when scammed.

Third and in line with CPM theory, victims can often anticipate the reactions and receptiveness of those they might intend to become *co-owners* of the abuse incident (Petronio 2002). The target's closeness, history of trustworthiness, perceived supportiveness, emotional strength, and potential for advocacy all become important attributes in the mental calculus and trade-offs about whether to disclose or not (Stiles 1987; see Agne et al. [2000] regarding patients' willingness to divulge to significant others their having contracted HIV and Petronio et al. [1996] with respect to child abuse). In addition, how the recipient will likely handle the information, the legal implications of and involvement in what could follow, and public dissemination of all this are potent factors for abusees; for instance, would recipients be indifferent, non-responsive, unhelpful or even unpredictable? Nevertheless, even the process of negotiation between the victim and their network with respect to how to manage the knowledge of abuse, known from CPM theory as "boundary coordination", could be transformed into a more negatively-framed and tense state of "boundary turbulence" for friends and family (Petronio et al. 2003). The all-consuming risk is that the elderly person not only loses personal control of private information and autonomy but could, as indicated above, lead to institutionalization (see Quinn and Tomita 1986).

When considering mediating schemas for link 2, as emerged with Figure 1 link 1 above, elders' attachment styles might be relevant (Bartholomew and Horowitz 1991). Work in this tradition suggests that individuals' early experiences of being cared for (e.g., as "preoccupieds" or "fearfuls") can affect how, or if, they form romantic and other relationships in adulthood as well as

the modes of disclosure within them (e.g., Collins and Feeney 2000). Allowing for the possibility that early attachments predict relational connections made *much later* in the lifespan, then it is possible that so-called “secure types” would be the most prone to disclosing the occurrence of abuse to their social network. A number of studies have, indeed, shown that secure individuals are more likely to see their friends as supportive, divulge intimate information to them, and feel comfortable about doing so than other attachment types (e.g., Ognibene and Collins 1998; see also Holtzen et al. [1995] regarding the disclosure of homosexuality to parents).

Before finally engaging link 8 in Figure 1, it could well be that link 2 has to be attempted and then established by an abusee as a precursor of it. Given the ambiguity attending the criteria of what criminally constitutes elder abuse and neglect for lay people, discussion of such incidents with friends and the like can assist in the attributional process. Again calling upon sexual abuse research, nearly 50 percent of women who had endured rape did not consider it as such (Fisher et al. 2000) and that those who did depended on their network’s reactions for definitional clarity (see Pitts and Schwartz 1997). Moreover, people who have risky information can strategically “test the waters” (see Petronio et al. 1996) in terms of disclosing to a confidante and determine their reactions and level of support for moving the matter further and into the legal domain. In this vein, it is noteworthy with respect to rape victims that a very large percentage talked to others before going to the police, a position that had been advocated by their network (Greenberg and Ruback 1992). However, the ultimate decision about whether to go down link 8 pathway or not is likely mediated by elders’ (and probably their social networks) degree of trust in law enforcement, and whether or not – as discussed above – police will be accommodating. As in the case where rape victims have doubts about reporting on assailants with whom they have had a prior close relationship (e.g., Ullman and Filipas 2001), so too will elderly victims of abuse have qualms if a family member is implicated. In particular, older people may worry about further torment if the abuser is not removed or incarcerated.

5. Epilogue

We have then brought attention to a distressing social and criminal malaise that has been afforded more publicity in recent years; crossing age boundaries for way too many people can be a traumatically violent experience. Yet even if the entire contemporary and dramatic upsurge in the incidence of

elder abuse and neglect can be attributed away to reporting increases due to increased awareness, the introduction of legal mandates, and/or elder population demographic changes, the argument remains that this is an important (hitherto neglected) area for communication and sociolinguistics to seriously engage. Our heuristic model has focused upon a small number of the communication pathways possible and it is our fervent hope that this foundation will encourage researchers to study and theorize about these, and many others, systematically. For instance, bystanders (medical, neighbors, etc.) present at the time of an elderly person, unknown to them personally, reporting abuse may not, by virtue of their endorsing negative age schemas, be disposed to believing or helping such an alleged victim (see the classic bystander effect, e.g., Latané and Darley 1970). This might be particularly the case if, through “pluralistic ignorance” (see Miller and McFarland 1987), relevant others also present seem to be ignoring or acting oblivious to the claims. Although we have been cautious, given the lack of communication research in this field, about not assigning formal propositional status to relationships inherent in our model, empirical predictions and a robust research agenda were embedded within our discussion of it.

Social services and police need to be involved in a way that communicates respect to an elder and leaves whatever independence they have intact. Legal sanctions could be put in place that allow older people further protection, such as a possible Megan’s Law information bank of prior offenders who could be required to seek help in ways that are not at the victims’ expense. Sensitivity is required by social services and law enforcement in handling elder abuse in ways that avoid illegitimately placing a burden of guilt on parents who feel they may have done a poor job in rearing their abusive children, which, in turn, deters parents from prosecuting their violent offspring. Training – with both majority and minority ethnic groups – needs to focus on looking past what may seem like normal effects of aging and digging deeper to find and explain what has occurred in each unique abusive situation, albeit the similarities between them. Educating older people as to the types of resources available to them which, ideally, could model safe-houses for younger victims who have been domestically abused is an important quest. In addition, other strategies beyond those already tried in various jurisdictions (e.g., elder law clinics, nonprofits, pro-bono groups) could be introduced to stem the tide of elder abuse in setting up: hotlines for immediate relief in crises; more frequent exposures to current elder financial scams; banking reviews of withdrawals of large sums from elders’ accounts; and even mental health services to help adult dependent children become independent.

Our intent has been to bring this “invisible problem” of elder abuse and neglect to the attention of communication researchers. In parallel, we wish to make scholars in other disciplinary terrains appreciate the potential for a communication perspective to further assist analysis of these abhorrent afflictions on our aging population. Finally, we funnel back out from our model to a critical point made earlier that a significant element in the etiology of elder abuse may lie outside the narrow confines and immediacy of pathways indicated in Figure 1. Simply put, we need to explore ways to enhance the lifespan as a complete and valuable journey in its totality and place intrinsic values on older persons that have less to do with their spent productive capacities and more on their “being”. It is important to understand the destructive tendencies to stereotype that perpetuates ageist myths that represent older individuals as nonessential to society and old age as the least vibrant phase of a person’s life. Relatedly, in a large-scale study of older Danes’ evaluations of different decades of their lifespan, only 8.5 percent claimed an over-60s decade to be the most satisfactory period (Mehlsen et al. 2003). This, arguably, bleak pattern or bias – and maybe the ill attending elder abuse and neglect as well – can only be overcome when we come to a place where older people are considered worthy of being portrayed more visibly and positively in the media (see Robinson et al. 2004), and when we, as a society, choose not to buy into the highly constraining proposition that our younger – or even college years – are “the best years of our lives”. Fortunately, many elderly people are independent, competent, and socially-engaged with robust social networks and, therefore, may be less susceptible to elder abuse.

Recalling that the world is becoming a village and that it takes a village for the most vulnerable of us to thrive, it remains a necessity that we take time to notice elders around us, become involved in their lives in whatever small ways we can, and be aware of the things we can do as neighbors and citizens to make this world more elder-friendly. Put another way, we should endeavor to insure that intergenerational communication climates are “safe grounds” for seniors (see Morgan and Wilson 2007) and that *crossing age* boundaries should be a welcoming, invigorating, and growth experience.

Notes

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Chapter 9

Discursive construction of (old) age identity in Poland

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1. Introduction

Age is a variable that has long been present in sociolinguistic (variationist) studies, which describes the age stratification of linguistic variables. In this stratification speakers are usually grouped into age cohorts according to their declared or estimated age. Many of these studies have ultimately aimed at describing language change. It is important to note that this requires a good understanding of the process of age grading, i.e. changes in the language of an individual over the lifespan in the context of complex social and psychological identity changes (cf. Eckert 1997: 152 – “understanding of the linguistic lifecourse”).

Sociolinguistic variationist studies have relied on information about informants' chronological age, which, however, is only one dimension of the individual and social understanding of age. In fact, “chronological age is a poor predictor of behavior” (Pecchioni et al. 2004: 170), though it does function as an index to guide people's expectations and activate their stereotypes (including self-stereotypes). It is also a component of people's social identity (Tajfel and Turner 1986), that is, how they identify themselves, in relation to social groups, as out-group and in-group members.¹ Age identity should thus be understood as a complex construct formed in an individual in the context of social relations. For the purposes of the current chapter it is important to point out that the processes of age-related identity formation and social categorisation are highly culture- and context-specific.

Following the assumption of social constructivism that discourse is socially constitutive (Fairclough and Wodak 1997), we claim that socio-psychological age identity is defined, performed and negotiated through discourse and interaction. The focus of this paper is not so much on the interactive processes that shape people's age identities in discourse, but rather on how individuals discursively enact (and disclose to others) their personal age identity in interaction. In other words, we concentrate on how people choose to define their age identity rather than on how they negotiate it in interaction. However,

admittedly, such displays of identity are always performed in the context of how they are interpreted by interlocutors. Thus, age-identifying statements, apart from providing age information, are also instruments of social categorisation. Notably, even in the absence of explicit verbal statements, age will be inferred anyway (from non-verbal cues) and used for categorisation (cf. Mulac and Giles 1966; Hummert 1990).

This chapter presents a project aiming to consider the following questions: (1) how is (old) age identity discursively constructed in the Polish context? and (2) what are, in the context of the local cultural understandings of ageing and old age, the local practices of age disclosure?

2. The study

With the aim of contributing to cross-cultural studies of the discourse of age identity, the present study is an introductory inquiry into the discursive construction of old age identity in Poland. It is to be followed by a larger quantitative empirical study of age-related issues in language and communication in the Polish context. In this qualitatively oriented discourse study no claims are made as to the representativeness of the participants in the interviews.

The interview was used as a method of data collection. All parts of the study relied on inter-generational interviews, with young interviewers and their (older) interlocutors (further referred to as “respondents” or “participants”), all highly educated individuals. The interviewers were in all cases relatively familiar to the respondents or, for the interviews, recommended by family or friends. The interviews were conducted in the respondents’ homes. Consent was obtained from the participants to record the interviews for research purposes.

The study consisted of the following three parts: (1) *Reminiscence I*, based on interviews with speakers of two generations; (2) *Reminiscence II* and (3) *Old age and telling age*, both involving interviews with elderly respondents.

The pilot study (*Reminiscence I*) was based on 36 interviews with men and women of two generations. Twenty-two-year-old interviewers recorded their conversations with 40+ and 65+ year-old interlocutors. The interview questions referred to the introduction of martial law in Poland on December 13, 1981 and asked whether the respondents remembered the moment martial law was declared and what the circumstances of their lives were at that time. In response most recalled the Sunday morning when they learned about it from television, and they went on to describe the shock of seeing soldiers in

the streets and themselves, from that moment on, being heavily restricted in their freedom to travel (a curfew was enforced) and to communicate (telephone lines were disconnected).

It turned out that the introduction of martial law was far from neutral as an interview topic. Its possible drawback may have been that it proved ideologically sensitive: the respondents felt questioned about, and compelled to disclose, their political views. Therefore, it may have been perceived as threatening by some interlocutors. On the other hand, reminiscing martial law involved recalling (and perhaps feeling) strong emotions, such as fear or anxiety. This seemed to work well in drawing the respondents' attention away from the recording equipment. Finally, some respondents treated the interview topic as an occasion to appraise their lives retrospectively. They were willing to openly reflect upon the significance of the event from the perspective of their individual life experience rather than the socio-political history of their country.

The second part of the study (*Reminiscence II*) was based on 14 structured interviews with people aged 70+ about two events in Poland's history: the introduction of martial law in 1981 and the outbreak of WWII in 1939. The interviews were constructed so as to juxtapose the two events separated in time and thus to provoke explicit comment by at least some of the respondents on how they may have been too young to remember the earlier event.

Finally, the third part of the study (*Old age and telling age*) was oriented towards the culture-specific definition and perception of old age, and the circumstances and implications of telling age. In this series of interviews, older respondents were first asked whether they considered themselves elderly, and were then requested to specify what "being elderly" meant in Poland. This was followed by a bold question about their (chronological) age to uncover the speaker's strategies when dealing with a potentially threatening social task.

3. Research questions

The research questions for the reminiscence interviews were the following: (1) Is the respondent's age brought up as relevant to the topic of recounting past events? (2) How is age identity marked or framed? (3) How does the social role taken on by the respondent affect age-identity construction?

In the old-age-and-telling-age interviews the principal research question was: How do the respondents construct their age identity in their responses to

more or less personal questions about their own elderliness and about old age in general? More specifically, what strategies do they use to construct their age identity? How do they age-categorise themselves and others? Finally, with a view to the Polish context, we sought to find out whether the disclosure of chronological age is appropriate in this local context, or perhaps personal (chronological) age is more of a taboo topic. In other words, is it face threatening to be asked about one's age in Poland?

4. Results and discussion

4.1. Age identity marking

Age identity marking (Coupland et al. 1991: 65) may be performed in discourse in a variety of ways, some of them far from explicit, such as:

- through the disclosure of chronological age
- by self-categorisation (committing oneself to an age-related category)
- through reference to a social role played
- through references to frailty or ill health
- through temporal framing which locates the speaker in time.

In the present study, the content analysis aimed at identifying words and phrases related to age and ageing in their context. Specifically, we meant to locate in the text of the interviews (1) age identity references, (2) age-categorisation labels, and (3) chronological age disclosure (DCA) expressions. In the interviews where the topic did not explicitly address age and ageing, such as the reminiscence interviews, age references were not necessarily expected. However, accounts of the participants' past experience were likely to be framed in terms of age categories. In the interviews which focused on ageing and being old, participants' explicit comment referred to own age and others'.

In the first series of reminiscence interviews respondents of both generations seemed to have evaded self-age references in their accounts of a historical event. The informants revealed their age identity mostly through temporal framing, i.e. by locating themselves, or their professional and social roles, in the context of the historical period discussed. Significantly, most of the circumstances and roles mentioned were personal and family-oriented (e.g. "we were planning to get married", "I gave birth to my first child", "I had become a grandmother"). Other age-identifying statements referred to a

role or a stage in the informant's life (e.g. "I was a Ph.D. student then", "I was ready to enter the army").

Many of the self-age references were indirect. In one particular case the respondent's use of the indirect reference to himself as *człowiek* ('man') (as in [1a] and [1b] below) was extended to a strategy to generalise his experience to a whole generation (as in example [1c] below):

- (1) a. *Człowiek kończył szkołę.*
man finish (3p. sing. past) school
'I was finishing school.'
- b. *Człowiek był wtedy w głupim wieku.*
man be (3p. sing. past) then at silly age
'I was at a silly age.'
- c. *Człowiek miał więcej czasu niż w obecnych czasach.*
man have (3p. sing. past) more time than in present times
'One had more time than nowadays.'

The second series of reminiscence interviews brought forward some age-related themes, such as descriptions of past events, as well as recognition and evaluation of historical and social change. Indeed, in most interviews the topics raised did invoke the necessity to relate personal experience to the timing of historical events discussed and for this purpose the respondents used some self-age references. More precisely, the participants were prone to specify their age in connection to their memories of the outbreak of WWII, when all of them were children younger than 10 years of age. In the recollections of the introduction of martial law (in 1981) the age-identifying phrases were common but more indirect. For example, female respondents commonly referred to the age of their children.

In the old-age-and-telling-age interviews the participants were challenged to admit that they were old people. The question was contextualised in the following way: the interviewer asked the interlocutor to recall that in the extremely hot weather the previous summer the media had advised "elderly people" (*P. starsi ludzie*) to stay indoors between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. Then the interviewer asked whether the interviewee thought this advice was addressed to them. In response, most chose to elaborate on how they actually felt during the summer heat wave, ignoring the interviewer's explicit question as to whether they interpreted the label "elderly people" as in fact referring to them. Next in the interview, the participant was asked to specify the criteria for classifying someone as "elderly" or "old" in Poland. The following themes were singled out as relevant to old age categorisation:

- being intellectually and emotionally active or passive;
- being independent of, or dependent on, others for basic life functions;
- being professionally active or having retired.

4.2. *Age categorisation*

The relativity of age categorisation was only one among other recurring themes. For one thing, it was claimed that the individual's perception of (old) age changes as they grow older (*Ta granica przesuwa się chyba z wiekiem* E. 'That borderline seems to shift with age'). For another, the respondents suggested that over recent years the general social definition of the onset of old age had also moved forward (*Wszystko się przesunęło (. . .) ludzie żyją dłużej* E. 'Everything has shifted (. . .) people live longer'). Indeed, according to a recent report by the Public Opinion Research Center (entitled *Czy zmienia się stosunek Polaków do starości?* [Is the attitude of Poles to old age changing?]), published in February 2007, the onset of old age is now declared to be 61 years and 8 months (on average), and has shifted forward by 10 months since 1998. In the interviews, there were as many responses to when old age begins for an individual in Poland as there were respondents. They were expressed as age-in-years (e.g. 65) or as a stage in the life course (i.e. retirement). However, all such straightforward responses were immediately followed by reservations of how this is in fact dependent on a number of factors (physiological, psychological, social and contextual).

4.3. *Chronological age, psychological age, social age*

Age category is a complex construct of dynamic social and psychological perceptions of age in the relatively stable context of chronological age.² Predictably, self-age categorisation would be crucially dependent on psychological considerations. It seems that the respondents' self-categorisation depended on which dimension they recognised as being primary. On the one hand, they considered age categorisation a matter of personal judgment (and thus related mainly to psychological age):

- (2) *Mi się wydaje że to jest sprawa indywidualna (...) bo są młodzi i się czują staro i są starsze osoby które się bardzo dobrze czują i zresztą prosperują bardzo dobrze.*

'It seems to me to be an individual matter (...) because there are people who are young but feel old, and there are elderly people who are feeling very well and they prosper very well.'

The respondents suggested, however, that societal categorisation is guided by chronological age. Therefore, they feel trapped by the inevitability of growing biologically old, as shown in the following examples:

- (3) *Kalendarz to zawsze prawda obiektywna.*
'The calendar always gives the objective truth.'
- (4) *Cóż zrobić, kalendarz mówi prawdę; bo . . . tu boli, tam boli i ówdzie boli.*
'What can I do? The calendar tells the truth; and also . . . it hurts here, there and everywhere.'

Accordingly, in response to "Do you consider yourself an elderly person?" they were reluctant, though felt forced (by "the calendar"), to admit it. Nevertheless, the perceived negotiability of the terms is expressed by their reservations following the affirmative answers and typically opening with the conjunction *but*, thus implicitly contrasting their chronological and social age identity with their psychological age identity:

- (5) *Tak, **ale** ja jeszcze się nie zaliczam sama przed sobą do ludzi starszych*
'Yes, **but** in my mind I do not consider myself an elderly person'
- (6) *Owszem, uważam się za osobę starszą, **ale** nie starą, bo staram się walczyć ze starością*
'Yes, I consider myself elderly **but** not old because I am trying to fight old age'
- (7) *Na pewno jestem osobą starszą, **ale** nie czuję się*
'For sure, I am an elderly person **but** I don't feel like one'

However, all of the responses considered, they range between fervent rejection and full resignation, as in the following examples:

- (8) *Nie, nie, tylko mi przypominają kalendarzowo!*
'No, no, only they keep reminding me about the calendar!'
- (9) *No, nie chciałbym ale muszę, życie jest życiem*
'Well, I wouldn't want to but I must – life is life'

- (10) *Tak, stwierdzam, że z roku na rok tempo utraty sprawności się zwiększa.*
 ‘Yes, I think every year the rate of physical decline increases.’

As all the respondents in the main parts of the study were over seventy, they may have felt that any explicit denial of their own ageing would seem preposterous or at least naïve. Yet they did use strategies underlining their being relatively young at heart. They did this either directly, by claiming to actively “fight old age” or indirectly by asserting their social and intellectual activity (e.g. being computer literate). Another common strategy was contrasting one’s own situation with that of one’s age peers, i.e. claiming out-group identity:

- (11) *[To] dotyczy ludzi którzy psychicznie są znużeni życiem, ja działam społecznie, mam taki program wypełniony*
 ‘[this = being old] refers to people who are psychologically tired of life, I am socially active, my agenda is so full’
- (12) *... ale moi rówieśnicy niektórzy – znam takich, którzy już no boją się ... no chociażby podejść do komputera*
 ‘But some of my age peers, I know some who are scared ... to even go near a computer’

In response to the more general question about the onset of old age in Poland, different chronological age points were mentioned in the interviews (sixty, seventy, seventy-five, eighty). Yet, however the participants chose to set the calendar criterion, being age-categorised by others was treated differently. In particular, public use of age category labels proved a sensitive issue. This was evinced by the explicit disapproval of the media labelling people as *staruszek* (E. ‘old man’) and *staruszka* (E. ‘old woman’):

- (13) *Mnie na przykład denerwuje jak czy w telewizji czy w ogóle prasa określa kogoś “staruszek sześćdziesięcioletni” – to mnie to bardzo denerwuje bo (...)*
 ‘For instance, it irritates me when – either on TV or in the press – they label someone as “an old man of sixty” – this really upsets me because (...)’
- (14) *(...) komunikat, że “na pasach została potrącona sześćdziesięcioletnia staruszka”*
 ‘(...) the news item that “an old woman of sixty was hit by a car on a pedestrian crossing”’
- (15) *Sześćdziesięcioletni staruszkowie popełnili samobójstwo.*
 ‘Two old people of sixty committed suicide.’

- (16) *Czasami jestem zaskoczony jak piszą że “starszy człowiek,” ja patrzę ile, sześćdziesiąt pięć lat – trochę mniej tak to . . . Ja myślę że starszy człowiek to jest powyżej osiemdziesiątki.*
 ‘Sometimes I am surprised when they write ‘an elderly man’ and I look to see how old, sixty five – that’s a little bit . . . I think an elderly person is someone over eighty.’

In general, the declared reasons for classifying someone as old or elderly varied and involved having attained a specific chronological age, having health problems or having psychologically developed an old-age identity. The latter was sometimes linked to an explicit *verbal* claim to an identity. For example, one interviewee affirmed that being old depends on actually stating the fact:

- (17) *Znam ludzi, którzy uważają, no **mówią** “ja już jestem stara, ja już jestem schorowana i wymagam opieki”, to jeżeli przyjmie się taka postawę . . . to wtedy już człowiek właściwie coraz słabiej chodzi, coraz bardziej jest zasklepiony wokół swojej osoby*
 ‘I know people who think, well who say “I am old, I have had illnesses and I need to be cared for”, then if one assumes such an attitude . . . then one starts walking more poorly, is more and more confined to one’s own person’

More than once the act of declaring oneself to be old and/or in need of assistance was pointed out as socially constitutive:

- (18) *(...) fizycznie słabi, którzy wymagają wspomagania, ci którzy **mówią** “ja już wymagam opieki”*
 (...) the physically weak, who require assistance, those who **say** “I already require care”

The fact that the blurring of socially-defined old(er) age categories was stressed by the participants may suggest that this impression has been their own life-course experience. In explicating the concept of a post-modern life-course researchers have mentioned the gradual erosion of age category boundaries (cf. Jones 2006: 80). However, chronological age features rather high among the relevant criteria.

4.4. Disclosure of chronological age

In the reminiscence interviews participants’ age was treated as a piece of demographic information routinely elicited at the end of the interview. Yet,

the participants' responses to the final, direct question about chronological age were all marked. One type of response was hesitant, hedged and mitigated, as in the following exchange:

- (19) Interviewer: *Na koniec chciałam zapytać ile pan ma lat.*
 'Finally, I would like to ask how old you are (lit. how many years you have).'
- Respondent: *Sporo, sporo, zbliżam się, przepraszam, nie zbliżam się, jestem już na emeryturze.*
 'Quite old (lit. many, many), I am approaching, excuse me, not approaching, I *am* retired already.'

In another example the respondent was very careful not to round up the number of years given as her age:

- (20) Interviewer: *Prosiłabym o dane o pani: wiek?*
 'I'd like to ask for some personal details: your age?'
- Respondent: *Pię . . . czterdzieści dziewięć* (laughter) – *ale bym sobie dodała!*
 'Fif . . . forty nine (laughter), I almost added one on!'

Alternatively, age in years was given as the only reply – with no signs of hesitation, as if the respondents were just fulfilling the formal requirement of the interview. It is also possible that abstaining from commenting on one's age spares the speaker embarrassment and is meant to divert the interlocutor's unwanted attention. Either way, disclosing self-age always seemed a relatively sensitive issue in conversation with the interviewer.

Similarly, in the old-age-and-telling-age interviews, where old age was the main topic, the bold question about the respondent's chronological age ("How old are you?") brought about mostly mitigated and hedged responses, for example:

- (21) *No, to nie jest żadna tajemnica, bo niedawno miałem urodziny. Czyli skończyłem, no jak pan sądzi? Jestem 35 rocznik. Dlatego mówię, że nie jestem stary.* (laughter)
 'Well, that's no secret because I recently celebrated my birthday. So I became, well what do you think? I was born in 1935. That's why I'm saying I am not old.' (laughter)
- (22) *A to muszę powiedzieć? Jak to jest konieczne dla sprawy to jest rocznik 1930, można sobie policzyć.*

‘Do I have to say that? If it’s necessary – it is the year of birth 1930, you can calculate.’

Laughter or the use of expressive words (e.g. *oj!*) was common. Also various avoidance strategies were used such as answering indirectly by giving the year of birth rather than age in years³ (as in the examples above), echoing parts of the question, e.g. *ja?* (E. ‘me?’), *ile?* (E. ‘how old?’), or joking about the whole thing (‘I’m not sure I remember . . .’):

- (23) *Aaa, żebym ja pamiętał . . . siedemdziesiąt siedem, ale już zacząłem sobie odejmować*
 ‘Ah, if only I could remember . . . seventy seven, but I’ve already stopped counting.’ [lit. but I’ve already started subtracting]

As suggested by some researchers (e.g. Harwood and Giles 1992; Huyk and Duchon 1986; Ylänné-McEwen 1999), humour is one way of coping with the anxieties of growing old and the tension associated with talking about it.

In spite of the predominantly positive attitudes projected, the “illegitimacy of old age” (Coupland 2001: 1999) surfaced through the interviews, although with the significant age difference between the interviewer and the interviewees nothing but candidness seemed a reasonable strategy. All in all, the respondents did not feel intimidated by the young interviewer’s questions about their chronological age. Their responses pictured old(er) age as something uninvitingly inevitable but agreeable. Neither did they react apprehensively to “Do you feel the questions about old age are embarrassing or inappropriate?”. One example of a response illustrates a not uncommon viewpoint combining acquiescence, agreeability and frustration about times having changed for the worse in social attitudes to the old:

- (24) *Dlatego, każdy będzie stary, absolutnie, każdy wiek ma swoje uroki; uważam tylko, że w Polsce nastąpił kryzys jeśli chodzi o postrzeganie ludzi starych, kiedyś ludzie starsi to byli szanowani.*
 ‘Why, everybody will be old, absolutely, every age has its pleasures. I only think that Poland is in crisis as regards the perception of old people, in the past elderly people were respected.’

None of them, however, expressed a feeling of being estranged or maladjusted in the “new reality”.

4.5. *Ageing and attitudes to the elderly*

In a study by Jolanki et al. (2000), conducted in Finland, the interviewees were the oldest old (aged 90 or older). In biographical interviews they were asked to reflect upon growing old and old age, and the researchers particularly focused on 'age talk'. In their data they identified two "interpretive repertoires": that of *choice* and that of *necessity*. The central notion of the latter is deterioration, with declining health and growing frailty being not only inevitable but also *essential* characteristics of old age (Jolanki et al. 2000: 362). The choice repertoire involves suggestions that old age may be defined (or constructed) by stressing the capacities of older people which are valuable to society and by claiming for them self-reliance and independence from that society. The authors described some of their interviewees as "walking a tight-rope between the two repertoires" (2000: 367). This is often done, also in our data, by incorporating both kinds of speaker characteristics into his/her narrative or by contrasting the speaker with their age peers (see examples [11], [12] above).

In general, the rhetoric of contrast proves a common way of dealing with the age-related social stereotypes and expectations on the one hand and the self-constructed age identity projection. By challenging the predominantly negative impact of the former, people attempt to create a positive image of themselves to gain personal integrity. Language and discourse prove instrumental here.

The contrast is also apparent in the ambivalent attitudes to old people in Poland. The 2007 report cited above (*Czy zmienia się stosunek Polaków do starości?*) stresses that, in terms of their stated social opinions, Poles' attitudes towards the old are polarised, and are perceived as much more positive in local community circles (among family, neighbours and fellow parishioners) than in social institutions and in society at large (offices, public spaces). A recent study of attitudes of young, middle-aged and old adults (Trempała and Zajac-Lamparska 2007) also testifies to largely non-negative attitudes to the elderly, either neutral and ambivalent. The attitudes are age-stratified, with the older members of the sample showing more negative attitudes than younger adults. The relatively more positive attitudes among young adults are optimistic. Older adults, on the whole, have more negative attitudes towards their own age group. Some other older adults, though their perceptions of their age peers are favourable, prefer to avoid contact with the old, perhaps because they have problems accepting their own biological ageing.

5. Discussion

Age identity has proved salient in the context of the topics raised in the reminiscence interviews and was perceived by the participants as relevant to the interview tasks. Although self-age references were avoided for the reasons suggested above, temporal framing was the technique used to locate the speaker in the context of the historical events discussed. Sometimes a DCA was even volunteered for the purposes of clarifying narratives on topics assumed to be unfamiliar to the interviewer:

- (25) *Mmm, ja jestem 44 rocznik, więc pamiętać nie mogę, ale (...)*
 ‘Mmm, I was born in 1944, so I can’t remember, but (...)’

In the context of age-focused interviews, DCA was rarely used strategically (cf. Coupland et al. 1991). In general, categorising oneself as “old” occurred only in the context where it was contrasted with unstereotypical age-group features (e.g. possessing a certain skill, being particularly active, or remaining in good health – see examples [11], [12] above). This strategy may be linked to the “disjunctive” usage of DCA, where it “allows the discloser to claim credit against normative expectations (. . .)” (Coupland et al. 1991: 140).⁴ When the participants were explicitly asked about their chronological age, it seems they perceived that as face threatening as DCAs were performed through mitigating behaviours to defocus the interviewer’s attention and thus minimise the face loss (see examples in section 4.4. above). Harwood (2007: 89) observes that such use of DCA as a face-management strategy may be useful for an elderly individual but is detrimental to old people in general because it depends on, and reinforces, negative perceptions of them as a group.

The role of the interviewer as a mirror for retrospection should be highlighted at this point. In the reminiscence interviews, the young interviewer was positioned as the learner: a person seeking knowledge and one, evidently, “too young to remember”. In this way the presence of a young interviewer offered a positive social role for the respondent to play, that of a teacher and expert. The role or, more accurately, this position (cf. Jones 2006: 81) was constructed with reference to the age discrepancy between the interviewer and the participant, which was sometimes amplified by the latter’s use of address forms, such as *dziecko* (E. ‘child’) or non-reciprocal use of the familiar second person singular pronominal forms.

In most societies negative stereotypes of old age and the elderly predominate, but there are positive subtypes (e.g. Kite and Johnson 1988; Pecchioni

et al. 2004). Similarly in Poland many stereotypes of old age are negative and centre around physical frailty, health problems and social isolation (Kuchcińska 2000). Interestingly, researchers have recently concluded that the overall attitude to the elderly has also shown positive traits, and is complex and far from equivocal, which is symptomatic of an ongoing change (e.g. Zajac-Lamparska 2008). According to Zajac-Lamparska (2008), the change may be attributed mostly to new lifestyles of the seniors, their changing self-stereotypes, and the growing awareness of society at large of the consequences of age-based prejudice and discrimination.⁵ In her study Zajac-Lamparska (2008) identified most common positively valenced themes used in describing old people: being calm, stable, and well-organised as well as possessing wisdom, experience and an interesting personality. Their negative characteristics are: weariness, poor health and frailty as well as being sad, unhappy and lonely. The general picture, significantly, is positive.⁶

Accordingly, the projection of older age presented by the participants of the present study comes through as ambivalent, but predominantly positive. The strategies used by the respondents for achieving positive age identity were the following:

- claiming a good memory, thus acting against the stereotypical image of an old person having memory and recall problems;
- assuming a positive social role, that of an expert;
- projecting an image of oneself as an active and creative person (cf. “active engagement” theme – Lin, Hummert and Harwood 2004);
- distancing oneself from same-age peers.

The participants constructed their age identity by relativising the bounds of age categories through the use of category labels. There seems to be a critical difference in the connotations of the adjectives *stary/stara* (E. ‘old’ m/f) and *starszy/starsza* (E. ‘elderly’ m/f) which helps to distinguish between old-old identity and young-old identity (‘old age is yet to come’). It may be concluded that in the context of their own ageing they moved the declared onset of old age from the ‘third age’ to the ‘fourth age’ period.

The distinction between chronological age and socio-psychological age identity was also exploited by the respondents in that they oscillated between the negative image associated with the former and positive image associated with the latter, viewed as dependent on individual choice:

- (26) *Wiekiem jestem starsza, ale nie czuję się [starsza].*
 ‘According to age I am elderly, but I don’t feel it.’

Another pair of labels, *staruszek/staruszka* (E. 'old man'/'old woman'), were definitely perceived as clashing with descriptions of people of sixty years of age (see examples [13], [14], [15] above).

On the whole, the individual participants differed in how they either mostly opted for self-definition of their age identity or succumbed to the chronologically and socially imposed age categorisation. The variation in their more general perception of old age resulted from their high awareness of the context dependence of age status and of its social negotiability.

6. Methodological implications

The research environment selected yielded interesting results. For one thing, the non-threatening personal context (the familiar interviewer) may have counterbalanced the threatening nature of the age-identity questions. Secondly, the type of task (inviting the participant to play the expert) proved helpful in the elicitation of spontaneous (if sometimes short) responses, in which references to the speaker's age were not topicalised but rather they supported the narratives.

On the other hand, the very format of the reminiscence interviews proved a limitation because the interview repeated the question: "Do you remember (...)?" The respondents often seemed to focus on the issue of "being able to remember", and perhaps wanted to prove their "ability to recall". In fact, some people very strongly stressed their good memory, thus constructing their age identity: by suggesting "I can remember very well", they implied "I am not old". Thus, the way the questions were phrased made memory an issue and, as expected, this stood out as related to ageing and triggered counter-stereotypical reactions.

7. Conclusions

The analysis of the results focused on the conceptualisation and linguistic construction of elderliness in Poland. In many societies people tend to dissociate their chronological age from their self-constructed age identity. This can be achieved through discursive means:

In Western societies, if an incongruence between these two notions of age is expressed, it is often more desirable for contextual age to be lagging behind chronological age. (Ylänne-McEwen 1999: 426)⁷

In the present study, reminiscence interviews as well as those focusing on age-identity provided a context in which the participants were able to construct their 'contextual age' by verbalising their personal experience. As a result, chronological age was clearly backgrounded in the respondents' self-references, yet was singled out as decisive in the societal age-categorisation process. Calendar age was declared to be definitive for the social understanding of old age but seemed less significant to individuals as they projected their psychological age identity.

While the social relevance of chronological age surfaced in the interviews, disclosure of chronological age seems to be taboo for the Polish elderly: in the interviews a person's age was deemed particularly private information and thus it is socially advantageous to keep it secret. Usually age disclosures were hedged. Humorous remarks, or at least laughter, often appeared to minimise the imposition of face-threatening questions about age.

Research suggests that the position of the ageing population in Poland has in recent years become highly diversified. Following the socio-political transformation in Poland after 1989, many social groups, including the elderly, have suffered from increased feelings of insecurity. Additionally, the process of transition has involved the perpetuation of negative stereotypes of old age (cf. Trafiałek 2003). On the other hand, the changing (i.e. increasingly active) lifestyles of the old and the growing societal awareness of adverse consequences of age-based discrimination have given rise to positive perceptions of and attitudes to elderly people in Poland.

It is important to point out that the participants in the present study do not belong to a disadvantaged or marginalised group. They are all well educated, professionally fulfilled and socially satisfied, most of them ready to adapt and face the challenges of the new reality. Perhaps this is the reason why the respondents constructed largely positive older-age identities. Though they occasionally mentioned their physical frailty and health problems, they focused on projecting the positive and optimistic images of old age. This, again, may have been an interactive strategy as they tried to protect their own face but also felt responsible for the in-group image in the eyes of an out-group member, the interviewer. These individual presentations of old age may be understood as people's private construction of their identity but also – in conversation with a young interviewer – as their contribution to social knowledge and social practices.

Language and discourse prove constitutive in the societal and individual construction of age identity. They are recognised by individuals as creating and perpetuating social perceptions of old age and thus affecting old people's

quality of life. Old people, just like members of other socially stigmatised groups, are aware of the indexicality of age-related labels and their power to bring social and psychological consequences.

Notes

1. Significantly, age is a particularly dynamic social variable: being at a certain age is not one's permanent characteristic, therefore a person is familiar with being an in-group member even if they are not one any longer.
2. Coupland et al. (1991: 140) refer to two poles of a relational evaluation: one is chronological age, the other – contextual age.
3. Matoesian (2001: 196) shows how an attorney patronises an expert witness in court by first asking him when he was born, and then – additionally, and perhaps unnecessarily – urging him to spell out his age in years. Significantly, the expert's chronological age does not seem relevant in the context, especially as the length of his professional career is revealed elsewhere in the questioning. This forced repetition and expansion on the expert's age Matoesian (2001: 199) is labelled as a case of “discursive hegemony” and considered a demeaning verbal practice with an ageist imputation.
4. There were no instances in the data of DCA (or, more generally, old age self-categorisation) used to serve the ‘accounting’ function (cf. Coupland et al. 1991: 138–140).
5. Further, the more positive attitudes towards the old are characteristic of young (rather than middle-aged and old) adults and by young women in particular (Trempała and Zajac-Lamparska 2007).
6. The results of the study show a difference in perceptions of familiar/intimate elderly people and of the old-age group in general: the close relationship is marked by a more positive picture.
7. According to Giles et al. (1992: 287), contextual age “represents a person's subjective experience of his/her position and is measured in terms of health, economic, social, and mobility dimensions”.

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Chapter 10

Alcohol as a way of “doing” adolescence: Perspective, stance and strategy in the discourse of Italian institutions¹

Giuseppina Cortese

1. Aims

In a valuable addition to the literature on adolescence (Williams and Thurlow 2005), two dominant representations of adolescents in the mass media are identified, which are embedded in two competing discourses. One discourse focuses on generational change and stereotypes youth as a threat to the established social order, creating waves of “moral panic”. The other discourse focuses on socioeconomic and political change, usually construing the lifestyles of the young as evidence of wider and more permanent social change.

Unsurprisingly, the Italian media seem to fit both perspectives; yet when it comes to leisure, the wind seems to veer in only one direction. Press features regularly carry an abominable title which associates Saturday night fever with fatal road accidents. *Stragi del Sabato sera* they are called, recalling slaughter, carnage, bloodbaths etc.²

Press features spread concern about alcohol consumption at an early age, even as early as eleven; but for all the special columns screaming about teenagers exposed to severe alcohol-related risk, I yet have to see a well-informed, well-argued lead article on the vested interests and the profit ethics involved.

At the same time, hardly any notice is taken by the press of the prevention programmes enacted at the local, regional and national level. The public at large is unaware of the institutional initiatives implementing strategies that help the young construct a responsible self and valorise a culture of respect for life. Further, no attention has been given to the change of perspective brought about by these positive actions – a radical change, visually conveyed by the stark contrast between documents (a) and (b) below. Both attempt to promote teenage awareness of the risks of drinking and driving: (a) is dated 1994 and (b) is dated 2005.



(a)

1994 poster by Oliviero Toscani entitled *Modello Quattro Pirla In Meno* (*Model Minus Four Idiots*), commissioned by the Regione Emilia Romagna (the Region with the highest casualty rate in road accidents). The picture was taken from Polstrada (road police) archives. Verbal elements above the picture: technical data relating to acceleration, speed and competition performance, viz. the performance features most valued by young drivers. Below the picture: the car model is called *minus 4 idiots*.



(b)

July 2005 Italian State Police campaign *Sabato sera: rientro sicuro* (*Saturday night: get back safe*) in co-operation with Ania (Foundation for Road Safety) & Fipe (Italian Federation of Disco/Night Club Owners).

Distributed by the State Police, this voucher for free entrance to a disco is a gift for passing the alcohol test: a similar card provides a multiple choice aiming to make young people familiar with the breathalyzer test.

Slogan: “Guido con Prudenza. Zero alcool tutta la vita”. (‘I am driving with Prudence. Zero alcohol all my life’). Guido and Prudenza are dressed like videogame heroes.

Our post-Cartesian “emotional brain” will immediately perceive a different axiology and a different stance – the essence of social and generational change which has occurred in the space of a decade. Document (a) is shocking, provocative and paternalistic in its stigmatisation of the victims of an authentic car crash, who are called idiots; the axiology is negative, constructing panic, fear and ultimately a threatening message into the representation of traumatic death. Document (b) conveys a gentle and captivating approach, using the visual icons of adolescent computer games. The police are obviously trying to dislocate their role from the semantic sphere of law and order (or stigmatisation and punishment) to the sphere of care; the axiology is positive, stressing responsibility, autonomy, awareness, health etc.

The dissonance between these two documents exemplifies the contrasting perspectives I explore in this chapter, focusing on:

- a) the discursive strategies on the drink/drive issue deployed by Italian institutional bodies, from the government to local authorities, and by non-governmental formations such as associations of road victims’ families;
- b) the perspective and positioning of those who plan or implement strategies for coping with adolescent alcohol practices in Italy.

Some of the relevant questions that can be tackled are for example:

- How are adolescent lifestyles conceptualised and approached?
- Where and how are culturally/ideologically adversarial contexts represented in discourse?
- What values are communicated in the discourse of professionals who face the issues of underage drinking and road safety?
- What are the moral emotions and issues of sentiment that colour socio-political concerns?
- Where and how does resistance and confrontation become manifest in discourse?

2. Framework for analysis

I consider culture here as a repertoire of customary practices within which individuals become positioned by way of inculcations/suasions about norms, values, beliefs, traditions, perspectives, lifestyles and the discourses embodying them (Cortese 2001). The notion of change needs to be incorporated into the notion of culture, as highlighted by Hymes nearly four decades ago: “Too often [. . .] we implicitly think of culture as what is completed. [. . .] We have [. . .] everywhere the interplay between the cultural as traditional and the cultural as emergent” (Hymes 1974 [1969]: 34–35).

Out of their daily experience within their specific local speech community/ies, individuals develop a “linguistic sense of [social] place” (Bourdieu 1991) and sets of behavioural expectations which include interpretive frames for text/talk. Through such scripted knowledge at the dynamic interface of the individual and the social matrix, the “discursive mind” develops “situated cognition”, viz. modes of thought and forms of discourse which always carry point of view (Bruner 1991: 3) and “dispositional states” (Edwards 1997: 149). Further, since comprehension/interpretation is a function of perspective (Keysar 1998: 194), the resources through which perspectivation/perspectivity (Graumann 2002; Keysar 1998; Linell 2002) moulds discourse are relevant, viz. speech acts, text types and the language resources which configure convergence or non-accommodation of the interactants’ perspectives and action in discourse.

But the meaning that is intersubjectively produced through interaction is not impermeable to contingent context; there is an ongoing osmosis, as it were, between meaning and its changing context. Crucial representations can be reversed by changes in the cultural context. While hegemonic groups perpetuate their own discursive representation of the social world and sanction its credibility, other groups deploy their own discursive practices to challenge the dominant ideological frame and its value construals, “particular versions of the social order and the notion of person (or self) that is part of that order” (Duranti 1997: 228). Thus, power asymmetry will produce the “new”, the “marginal”, “oppositional” or “alternative” against the “given” discourse, and also action in and through this discourse, since language itself (i.e. text and talk, visual images, the “technologised word” of the media) is embedded in social practice – it is action. This study tries to account for the macro and microtextual “linguaging” devices whereby the sociocultural and legal order is both challenged and negotiated – for “alternative” discourse is not

necessarily juxtaposed but dialectically engages with dominant discourse as Fairclough (2001) has persuadingly shown.

To understand what language means to its users, socially and discursively, I make use of studies of persuasion, in order to gain insights into affect and emotions, which are crucial to comprehending perspective-taking in language. I also look for insights into epistemic, agentive, reflexive stances constructing conflictual/negotiative “alterity” (Candlin 2002: 26–27) and the inevitable “othering” (Duszak 2002: 2) involved in discursive action.

Finally, the social actors and their discursive tools form a nexus of action-as-discourse (Scollon 2001), involving the three elements identified by Scollon and Scollon (2005: 38): “the discourses in place, the historical bodies of the participants in the action, and the interaction order which organizes their mutual participation in the action.”³

3. The corpus

According to the Italian Ministry of Health, 2004 was the year in which the dissemination of road safety educational programmes reached its peak; 2004 was also the year in which the so-called “Giovanardi draft law” aiming to discipline disco activities failed to become a law in Parliament by one vote in spite of unanimous approval by the Cabinet.⁴

The small *ad hoc* thematic corpus for this study consists of documents issued in 2004–2005 which concern these intensive campaigns. Most of the material covers regional and local programmes developed in the wake of EU directives and drink-driving countermeasures,⁵ with a particular focus on the Region of Emilia Romagna, which has the highest record of road victims and is one of the most popular areas of aggregation of the so-called *popolo della notte* (‘night crowds’). Press releases, statistical polls, the 1993 bill of law and the ensuing campaign and debates are amply represented. Next to institutional and interinstitutional projects, I included the websites of two associations representing the point of view of the families of road victims.

While all documents fall within the purview of advocacy, they are likely to feature some degree of text-type hybridity. Statistical “fact sheets”, programmatic documents, research reports, are written from a detached stance according to the canonical features of institutional “grey literature” and research genres; press reports and press releases, i.e. selections of published news features and press agency sheets, range between the factual and the

sensational. Affect ranks highest in the extremely personal items by “grass-roots” associations representing road victims, but is also deployed in political debate as we shall see.

4. Corpus investigation: main findings

Working within the framework of language as social action detailed in Section 2 above – namely discursive construction of social actors, their knowledge states, stance and alignments/alignment shifts – texts were analysed for strategic lexico-grammatical choices embodying “arguments and accompanying actions”, the discursive and socio-cognitive dynamism of communicative practices (Candlin 2002: 23). The emerging micro- and macro-textual patterns, based on their pragmatic status and rhetorical configuring, that is to say their socio-rhetorical accomplishments as discourse, are reported below.

4.1. Arguing from evidence: the relevance of figures

Figures make argumentation persuasive, contributing to positive impression formation by enhancing source competence and trustworthiness, on condition that they are plausible and relevant to the overall claim. According to persuasion studies, the addressee’s expected cognitive path is: evidence evaluation → message evaluation → post-message belief in the message proposition (Reynolds and Reynolds 2002: 432–433). Figures, whether from identified or unidentified sources, from national institutions or from regional and local surveys, loom large in the corpus. They constitute the expository opening, the basic “objective” quantification of the national or local scenario triggering argumentative sequences often couched as statements of need for action which have recourse to battlefield metaphors: *fronteggiare*, *arginare*, *scendere in campo*; *battaglia per la vita*, *by night blindato*, *controlli anti-strage*, *servizi antistrage*; *la battaglia contro una delle più grandi calamità nazionali è cominciata*, *la guerra forse non finirà mai* (‘to face’, ‘to withstand’, ‘to enter the fray’; ‘fighting for one’s life’, ‘heavily policed night life’, ‘patrols against drink driving leading to multiple deaths’, ‘policing against drink driving leading to multiple deaths’; ‘the battle against one of the worst national calamities has begun’, ‘the war might never come to an end’) pragmatically endorsing police patrols or deontic appeals about what should, must, needs to be done.

When space does not allow for an entire paragraph reporting statistics, a summative comment is provided: *la notte resta il periodo con il più alto tasso di mortalità* (‘night-time remains the time with the highest casualty rate’).

However, this confrontational discourse mostly addresses the *phenomenon* of Saturday night accidents. No direct attempts are made to target human agents whose specific business interests are involved. In other words, the stance of the press is clearly to address Western rationality and the need for statistical evidence that will “withstand counterargument”, thus feeding public opinion with a sinister image of discos. In fact some press items refer to the *popolo della notte* or ‘night crowds’ and exploit wordplay, such as the collocation *ballo/sballo* which juxtaposes ‘dancing’ with ‘freaking out’, in ways that not even too subtly evoke a negative judgement on late-night fun. More generally, the disco is the *demon* lurking in the picture, sometimes unnamed sometimes simply referred to in connection with accidents. A typical demonising allusion is for instance *un altro fine settimana di sangue per chi ritornava dalla discoteca* (‘another weekend drenched in blood for those getting back from the disco’). Yet the fact that the *popolo della notte* includes not only young people who may end up drenched in blood, but also bar owners who certainly end up with huge profits seem to go largely unnoticed.

Epidemiologists make lavish use of regional and local data to back up their social health programmes and educational programmes. Their educational brochures and other materials jointly produced with educational agencies, however, do not make profligate use of statistics, as young people expect different forms of proof (cf. Reynolds and Reynolds [2002: 432–437] for intercultural variability on the heuristics of evidence).

Along with statistics, the use of polling data needs highlighting, especially in connection with the Government campaign backing up the draft law on the *stragi del Sabato sera*: opinion polls clearly show a vast majority of respondents supporting the law, and even responding that the law *is not repressive enough*.⁶

4.2. Statistical hide and seek: the game of vested interests

During a public meeting held at a megadisco in Northern Italy in July 2003, the then Minister of Health Girolamo Sirchia was confronted by representatives of Fipe (*Federazione Italiana Pubblici Esercizi*). Fipe framed their perspective from an oppositional stance, with an almost incredible twisting of official Istat⁷ figures to support the claim that road casualty peaks occur on

Thursday nights, not on weekend nights – but notice below the misbelieving attitude of the reporter, metapragmatically conveyed by the conditional *spetterebbe, andrebbe*. The Minister's perspective-taking surfaces morphopragmatically in the diminutive/derogatory *numerucoli*. He dons his "you/us" polemic with a gentleman's garb, but in his closing appeal to affect includes in the "us" front *the Government and the majority of Italians*:

Sono partiti all'attacco i rappresentanti della Fipe, presentando uno studio statistico sulla base di dati Istat, tendente a dimostrare che non c'è nesso di causa-effetto fra gli orari di apertura delle discoteche e gli incidenti stradali, tanto che il piu' alto indice di mortalità tra le due e le sei del mattino spetterebbe alla notte del giovedì e non a quelle del venerdì o del sabato. In particolare, fra le tre e le quattro *la palma andrebbe al martedì* e se si considerano solo le quattro, al mercoledì. Mentre la fascia oraria in cui si concentra il maggior numero di morti per incidenti stradali è quella compresa fra le 16 e le 20, con un picco massimo alle 18. Nel 2000 – continua lo studio della Fipe – i morti con età fra i 15 e i 29 anni sono stati 1958 (29% del totale), ma se si ammettesse che le persone decedute fra le tre e le sei avessero tutte un'età compresa fra i 15 e i 29 anni, si arriverebbe a contarne 326 (il 16,6%). Allora – è la domanda provocatoria – le altre 1632 vittime sono statisticamente accettabili?

"Questi sono *solo numerucoli* – ha risposto il ministro della Salute – *costruiti per difendere le discoteche*. Ed è plausibile che i rappresentanti della Fipe difendano le discoteche, così come è dovere del Governo difendere la vita dei suoi cittadini più giovani". E, ai numeri delle discoteche, Sirchia *ha contrapposto* i suoi: "È un fatto – ha detto – che fra le persone multate nelle ore notturne dalla polizia stradale, fra mezzanotte e le due del mattino quelle con tasso di alcolemia superiore alla norma sono l'11,8%, fra le due e le quattro sono il 17% e fra le quattro e le sei sono il 21,5%. *Il Governo e la maggior parte degli italiani* – ha aggiunto il ministro – *sono choccati* quando si aprono i giornali e si vede che in quelle ore ci sono state decine di morti." (www.cybermed.it/cgi-bin/news/print.pl?article=3064; Downloaded 19 November 2005; my emphasis)

(‘Fipe representatives launched their attack, presenting a statistical study based on Istat data, aiming to demonstrate that there is no cause-effect link between the opening hours of discotheques and road accidents, so much so that the highest death rate between two and six in the morning would seem to occur on Thursday nights, not on Friday or Saturday nights. More precisely, between three and four o'clock Tuesday nights would hold the record, and if one considers only four o'clock, it would be Wednesday. Instead, the bracket in which most road deaths occur is that between 4 pm and 8 pm, with the highest peak at 6 pm. In the year 2000 – goes the Fipe study – there were 1958 deaths in the age range between 15 and 29 years, namely 29% of the total road deaths; however, if one posited that all people who died between 3 and

6 were included in the 15 to 29 age bracket, the total would amount to 326, that is 16.6%. What about the remaining 1,632 victims – so goes the provoking question – are they statistically acceptable?

“These are nothing but vile little numbers – answered the Minister of Health – constructed to defend discotheques. It is certainly plausible that Fipe representatives should defend discotheques; however, by the same token it is the Government’s duty to defend the life of its youngest citizens.” And so, the Minister juxtaposed his own figures against those provided by the discotheques: “It is a fact – he said – that 11.8% of drivers fined between 2 and 4 am are found to have more alcohol than normal in their blood, but the percentage rises to 17% between 2 and 4 am, and to 21.5% between 4 and 6 am. The Government and the majority of Italians – added the Minister – get a big shock when they find out from the morning papers that there were so many deaths in those hours.”)

At the heart of the discussion was the draft law, which proposed to have discos close at 3 am and, to prohibit the sale of alcohol, lowering the music and stroboscopic lights, after 2 am. The *maitres à penser* participating in the meeting, including popular mass-media psychologists, a leading figure in therapeutic communities and the then head of the Italian Observatory on Youth and Alcohol, argued that the law was simplistic and repressive.

A year later, an attempt to regulate the closing time of night clubs through a Government circular (29 July 2004) was stopped by a House member who protested that severe economic damage would ensue for the tourist industry of regions like Emilia-Romagna, where dance halls are a main source of income especially in summer. Minister Giovanardi retorted by recalling the incalculable economic costs of accidents, let alone the loss of human lives, for the state and for families:

ma quale danno per i locali [. . .] quanti migliaia di miliardi viene a costare la traumatologia e la mortalità dei giovani al sistema sanitario italiano? E quanto costa alle famiglie in termini non solo di perdite umane, ma anche di soldi e di cure? (ANSA, reported in www.fipe.it/fipe/Notizie-da/; downloaded 20 November 2005)

(‘damage for night clubs, what damage are you talking? [. . .] how many thousand billions will the trauma treatments and the toll on young lives cost the Italian health system? And what will the cost be for the families not only in terms of the loss of human lives, but also in terms of money and health treatments?’)

Note that a different strategy was adopted by the Government in February 2005. The region of Emilia, a top national attraction “where action to prevent

road accidents is most needed” as the leisure business was setting a trend based on excesses and transgressive behaviour,⁸ was the target of a successful safety package agreement between Minister Lunardi and various stakeholders, including hotel and ship owners, the national and local public transport system (railways and buses), insurance companies and disco owners. A whole network of inter-institutional services was arranged to improve safety on the local Riviera: needless to say Fipe, which locally operates discos opening at midnight and closing at midday, was highly satisfied with measures which “did not demonize discos and highlighted responsible behaviour”. Responsible behaviour of the young, of course.

4.3. *Visual-verbal oxymorons: bevi responsabilmente/‘drink responsible’*

Imagine browsing one of those weeklies that thrive on a well-balanced mix of serious political and current affairs editorials, of sensational “investigations” into powerful business collusions (or collisions), of jet-set and showbiz gossip with profligate use of colour. Registers range from chatty to educated, skirting around the edges of the intellectual. Adverts play a considerable part in styling to an Italian middle class that is fast thinning out on account of galloping inflation and yet likes to cling to its cult objects and status symbols, pretending or dreaming still to identify with the élites that can aspire to the best. Even the structure of advertising pages is keen on the compulsive-obsessive: no longer one but two full-blown pages facing each other, or one full page and the remaining two a few pages further on. To confirm the feeling of being part of the supra-national affluent circle, these ads are worded in the “globish” koiné. Or, in an improbable Italian, as we shall see.

In the weekly *rotocalco* I am about to consider (*L'espresso*), the inside cover and the page facing it offer the utmost of the good life. A tall and slender (healthy slender, not anorexic) young woman in full evening attire – with more than a sprinkle of diamonds – faces a shiny, silky red curtain and holds behind her back, therefore hiding but actually showing in full view, a bottle of red liquor. The next page is occupied by the brand name of the liquor, with a centre-page glassful of the same (on the rocks, for details) and a cocktail recipe, against a pitch-black background. Finally, in small print for those who direct their gaze toward the bottom of the page, just three words: BEVI CAMPARI RESPONSABILMENTE. Thus reads the imperative, with that out-of-the-ordinary adverb, sounding like a literal translation from the English *responsibly*.

Moving to the website – the URL address lying quite close to the imperative at the bottom of the page, to point out the continuity across the media – one could find, up to a few weeks before the time of my current writing (July 2008) the same “odd ring” through French, English and Italian (I am not considering German because I am too unfamiliar with the language): *drink responsible* is unacceptable (a copula verb like *be* is always followed by an adjective, but a verb of action such as *drive* or *drink* can only be modified by an adverb, e.g. *drive responsibly* or *drink slowly*); *boire avec responsabilité* sounds like a faithful translation from the Italian (why not *bevez*, retaining the imperative? Or why not an adverb, which would indeed be more natural in French, or as we have seen in English?). So we were in the realm of dream language/fun language, one of the attractions of advertising. Below came the recommendations on how to drink and drive sensibly and safely, in line with the (publicly professed) ethics of the alcohol business, and the subheading *Red Passion people do/Choose Red*, followed by the text below:

Alcoholic beverages, from wine to cocktails, liqueurs and spirits, have *always been an element of Italy's food and drink culture and traditions. A moderate consumption of alcohol, generally as an accompaniment to food, is typical of Mediterranean culture* (. . .). Campari, the most iconic brand of Italian origin and traditions, could not fail to support an *approach to alcohol in keeping with those traditions. Only moderate consumption can give true drinking pleasure.* The aperitif is [. . .] a *convivial ritual* in which Campari has always played a very *natural* role and represents precisely the *model of moderation and balance* that Campari seeks to promote. (my emphasis)

Provided one clicked on *YES* below the query *Are you of drinking age in your country?*, the site then showed the secret promises which lie beyond the red curtains that the black lady is facing in the magazine version of the ad. Tales told by a macho voice and visual fantasies which supposedly appeal to the *Red Passion community* of consumers. The black-gowned belle, now draped in candid robes flowing and floating in the breeze or in the tempest of the sea (obviously the tides of passion, although she is safely sitting on the shore rocks) and wearing some red symbol such as spike-heeled shoes (which magically turn into glasses) or a red-hooded cape, is conquering and enslaving one or two muscular rambos, lying (even rope-tied) at her feet: parodies of sexual power where innocence and passion, traditionally interpreted in terms of colour symbolism, are twisting and replacing the fantasies of male domination so as to appeal both to male fantasies of being subjugated by passion and to female fantasies of acting out the winner/conqueror role through

seduction. Whatever the gendered evaluation of such representations, the gist of the matter is: if you follow the imperative and drink sensibly, then you hardly get carried over into such dreams. In fact, in its current design, the site (www.campari.com) now highlights much less elitist members of the Red Passion people, and insists on *red passion inside*, with cute pictures of children and quite normal-looking families visiting places of interest or smiling at the camera during some healthy trekking adventure. This is at the time of my writing quite a recent change, which attempts to repair the previous contradiction between the representations of passion and the emphasis on tradition.

There was, indeed, a contradiction between the (former) voluptuous dreams of sexual conquest and the compliance with standards of responsibility and moderation. The very notion of the powers unleashed through alcohol runs against the notion of moderation, which is constitutive of the “ethical message” worded previously: alcohol is, in fact, a psychotropic substance, and it can induce passions only through excess and abuse. But the notion of passion itself was modified by the business pages which boasted activities and events including a calendar: *a small collectible luxury for the happy few that receive it (. . .) a tribute to the beautiful women and world class photographers that make it come to life every year*. These flamboyant presentations of the “Red Passion community” were topped by an animated gallery of Campari products, from spirits to wines and soft drinks, presented as follows:

Gruppo Campari is a major player in the global branded beverage industry, with a portfolio of over 40 premium and super premium brands marketed and distributed in over 190 countries worldwide.

Note that the ethical recommendation was reiterated at the end of the business page, this time in “serious”, ordinary English: *Enjoy our brands responsibly*.

The notion of passion, even though it emphasises sexual attraction and power, was socially constituted, aiming to define a socially elitist lifestyle which seemed to put together the symbols of the good life as the “posh” life, displaying the goods dispensed to the happy few by a *global major player*, a far cry from the Mediterranean, in particular the Italian tradition of which the brand purports to be *iconic*. Italian convivial ritual and traditional accompaniment of food with drink was rather a matter of hearty food and table wine at family and friendly gatherings, which marked the pleasure of being together and was not particularly associated with the insignia of elitist power.

It was, rather, a question of inclusive, not exclusive, bonding. It was the hallmark of socialising across generations, in and between families, and as such this tradition was cultivated in all social classes, from the working class to the elites, also celebrating the bonds of humanity with the generous wine-making country. It was also the favourite locus for perpetuating the value of moderation, where young people would grow accustomed to wine as the natural complement of food.

The good wine land was no surface scenario: it was an ecology and a lifestyle, where alcohol was part of a constellation of values, from hard work to family attachments, which migrant Italians preserve and to this day associate with a certain approach to drinking – an approach which they have carried over to foreign lands and which they still cherish. It is an identity trait, a bond with the distant homeland which is profoundly inscribed in the collective memory of migrants as a distinctive feature of their national and ethnic sense of belonging:

an Italian background where alcohol was freely available to *us* at an early age (. . .) *we are told* that it brings *great shame* on ourselves as an individual to be seen intoxicated in public.

My uncle in Italy once said to me

“drink as much of my wine here at home. Enjoy yourself and be merry. But *don’t* degrade yourself to *the world outside* by trying to prove that you can drink more than the next person.” (Source: *Sydney Morning Herald Online*, October 2005, News Blog entitled “Drinking Culture”, whose lead question was: *Do you think that getting drunk is part of being an Australian?*)

The intertext here involves collective memory as much as personal reminiscence, coloured and emphasised by affect (*great shame*): the cohesive *we* and the agentless passive (*are told*) highlight a common past which is represented as lasting in the present, construing a public individual whose ethnic roots are to be positively confirmed by each new generation upholding communal traditional values. Rooted in this ethnic pride is a positive axiology, inculcated and perpetuated through rearing practices, approving the pleasure of drinking when disciplined by shared norms which have become naturalised in the construct of common sense within the specific culture. The quoted narrator (*my uncle in Italy*) impersonates family ties with the distant homeland, and the narrative quote highlighted by the time adjunct (*once*) resonates with pride in a collective identity signalled by the solidarity deictics *we* and *us* (Duszak 2002; Mühlhäusler and Harré 1990), buttressing in-group values against any stigmatization from *the world outside*.

Thus, the very pages of the former version of the Campari site which purportedly emphasised moderation according to a certain tradition in fact rejected the tradition, which used to associate alcohol with moderation, not with surrender to passion.

However, while the Campari site has adjusted to the current recession which would lead members of the increasingly depauperized middle-class to feel frustrated by the insistence on an elitist lifestyle, the magazine feature retains its emphasis on the association of drinking with exclusive lifestyles and its appeal to both genders, focused on the seductive power that money can buy.

A further striking deviation from tradition, in the same magazine, is the gendered appeal to young women, who are offered a new world (*seguimi in un mondo nuovo*, 'follow me to a new world') associated with the consumption of beer (a huge can of an exotic brand held by an attractive young woman against a futuristic-looking skyline, rockets symbolising a new era). Thus, the traditional notion of alcohol consumption as part of social gatherings is replaced by the notion of drinking as an activity *per se*, not necessarily socialised, appealing to women and not only to men, and associated with the profile of the daring young woman, capable of breaking with tradition and of moving on to a globalised future, with the additional and powerful note of woman as winner: *a fresh take on life* is the original English-language text of a US-produced brand of beer, occupying a whole page with pictures of a young woman proudly approaching a helicopter to occupy the driver's seat.

To summarise, it would seem that advertising is seeking a new clientele for the alcohol industry precisely amongst the younger generation and in particular amongst young women, while at the same time trying to adjust its web image through the representation of a new ethos of "care and share".

4.4. *Arguing from and against authority: specialist discourse and political discourse*

Medical and forensic studies, especially research investigating causal links between road risk and alcohol-related behaviour, are extensively quoted by municipal documents concerned with forms of participatory governance that will give young people a voice and intensify/diversify occasions for aggregation.⁹ Consensus seems to be developing towards tuning the discourse of support to the young in ways that will not frame night fun as deviant or as a source of deviance *per se*, but treat young people as members of groups whose needs for entertainment are not adequately satisfied or cared for by

municipalities – citizens, in other words, whose leisure time is not well attended to, and who consequently have little choice but to leapfrog from their early teens into adult behaviour.

On the other hand expert epidemiological discourse has its detractors, who speak of “epidemiological terrorism”, of witch-hunting stimulated by the press, of the risk of moralistic prohibitionism. Sociologists claim that the role of alcohol in fatal accidents is that of a co-factor, not a primary cause, and that Italian drinking practices are by and large still very balanced. Physicians who do not share this persuasion counter the challenge by arguing that “evoking the ghost of prohibitionism” is of no avail and that drinking is by no means limited to socioculturally disadvantaged segments of the population.¹⁰

In this connection it is interesting to consider the debate on the Giovanardi draft law, which soon polarised two fronts, those in support and those hostile to the law’s construction of young people.

4.4.1. Evaluative language

The presentation of draft law n. 4180 concerning the *stragi del Sabato sera*, particularly its initial context of justification, deploys intense evaluative language (§1). Its representation of a healthy approach to leisure emphatically contrasts and challenges its current degradation, with a passing mention of the social and generational problems involved (§2). Emphasis on social health data (§6) and on the role of the press leads to a configuration of the law as a much-needed response to the expectations of public opinion. These themes highlight the framing of the law as a question of public order, which is then reinforced by a (brief) reiteration of social implications and by paragraphs devoted to the human, social and legal costs of the Saturday night massacres.

The discourse shifts from epistemic to ethical and political commitment. Pathos, well-argued and accounted for, lends dramatic urgency to the top-down, normative approach.

(§1) I frequenti incidenti mortali lungo le strade, nei quali sono coinvolti, in particolare modo nelle notti precedenti le giornate festive, *i giovani che escono dalle discoteche*, costituiscono purtroppo un fenomeno grave e preoccupante, che non è esagerato indicare come “*strage silenziosa*”, indubbiamente espressione anche di un disagio sociale e generazionale.

(‘The fatal road accidents in which *young people are frequently involved when they leave discotheques*, particularly on Saturday nights and nights before public holidays,

unfortunately constitute *a most serious phenomenon and cause of great concern. It is no exaggeration to label this a "silent slaughter" – no doubt also an expression of social and generational friction.*')

(§2) Il divertimento e lo svago *dovrebbero rappresentare* per i giovani un importante momento di crescita personale in quanto volti a favorire le occasioni di incontro, i rapporti interpersonali e la comunicazione sociale. *Purtroppo* oggi questo accade *sempre più raramente*: i ragazzi frequentano *fino all'alba* locali dove si balla al suono di musiche assordanti e dove sono sottoposti per diverse ore ad un bombardamento visivo ed uditivo; se a ciò si aggiunge l'abuso di bevande alcoliche, distribuite senza limiti di orario, o addirittura l'uso di sostanze stupefacenti, si individuano facilmente le cause dei gravi incidenti automobilistici che avvengono all'uscita delle discoteche o dei locali notturni, i quali hanno determinato un forte allarme sociale, sollevando, pertanto, evidenti problemi di ordine e sicurezza pubblico.

(‘Fun and entertainment ought to be an important moment in the personal growth of young people, as they are meant to provide opportunities for getting together, for interpersonal relations and for social communication. *Unfortunately*, this is *now increasingly rare*: kids stay until dawn in places where they dance to deafening music and where *for hours on end they are literally bombarded with sound and light*. If this is combined with the abuse of alcoholic drinks available without any time restriction and even with the use of drugs, it is easy to identify the causes of very serious car accidents when people leave discotheques and night clubs – accidents which have led to widespread social alarm, clearly giving rise to problems of public order and safety.’)

(§6) Per quanto riguarda invece la statistica sociosanitaria, occorre rilevare che l'Istituto Superiore della Sanità ha evidenziato che, su un campione di 6.959 giovani transitati nei reparti di Pronto soccorso degli ospedali italiani, a seguito di incidenti stradali avvenuti nell'anno 2001, ed in particolare nelle notti del fine settimana, la percentuale delle persone che hanno presentato patologie legate al consumo di alcool è del 65%.

(‘On the other hand, as far as social and health care statistics is concerned, it must be noted that the Institute of Health has highlighted the following: on a sample of 6,959 youths who received treatment after road accidents in the emergency wards of Italian hospitals in the year 2001, with particular regard to weekend nights, pathologies linked to alcohol consumption amounted to 65%.’)

Al di là dell'indiscutibile dato statistico, comunque, la tragedia delle cosiddette stragi del sabato sera non ha certo bisogno di numeri per essere dimostrata, è sufficiente sfogliare le cronache giornalistiche del fine settimana per rendersi conto delle intollerabili dimensioni ormai raggiunte dal fenomeno.

(‘Anyhow, beyond the indisputable statistical data, the tragedy of the so-called Saturday night massacres needs no figures to be proved. The weekend news in the

papers are sufficient to realise that the phenomenon has now reached intolerable dimensions.’)

Sulla base di quanto premesso, il Governo intende, con il presente provvedimento, dare una risposta immediata alle *pressanti aspettative che provengono da larghissimi settori dell'opinione pubblica*, affrontando un tema particolarmente complesso per le sue *molteplici e controverse implicazioni di carattere sociale e di ordine pubblico*.

(‘Based on the foregoing, the Government intends, with the present measures, to give an immediate answer to *the pressing demand arising from public opinion in so many quarters* and thus to face an issue which is particularly complex owing to its *multiple controversial implications of a social character pertaining to public order*.’)

Nell’ambito della più ampia strategia elaborata dal Governo in ordine alla sicurezza e alla salute dei cittadini che si prefigge di ridurre gli attuali tassi di incidentalità stradale, attraverso una serie di interventi di molteplice contenuto, volti a garantire, tra l’altro, una maggiore sicurezza sulle strade, il potenziamento della rete dei controlli, una maggiore incisività delle campagne di prevenzione e di informazione tese a diffondere una nuova cultura dell’educazione stradale, anche attraverso l’intenso coinvolgimento delle istituzioni scolastiche, s’inserisce pertanto la presente iniziativa, finalizzata per contrastare il fenomeno delle stragi del “sabato sera”.

(‘The present initiative, aimed at contrasting the phenomenon of the so-called *stragi del “sabato sera”* [“Saturday-night massacres”], is thus lodged within the broader strategy elaborated by the Government concerning the safety and health of its citizens, aiming to reduce the current rate of road accidents through a range of actions of multiple scope, intended to guarantee more safety on the road, a more incisive control network, more incisive prevention and information campaigns to foster a new ‘culture of the road’ also through a more consistent involvement of educational institutions.’)

In questo contesto, il principale ed imprescindibile obiettivo è quello di eliminare *l’intollerabile perdita di vite umane* così giovani, ed anche quello di ridurre l’elevato costo sociale e, secondariamente, economico che queste stragi determinano.

(‘In this context, the prior aim unquestionably is to eliminate *the intolerable loss of young human lives*, and also to reduce the high social and, secondly, financial cost that these massacres come to determine.’)

Dai dati forniti dall’EURISPES risulta infatti che *l’impatto psicologico per le famiglie è drammatico*: il 91 per cento resta traumatizzato, il 70 per cento non riesce più a guidare, il 50 per cento dei sopravvissuti ai gravi incidenti stradali presenta danni cerebrali. Senza contare *l’ingente onere finanziario a carico del Servizio Sanitario Statale* per la lunga e complessa assistenza sanitaria derivante dall’elevato numero di feriti.

(‘Data provided by EURISPES show that *the psychological impact on the families is actually dramatic*: 91% of families develop traumatic disorders, 70% stop driving, 50% of those who survive serious road accidents are reported to have brain damage. To all this we must add *the heavy financial burden on the National Health Service* caused by the long and complex health treatment and care for the conspicuous number of those who are injured.’)

Bisogna infine accennare ad *un'altra categoria di costi* generata dalle stragi del “sabato sera”: costi relativi ai danni materiali prodotti, costi amministrativi e costi giudiziari.

(‘Finally, we must point out *one last category of costs* generated by “Saturday night massacres”, and that is the costs produced by the material damage that is caused, the administrative costs and the legal costs.’)

([www.governo.it/GovernoInforma/Dossier/Nuove norme sulle “Stragi del sabato sera”/testo-ddl.htm](http://www.governo.it/GovernoInforma/Dossier/Nuove_norme_sulle_\); downloaded 19 November 2005; my emphasis)

Indeed the next above only gives modest attention to social implications, which are dispatched with in the nominal group *espressione anche di un disagio sociale e generazionale* (‘an expression also of social and generational friction’), §1. The epistemic adverb immediately preceding, *indubbiamente* (‘no doubt’), is counterbalanced and somewhat mitigated by *anche* (‘also’) which deprives the social implications of priority and urgency. Social problems, with a concession to their complexity, are constructed as questions of social and public order: *un tema particolarmente complesso per le sue molteplici e controverse implicazioni di carattere sociale e di ordine pubblico* (‘an issue which is particularly complex owing to its multiple controversial implications of a social character, pertaining to public order’). But the main challenge is raised in paragraph 2, which describes alcohol and substance abuse in night clubs and discos and immediately associates this state of affairs with road casualties, leading this first causal argument into the second one, which links road deaths with public alarm. This argumentative trajectory provides the context of justification for the public measures in the draft law, which are constructed as urgent and largely backed by public opinion and only after (§6) also considered within the framework of social and economic costs; central to the argument is the unequivocal identification of the milieu where substance abuse occurs. Now, those that disliked the draft law did not seem to pay attention to the fact that youth are presented here as victims (*sotto-posti*) and that the accusing finger is pointed against the leisure environment, not against young people. The critics, instead, interpreted the draft law as an implicit negative conceptualisation of and an attack on youth. In the polemics

between Minister Giovanardi and the Catholic priest Don Mazzi, commentators all too easily polarise the two stances: *I giovani di Don Mazzi sono giovani con un'anima* ('Don Mazzi's youngsters have got soul') whereas *I giovani di Giovanardi sono bovini da muovere in massa ad orari prestabiliti (. . .) da “raddrizzare”* ('Giovanardi's youth are bovines to be herded and pushed around at set times (. . .) they need to be “straightened out”') (my emphasis).

The oppositional perspective is then extended to the entire government:

L'approccio che *Giovanardi ed il governo* hanno con i giovani è lo stesso (. . .) Li considerano un *problema da risolvere, correggere, da riformare*

('The approach that Giovanardi and the Government have towards young people is the same (. . .) They consider them a problem to be solved, to be corrected, to be reformed.')

(www.margheritaemiliaeromagna.it/articolo.asp?idarticolo=41; downloaded 20 November 2005; my emphasis)

The critics, then, equate the disciplining of discos with the disciplining of the young and further interpret the law as a negative construal of youth. The draft law, however, was transversally supported by all forces in Parliament. It failed to be passed by one vote.

4.4.2. Persuading through (imitation of) young people's speech mannerisms

Educational and campaign materials claim to be attempting to address the young by using adolescent language. Some campaign slogans – e.g. *Ragazzi non rompiamoci la vita* ('Guys let's not break our lives'); *Si al divertimento No allo sballo* ('Yes to fun No to freaking out'); *Amici, ma non dell'alcol* ('Friends but not with alcohol'); *Guido con Prudenza* ('I drive with Prudence') – may sound fake in this respect, while the age-targeted educational posters, interactive CDs, brochures and radio spots with phone-in spaces are more realistic.

The role of state police in this respect is most surprisingly different from the current stereotype of the patrol squad peeking from around the corner to catch you speeding or driving in an intoxicated condition. The State Police website, no matter how doubtfully catchy their slogan and posters, hypertextually promotes the image of a police who care and whose main role is to help, not to punish. The tools which operationalise the nexus of action in discourse, such as special bracelets for designated drivers, free distribution of T-shirts and entrance vouchers for discos, certainly renovate the image of the

police. The promotion of alcohol testing to be done privately by young drivers is part of this approach which avoids paternalism and stigmatisation and aims to change prejudiced perceptions of the police – notice the colloquial, involving style of document b) in Section 1), closing on a self-ironic note: *l'avresti mai detto?* ('would you ever think of that?').

4.5. *The language of affect: persuasion or dissuasion?*

Repetition, accumulation, verbal metaphor, emotional outpour and above all contestation in all directions are featured in the webpages of PU.RI (*Punto di riferimento familiari vittime Onlus*), a website of associations representing victims of road accidents. Their oppositional agenda, though emotionally engulfing, reads like an untiring campaign of self-“otherisation”. Indeed, one of the texts bears the title *Una nota stonata* ('A note out of tune'). One wonders whether these dissenting voices and negative epithets, including reports of gruesome local gossip, can really stand the test of time and reach a larger public, in spite of the inclusive, solidarity evoking *we* elected as deictic origo for the hypertextual message. It is a *we* which is painfully placed in continuity with the chorus of the victims (see the text of the letter from the dead) and even more painfully enmeshed in unmitigated, ubiquitous confrontation, branding initiatives, institutions and the mainstream attitude (*gli struzzi di Romagna*, the indifferent *ostriches*) with distrust, suspicion and criticism. The silence of the media on their initiatives and the actual silencing of this group by the local authorities could well be a self-defensive, resistant attitude, a disposition not to listen aroused by such all-encompassing, ultimately counterproductive negativity (O'Keefe 2002: 334 *et passim*).

A different perspective is featured in the web pages of the *Associazione Italiana Vittime della Strada Onlus* (the Italian section of the European FEVR, *Fédération Européenne des Victimes de la Route*) with its “distal” third-person presentation, emphasis on legal questions, avoidance of emotion-boosting and action-gearred language. As a collective subjectivity, their disposition seems to be beyond anger, and rather for the legal campaign in favour of having drunk drivers prosecuted more seriously as shown in the communiqué reported in document c) below.

- c) Comunicato ai massmedia e ai responsabili dei gruppi politici
(‘Communiqué addressing the mass media and the leaders of political groups’)

Uguale modalità per uccidere: ubriacarsi e andare contromano dovunque ci si trovi, a Catania, sulla Pontina, a Verona, a Torino ecc.

(‘The same way to kill: getting drunk and driving on the wrong side of the road anywhere you are, in Catania, on the Pontina highway, in Verona, in Turin, etc.’)

La guida in stato di ebbrezza è responsabile del 50% degli incidenti mortali
(‘Drunk driving accounts for 50% of fatal accidents’)

L’Associazione Italiana Familiari e Vittime della Strada denuncia la grave responsabilità delle istituzioni e della giustizia *che ancora sottovalutano questo reato* di strage ed applicano pene risibili che offendono le vittime ed i familiari e *lasciano liberi gli assassini*. L’AIFVS chiede efficaci controlli sulle strade e forti misure sanzionatorie e penali per chi guida in stato di ebbrezza provocando la morte di persone, *ritenendo la guida in stato di ebbrezza una gravissima aggravante del reato*: ritiro definitivo della patente di guida e piena applicazione delle pene previste dall’articolo 589 del codice penale, riferite al limite massimo (anni 12) e non al limite minimo (anni uno ridotto di un terzo e sempre con sospensione condizionale della pena) *come fino ad ora è stato arbitrariamente fatto nei tribunali italiani*, che hanno così contribuito alla reiterazione del reato.

L’AIFVS chiede ai nuovi organi di governo di *contrastare la guerra non solo in Irak ma anche sulle strade italiane*, assumendo pubblicamente l’obiettivo di “prevenire l’incidente stradale” come primo punto assoluto del loro impegno. (my emphasis)

(‘The Italian Association of Road Victims and their Families denounces the hideous responsibility of the institutions and of those who administer justice. *Both still under-rate the crime* of causing multiple deaths through reckless driving and they apply ridiculous sanctions which are offensive to victims and their families, in that *they let the killers go unpunished*. AIFVS request effective road patrols combined with strong sanctioning and penal measures for anyone who, driving in a drunken state, will cause people to die, since *drunk driving is an extremely serious aggravating circumstance of the crime*. Such measures are permanent suspension of the driving licence and full application of all sanctions under art. 589 of the penal code, with the heaviest sentencing of 12 years, instead of the lowest, that is to say one year reduced by one third, always with suspension of penalty under condition, *which has so far been arbitrarily applied by Italian courts*. Thus the courts have been contributing to reiterations of the offence.

AIFS asks new governmental bodies *to oppose the war not only in Iraq but also on Italian roads*, publicly defining the objective of “preventing road accidents” as their absolute priority.’)

(Source: AIFVS site. Downloaded on 21 June 2006)

Concise identification of a constructive moral and legal mission emanates further credibility: their position is obviously dialectical, yet they must work from within the institutions whose negligence and inefficiency they are trying

to correct by claiming more severe penalties for drunken driving. Notably their proposal is that the *reato di strage* (crime of “causing multiple deaths through reckless driving”) should be configured in Italian law. The label incorporates the concept of multiple homicide – already contemplated by Italian law – but it carries the sensational/emotional connotations of the lexical item *strage* into the denotational, technical legal diction. After escalating from media language into the domain of political debate, *strage* caused by alcohol-related reckless driving is now further rescaling its semantic import by entering legal terminology.

The constructive handling of emotion by this group needs highlighting: besides running a Forum, the association publishes a *Guestbook* and brochures where individuals can let their emotions be known and where the memory of victims can be celebrated. Further, on the public side, document d) below shows how theirs was the strongest reaction against the poster by Oliviero Toscani (see Section 1).



d) Safety Fair in Rimini (Emilia-Romagna). The Emilia-Romagna Region re-used Toscani's 1994 poster for the fair. The father of a young road victim resemiotized the original Toscani image: *Modello 4 pirla in meno* is renamed *Modello Stato Assassino*, a re-perspectivation of the original 1994 nonverbal text.

5. Conclusions

There is no question that the institutional bodies, from the State to State police, local police and the many municipalities whose epidemiological and educational studies I have collected, show a deep concern with alcohol consumption among the very young, and a parallel socio-educational concern to contain a culture of leisure where alcohol and substance consumption may be “indexical of social positions and identities” (Edwards 1997: 243), acquiring in other words the status of an in/out-group divide. The stance and ideology of professionals and authorities involved in developing a culture of care and responsibility is not one of witch-hunting but a pervasive, capillary action through discourse whose evidence, from epidemiological studies to age-targeted materials and inter-institutional cooperation with educators, focuses on prevention and politically on the dissemination of initiatives for participated governance where young people are given a voice. Campaigns have been developed in festive auras, to the disappointment of grassroots organisations which seem to think that threat, panic and fear are valuable means in road safety education.

Institutional bodies, particularly the police, are responsible for meeting EU standards and implementing EU regulations, particularly the directive to halve fatal accidents by 2010. However, whilst supranational regulations are couched in “one-fits-all” prescriptive language, when it comes to adolescent drink-driving, police implementation has recourse to a creative rather than a harsh technical approach. Avoiding panic or terror, they try to capture the attention of the young in positive ways, especially to make young drivers familiar with instruments such as the alcohol test.

The political arena is divided between a discourse of containment and a discourse of liberalisation. The former presents the situation as unmanageable and in need of urgent legislative measures; this stance is seen by the opposing front as conducive to the affirmation of negative values in connection with youth. This cognitive dissonance – different persuasions, different inculcations on leisure – actually carries different cultural orders of representation concerning the role of the state and the legitimisation of its actions concerning social and generational change. On the two sides, settled worldviews and schemas of course provide contrasting interpretations for the role of alcohol and the notion of responsibility: one highlights alcohol-related risk in social and generational change; the other blurs the boundaries between use and abuse in the name of openness to change. These different stances are fuelled by an ambiguous press, which feeds public opinion with negative imaginaries

and emotionally styles the *phenomenon* as a *massacre* but indeed carefully avoids questioning *agency*: the ethos, or lack of ethos, particularly of stakeholders such as owners/managers of entertainment halls and their ambiguous policy. Ambiguity also occurs in advertising, which seems to encourage moderation in drinking while at the same time appealing, both visually and verbally, to a young clientèle, particularly young women, and their dreams of the good life.

While the predominant institutional strategies emerging in the corpus analysed here – even the draft law challenged for being repressive – are empathy-based, avoiding guilt, avoiding face-threat or cognitive and emotional entrapment, and thus are likely to induce supportive responses rather than dismissal and counter-argument; while institutions make the effort to involve young people by using their own language and style to stimulate reflection, what is the stance of the grand patrons who pull the strings of night-life? They serve political interlocutors cocktails of manipulated statistics; they seemingly cooperate with institutional agencies which in actual fact serve their interests through convenient discounts on “safety packages”; they are pleased with concerted efforts to educate the young into “responsibility”. Yet they cultivate a rhetoric of the anti-place or non-place where fun is allowed to slip out of responsibility into alteration of perception. And they would not even soothe this altered state of perception by dimming lights and sounds for one hour.

This form of resistance is conveyed by an old English adage: having the cake and eating it too. Little does it matter that the cake, this interest they defend through a neocapitalist rejection of state interference, should so often prove a deathly poison. As a community of practice, they simply do not have a deonticity except for a “smart” construction of ordinary reality as material profit, even using young people as the reproducers of their discourse: using them to sell underpriced entrance tickets with a convenient percentage gain. But this is personal information, and nowhere does it appear in the corpus though most Italian high schools seem to be involved in the game.

More than opportunistic, this double standard is plainly cynical. The question must be put: what responsibilities are *they* committed to? If the notion of “healthy fun” is repressive, where do they strike the balance between fun, safety and the wellbeing of their clients?

The Italian federation of night club owners (Silb-Fipe) like to represent themselves as no less than crucial to the mission of making Italian holiday resorts more competitive and of rescuing the Italian tourist industry from its current state of suffering. In a 2006 study, they construct discotheques as

an integral part of the tourist’s image of a resort – hence the pivot of the industry:

The night world distinguishes itself for its capacity to sell a product which is consumed by not sleeping (. . .) to do tourism you sell time [. . .] not necessarily sleep, but the giving up on sleep. (*la veglia*)

(www.silb.it/congresso/05; downloaded 26 June 2006).

In the meantime, the trend, called by its English name *binge drinking*, has been setting in, with more alarm being raised by health institutions, more sensational language in the press intensifying the massacre metaphor to its hyperbolic version *strage infinita* (‘endless massacre’, *La Stampa* 16/07/2007) and devising ever more alarming titles (*Pericolo giovane. Allarme alcol fra gli under 18: bevono troppo. E crescono le infezioni di origine sessuale*. ‘Young people at risk. Alcohol alarm under 18: they drink too much. And sexual infections are on the rise’, *La Stampa* 27/02/2008). But, to Silb/Fipe, a new and rather controversy-ridden measure forbidding alcohol consumption in public places after 2am is

una norma così proibizionistica e penalizzante non considerando che si muore sulle strade e non nelle discoteche

(‘such a prohibitionist and stigmatizing measure, which does not consider that people die on the road and not inside discos’)

Source: www.Abruzzo24ore.TV, consulted 20/10/2007

The reader may want to ponder over the choice and the impact of the impersonal *si muore*, which is lost in the English translation *people die*.

As for the stance involved in the specification that people die on the roads and not inside discos, it may well be said that the text does not need any glosses. Rather, a closing question can now be worded: Where do they, and where do we, in the best interests of the young, draw the line between capital gain and the right to fun that will affirm – not crush – life?

Notes

1. The present chapter is a revised and expanded version of a paper presented during the Colloquium on “Current Teenage Alcohol Practices in Italy. Social, Epidemiological and Discourse Implications for Good Practice” (organized and

- coordinated by Giuseppina Cortese as part of the 4th Interdisciplinary Conference on *Communication, Medicine and Ethics*, University of Cardiff, 29 June–1 July 2006), which subsequently appeared in *Words in Action. Diachronic and Synchronic Approaches to English Discourse. Studies in Honour of Ermanno Barisone*, edited by J. Douthwaite and D. Pezzini (Genova, Ecig, 2008).
2. MIUR Cofin – Protocol N. 2005109911_002. MIUR PRIN–Prot. N.2007JCY9Y9_003.
 3. Scollon and Scollon write: “We believe that if we want to address social problems in the world *we need to embed the study of language into a broader study of the common actions of social actors*. This is the crucial moment through which *the flows of power, ideology, and the discourses which carry them percolate*” (2005: 38; my emphasis).
 4. Approved by the Council of Ministers on 19 June 2003, the draft law was widely publicised through a campaign entitled *Accorcia la notte, allunga la vita* (‘Make your nights shorter, make your life longer’).
 5. Cf. especially the 2001 Commission of the European Communities White Paper. *European Transport Policy for 2010: Time to decide* (Brussels COM 370) which set the objective of halving road deaths in Europe by 2010, from 40,000 in the year 2000 to 20,000 in 2010. Cf also *Commission Recommendation* (2001/C 48/02-10) on the maximum permitted blood alcohol content (BAC, usually expressed in grammes of pure alcohol per litre of blood) for drivers and motorised vehicles. The *Discussion Paper on the EU Strategy on Alcohol* remarks that “full enforcement of drink-driving countermeasures in Europe would reduce male traffic deaths by nearly one-quarter and the disability due to alcohol from all causes by some 2–3%”; while protecting European citizens from the harm done by alcohol, *the EU strategy ought to “reflect the cultural complexity of alcohol consumption across Europe”* (my emphasis). Indeed, the BAC threshold in Italy had been set at a more tolerant level than in EU directives.
 6. National Survey June 2003, Poggi e Associati, Sondaggio Nazionale.
 7. The Italian Institute of Statistics, whose Tables for 2000 and 2001 already showed a peak of road accidents on weekend nights.
 8. (www.regione.emilia-romagna.it/urp/segrete/passaggio7/aslrn.htm. Downloaded 20/11/05).
 9. Da circa quattro anni una decina di operatori presidia la notte reggiana [. . .] L’obiettivo è quello di rilanciare il patto tra i giovani e la città. A cominciare dall’ascolto delle loro proposte. (‘For nearly four years now about ten social workers have been watching over night time in the city [. . .] Their aim is to renew and to fine tune the understanding between young people and the city, first of all by paying attention to the suggestions coming from them’) (www.municipio.re.it/Downloaded 20/11/05).
 10. See, e.g., the exchange on [www.aicat.net/lettera-aperta-al dott-andrea-poli.htm](http://www.aicat.net/lettera-aperta-al-dott-andrea-poli.htm). Downloaded 10/06/06.

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Chapter 11

“Old” and “young” in discourses of Polish transformations

Anna Duszak

1. Introduction

Biological age does not occupy a strong position in language studies, considering a relatively modest and selective coverage of its role in communication, whether among individuals or across groups of speakers. Age research indicates a division of labor within linguistics in that some of its sub-fields recognize the relevance of this variable, whereas others ignore it altogether. Thus, age has a strong footage in sociolinguistics and in language acquisition studies, where it has always been an important controller of human abilities for (foreign) language learning. Of late, however, we can observe a growing interest in age-related factors in communication on the part of various domains of linguistic expertise, critical discourse analysis in particular. Such a reorientation is largely due to new developments in linguistics turning it into an interdisciplinary field of social *and* linguistic studies.

The new salience of age follows from a growing age-awareness of modern societies, largely as a result of their rapid aging, and finds its reflection in lively social debates on ageism, age care, prevention of elderly abuse or *political correctness* in handling age-sensitive matters. Globalization has its own share, too, with the ongoing redefinition of social values, human competences (especially electronic literacy), life styles and communication patterns. Today, more clearly than ever before, the ineptitude of the old to function in the new environments leads to their psychological alienation, emotional frustration or unprecedented dependence on the young. In addition, a new valuation of assertiveness increases the disadvantaged position of the old, especially in cultures accustomed to social rules of modesty in formal contexts (cf. Benwell and Stokoe [2006] on commodification of modern discourses, and Fairclough [1995] on technologization). All this deepens, if not seriously aggravates, the “natural” distance between the old and the young. It impacts heavily on the tone of inter-generational dialogue, and raises new

hurdles for how empathy and solidarity can be deployed in communication across generations.

Not surprisingly, therefore, some earlier age-related research has been revived (cf. especially Coupland et al. 1991) and re-contextualized to meet the new demands in terms of content and methodological focus. The early age-sensitive work was profiled on interactional sociolinguistics, and strongly informed by Speech Accommodation Theory, establishing, as a result, links between social psychology and Conversation Analysis. Today the scope of age research spans across many contexts and genres, starting with home talk and ending with interactions in various institutional contexts (especially care-centers, hospitals, universities, etc.). Age helps to chart a new research agenda that includes such diverse topics as translation for various age groups, or communication with the aging immigrants in multicultural environments (see this volume).

At the same time, revisiting age presses for some reformulation of research priorities and tasks. Until recently the dominant analytical profile was on what could be described as therapeutic, ethical or educational concerns deriving from analyses of communication (problems) between the old and the young. From a critical discourse perspective, such studies tended to interpret age differences in terms of asymmetrical power relations, indicating a natural advantage of the young over the old as a result of biological and social weaknesses connected with aging. Such a polarized research profile would lead to obfuscation of biological age differences especially in the midrange bracket of adulthood, where the relative position of age rejects any easy divisions into “winners” and “losers”. Here we are dealing instead with people who are (already or still) socially active, independent, self-sufficient, and capable of contesting the power of others. They are comparable in that they cannot be positioned right away as weaker or stronger on the basis of their biological age only, as is the case with children or the elderly, even though they may actually differ along such parameters as professional expertise, institutional power, financial resources or social networking.

Viewed as a social parameter, age allows us to correlate biology with other human properties in the construction of social identities. Yet contextualizing chronological age also means localizing it within a particular historical, cultural, and social ecology, where its role can be upgraded or downgraded depending on the local systems of values. This includes stance positions on intergenerational continuity and discontinuity, or the relative distance between the past and the present in the life of a given community. Relevant here will be any traumatic historical experiences of the older generation that are not

directly accessible to the young. Today, the spread of globalization technologies may have a divisive character, too. Furthermore, if in a majority of Western cultures the ongoing changes come as evolutionary and harmonious, in many countries in transition they are likely to be revolutionary, disruptive, and socially divisive, broadening, as a result, the generational gap between the young and the old.

Poland is a good illustration of a society that, like many other post-communist countries, has to come to terms with her communist past and, at the same time, with the new challenges of market economies and a new democratic order. The chapter illustrates such age-related tensions on the basis of a recent public debate on *lustration*. It demonstrates how age and age-related arguments are strategically exploited in the media and how they fail or stagger when correlated with elicitation results from a population of informants.

For communication analysts, the growing importance of contextual age has its methodological caveats, too. With its turn to genre and context analyses, age research necessitates the use of discourse analytical tools that would enable its integration into the mainstream of social linguistic analyses. Here, however, age research comes across at least two difficulties. One is inherited from sociolinguistic studies and has to do with the ambivalent status of age as a variable in linguistic analysis. The other derives from the programmatic indifference of text (discourse) models to age distinctions and their attention to "adult" discourse processing. Both concerns are spelt out in some detail in the next section.

The paper supports integrative approaches to language that would combine sociolinguistic and text-linguistic variables and methods. It is argued that age related arguments are worthwhile in particular for an elaboration of an axiological component in a critical model of social discourse analysis.

2. Biological age and the regime of the adult

The actual significance of age for social linguistic analyses still remains fuzzy and often ambivalent. A part of the problem is the poor definability of age. We naturally possess the concept of biological age measured in years as the life-span of an individual. In sociolinguistics, biological age is approached in terms of cohort membership (dates of birth), generating major age brackets for human categorization. Rank ordering of people is used to correlate age data with other parameters of individual variation. Coupland et al. (1991: 7), for instance, distinguish two numerical elderly age-groups, the "young-old"

and the “old–old” (separated by an age boundary in the mid-70s, with “young–old” ranging between 64–76 years and “old–old” with 77 onwards). For most discourse analytical purposes, however, variation in biological age is of less use and, many would argue, of little relevance. As a rule, age details are, firstly, not available for inspection, and secondly, of debatable explanatory power because of poor isolation of age from other properties of language users.

Operationalization of age for researching communication seems, however, to be of high relevance for language studies in general. Some work within sociolinguistics on age provides useful insights and guidelines for further research. In sociolinguistics, biological age was shown to interact with other physical and social characteristics of humans, such as socio-economic class, sex, education, personality traits or generational position (grandmother–mother–daughter). Differences were noted among people of the same age undermining claims made in terms of chronological age only: people may be “younger” or “older” than we can assume from their birth dates. In addition, there are cultural differences in socially acknowledged age rights and obligations, projecting on how people from particular age brackets construct their own social image and how they are positioned by members of other age groups. That is why, rather than speaking of chronological age, we often choose to talk about “contextual age” or “an aggregated index of life-circumstantial and subjective factors” (*pace* Rubin and Rubin, in Coupland et al. 1991: 8).

In text linguistics and discourse pragmatics, on the other hand, age has never been a real issue. In the heyday of early cognitivist thinking, mainstream models of discourse processing worked with a somewhat vaguely a somewhat vaguely defined concept of advanced discourse competence against which general principles of text organization and functioning were formulated as optimal standards of textuality (cf. de Beaugrande and Dressler 1981; van Dijk and Kintsch 1983). In such frameworks, age was “neutralized” or implicit in what was generally understood as the “regime of the adult”. We talked then about *ideal* or *prototypical* users of texts who share the belief that human communication is intersubjective, reciprocal, rational, and cooperative, endorsing in this way what was the legacy of Grice and his followers (e.g., Nystrand 1986; Schiffrin 1994; Verschueren 1999).

New developments in genre analysis sensitized participant models to age, even though only indirectly and selectively. This is what happened in specialist genre studies invoking the concept of “discourse community” (cf. Swales 1990), or in critical discourse analyses focusing on power and

dominance in public communication (cf. Chouliaraki and Fairclough 1999). The new perspectives on social communication endorsed, if not highlighted, the asymmetry among human actors arising from a variety of linguistic and non-linguistic factors. Thus, in genre analysis, communities owning genres were seen as hierarchical structures showing a bifurcation of member categories in terms of *experts* and authorities, on the one hand, and learners (novices, apprentices, laymen), on the other. In order to become an expert one needs the time that is indispensable for the acquisition of field knowledge and discursive skills. In such socio-rhetorical accounts of professional communication, age became a hidden dimension of power. Here, too, the imagery of center and periphery worked towards prioritization of the rights of the "older". Swales (2004), for instance, claims that access to international academic publishing is easier for senior researchers and more difficult for junior scholars. There is contradictory evidence, though, that in some socio-cultural environments the biological age may be less relevant or act in a reverse direction (cf. Duszak and Lewkowicz 2008, on attitudes to and success in English-medium international academic publishing among junior and senior researchers in Poland and Armenia).

We still need to ask how to anchor age in a broadly conceived area of (discourse) pragmatics, at the same time making a point of contact with sociolinguistic advances in age research. What sociolinguists could offer here is their redefinition of chronological age-bracketing in terms of generational divisions and interpretation of generations as culturally distinct groups (cf. Coupland et al. 1991: 6; Giles and Coupland 1991). In turn, from the perspective of discourse pragmatics, intertextuality (or interdiscursivity) could offer a major contribution to our understanding of how meaning is created socially at ideational, interpersonal, and textual levels. Most insightful here are the approaches that adopt a dialogistic perspective on communication, deriving from Bakhtin's (e.g., 1986) conceptions of heteroglossia or polyphony, and attending to voices, viewpoints, and social positionings of actors on topics and stances. Cast in an intergenerational framework of analysis, this approach can naturally accommodate the role of time, agency, and involvement of the actors, as well as their strategies of social alignment or non-alignment as a result of varying historical memories, attitudes, and goals. Most importantly this is also the position that attends centrally to how meanings and values are re-contextualized and socially mediated across generations.

Communication across age groups is an instance of cross-cultural interaction, where what matters is the psychological distance between the interactants and the relative (in)congruence of their world views. Such considerations

become particularly valid when dealing with salient ideological, social, technological or cultural change, as is the case in many modern societies, especially in countries in politico-economic transition. This is what happens in the context of our immediate interest, i.e., under post-communist transformations in Poland. It is argued here that age-determined factors are helpful guidelines for our interpretation of social and political processes. I demonstrate how intergenerational dialogue is implicated in a struggle over power, and how the division into “old” and “young” is exploited in the media for the construction of adversaries in the debate on post-communist *lustration* in Poland.

3. Contextualizing the task

Technically, the year 1989 marked in Poland the turn from communism to the new era of political, economic as well as social and cultural transformations. It heralded the transfer from socialist to free market economy, and the entry of new communication technologies, initiating radical changes in human mentality and all walks of life. It was only natural that the swing of the ideological pendulum should generate discussions about the heritage of the communist system with respect to human actions, involvement, and responsibility for what was or what was not done in the past. Taking issue with the communist past became an important and recurrent theme in various social debates, over time assuming different forms and profiles, ranging from radical to conciliatory attitudes, from vengeance to tolerance, from a central to a marginal place on the socio-political agenda. Yet the entry of Western values and new opportunities was socially divisive, too. By and large, post-communist transformations brought a revolutionary change in the social consciousness of Poles, exerting their imprint on the character and the tone of intergenerational dialogue.

Age assumed a new value in positioning people as victims or beneficiaries of the regime, and, at the same time, as losers or winners of the new economic order. The older generation had to come to terms with its own past. Yet it also had to learn how to re-contextualize, mediate, and legitimate it in the eyes of the young. The younger, on the other hand, had to learn how to make sense of such narratives and how to reconcile their parents' and grandparents' stories with their own preoccupation with the present and the future.

Since 1989, social attitudes to the communist era have been fluctuating. The first *Solidarity* Prime Minister, Tadeusz Mazowiecki, became known for

his conciliatory position, his call for the unity of all Poles, for social reconciliation and joint efforts for the future. He is still remembered saying that we need to draw a "thick line" between the past and the present. Yet over the years, *lustration* was never a dead topic, ebbing up and down on the waves of ideological priorities of the parties in office. The debate gained a new and vibrant impetus with the entry into office in 2005 of a rightist party (*Law and Justice*) led by the Kaczyński brothers. The twins, the Prime Minister and the President, made "remuneration" for the communist past into their political priority, vehemently defending the need to cleanse Poland of her communist heritage, and to remove from public life all the people of the old regime. A strict bill on lustration was passed on October 18, 2006. The bill obliged a wide spectrum of professionally active Poles, including journalists and academic staff, to submit declarations of collaboration (non-collaboration) with the communist regime under the sanctions of losing employment and the right to carry out their profession. The sanctions applied to incriminated activities in a wide time bracket between July 22nd of 1944 and August 31st of 1990. Amidst a growing social outcry about the legal quality of the document, the Supreme Court questioned some of its formulations. Amendments followed, and the bill is being applied now to a much narrower group of people. This revision coincided with a change of political party, with the *Law and Order* party being voted out of office in fall 2007, and replaced by a more liberal coalition headed by *Civic Platform*.

The bill established a formal age group applying to people born before August 31st 1972. It created a population of "suspects" that was heterogeneous enough in terms of biological age not to reveal differences in historical memory, capacity for agency, and political involvement in the past, or current concerns for job safety. If most of the older people had personal knowledge of World War II and/or post-war communist realities, the younger had no such memories except for what was made available to them by their parents, grandparents or teachers. Therefore concerns of the various age groups under lustration obligation could be similar, but also varying, if not conflicting. If the older might care first of all to defend their reputation, the younger were likely to focus on how the procedure could impact their professional stability and career prospects. The very decision of compliance or non-compliance with the lustration duty could be interpreted differently depending on the age of the person. The older denouncing the bill could be easily accused of trying to cover up something, especially as the "old-old" could afford a nonchalant attitude to vetting in the face of nearing retirement. The main target became the generation of the "young-old", people in their fifties and sixties, who had

most to lose in terms of job security and general stability in life. From the social perspective, the letter of the bill made age a meaningful point of reference, triggering new mechanisms for inter- and intra-generational alignment and nonalignment, and exposing coherence as well as conflicts of interests among social actors.

4. Polarization of age in media discourses on lustration

Discourses on lustration cannot be separated from the whole universe of the national discourses of which they are an inalienable part. As aptly noticed by Woleński (2007), lustration serves as “a mirror” reflecting the condition of the nation with its past traumas and present concerns. In this sense, lustration discourses are located in the context of similar debates in other countries contemplating the past and the present (cf. Anthonissen and Blommaert 2006; Gruber and Menz 2004; cf. also Ietcu 2006). But they also reproduce and co-construct a specific history of a specific community. Furthermore, no matter how strongly marked by age, they cannot be reduced to a form of intergenerational communication. Nor can they be approached through a simple polarization of the agents into old and young, “good” and “bad”, guilty or not guilty.

The polyphony of lustration discourses resounded in many ways, with the topic being re-contextualized for various actors, goals, and ideologies. In the public domain there were official statements, press articles, television and radio debates, documentaries, books, and even a feature film. It was common to individuate the issue and present it as a procedure affecting concrete people and involving concrete actions. Lists of apparent collaborators with the secrete police or foreign intelligence were made public in the press and on Internet, stirring mixed reception among the public. Accusations were often made under the presumption of guilt rather than on the basis of solid evidence, raising discussions of the legal and moral aspects of the procedure, and questioning the competences and motifs of the accusers. Often reason was mingled with emotionality, with accusations resembling insinuations driven by vengeance or lust for popularity. There were media appearances and emotional displays of guilt, shame, and offence, with people confessing their collaboration, fending off the accusations, or going to court to defend their reputation. There were voices of indignation, as well as compassion and empathy, calls for retribution as well as restraint and forgiveness. For some the social gravity of the whole procedure was damaged by what looked like

a sensational search for scapegoats, often confusing predators with victims, especially when the attacks were targeted at the authorities, whether alive or dead, including many icons of the *Solidarity* anti-communist movement. Concerns were raised as to whether such attacks were necessary, ethical or justified at all. That is why, despite a general endorsement of lustration among a wide segment of society, people were divided as to what standards could legitimate the procedure and, above all, how it should be enacted in practice. Not surprisingly, therefore, in mid 2007 there were signs of lustration fatigue. They came after a period of invigorated interest in lustration in 2006, following a rise in social acceptance for the procedure. According to public opinion polls (according to *Polityka* July 8, 2006: 25), in 2002, some 31 percent of Poles were against lustration, while in 2005 their number dropped to 20 percent, which many commentators interpreted as a big success of pro-lustration thinking represented first of all by members of the *Law and Order* party.

In this chapter, I present some findings from my analysis of lustration coverage in the Polish media with special focus on the most "fertile" and dramatic periods in 2006 and 2007, when the legal status of the bill came under fire and the social debate reached its peak. There were plenty references to age in how the public debate was run, reproduced in the media, and enhanced by the coverage that was given. Normally age was used for drawing a line between the "young" and the "old". On closer reading, this polarization was linked to an attribution of views, with the old implicated as opponents, or at best skeptics of lustration, and the young as its advocates. It is significant, though, that the press headlines that I was able to collect used reference to the young only. In part this may be due to political correctness dissuading journalists from the use of the word "old" in general, and in this socially sensitive context in particular.

The two headlines below illustrate this mediatized power of young age, with the "young" topicalized and, in terms of transitivity choices, presented as Agents:

- (1) "Młodzi lustrują" (*Gazeta Wyborcza*, Aug. 5–6, 2006)
[‘The young are lustrating’]
- (2) "Młodzi chcą galopować" (*Polityka*, Jan. 27, 2007)
[‘The young want to gallop’]

In contrast, the "old" in both texts, and in many other materials of this kind, are positioned in the capacity of a Goal, a Patient or the entity acted

upon. Often the young are empowered implicitly, with a focus being placed on their stance or recommendation, as in (3) below:

- (3) “*Profesor agent nie powinien tracić pracy*” (*Gazeta Wyborcza*, April 21–22, 2007.)
[‘Professor–collaborator should not lose his job’]

In this particular text, the young are presented as those who can “absolve” the old of their “sins”. The text summarizes opinions of students from major educational institutions in Poland, inquiring into whether – according to the young – teachers guilty of collaboration with the communist regime should be deprived of their jobs. The opinions vary, as do their justifications, yet most students speak for a pragmatic solution, and argue that, considering the shortage of highly qualified university staff, the best specialists should stay despite their involvement with the communist regime. Some opinions border on cynicism with the implication that nothing will happen anyway as the old have enough power to stay safely where they are.

The reading of the headlines is also meaningful in that they leak information not only about the author’s stance on lustration but also about his (her) generational status. Clearly, the third person references in (1) and (2) above are made from the position of the old(er) *other* who attributes to the young particular doings and intentions. Such a strategy of exclusion normally goes with a valuation of the young person’s performance and motivation. A negative assessment is a rule rather than exception, even though only some populations of the young may be targeted. An example is given in (4) below, where the headline and the lead refer to young officials at the *Institute for National Remembrance*:

- (4) “*Doktor filister*” (*Polityka*, June 24, 2006: 36)
[‘Doctor philistine’]

The article constructs an image of a young doctor with weak academic credentials but strong ambitions for a public (political) career. Put in the position of power, the young are doing their best to use the ‘lethal weapon’ (*śmiercionośne narzędzie*) that was made available to them with access to the archives of the security police of the Polish People’s Republic. The picture that accompanies the text adds to this flippant “conspiracy” of the young, showing three militant activists over pitchers of beer.

In contrast to (1) and (2), where the young are nominated by the *other* as actors, the headline in (5) reverts the perspective, resorting instead to a solidarity pronoun *we* and introducing an overt voice of the older generation.

(5) "*Zapraszamy na lincz*" (*Polityka*, July 8, 2006)

The headline says 'We invite to lynching', or 'Welcome to a lynch'. The general message of the article is not to counteract lustration but to indicate its various aspects, including the controversies of a legal-formal nature brought up by many sceptics but not necessarily the opponents of the procedure. Among the objections raised was, for instance, a poor definition of many legal categories, such as OZI ('personal source of information'), basic for a proper establishment of human agency, responsibility and guilt. The tone of the whole text is rather moralizing, somewhat typical of an older intellectual and political dinosaur preaching about values and standards that he considers socially valid and relevant, no matter how controversial they may sound to others. For many Poles the style of lustration did have features of a witch hunt driven by vengeance, "folk justice" with little attention being paid to common sense, fairness or social and political consequences.

Many headlines invite a dialogic cross-reading, deliberately or accidentally creating a polarization of views in the national debate on lustration. The titles and the contents of the various press texts suggest a simplified division into lustration proponents and opponents, and point to its age-based rationalization, positioning the young in the pro-lustration camp and the old among lustration sceptics. On closer look, however, such a polarized conception crumbles with the emergence of an additional factor, and namely that of the change of elites. In this view attitudes to lustration may still depend on age but they also invoke more complex processes of an intergenerational struggle for power. Reference to the change of elites was also made in explaining differences of opinions between entire institutions, including press titles, for instance (more conservative) *Dziennik* and (more liberal) *Gazeta Wyborcza* (cf. Romanowski 2007).

With elites being brought into the picture, lustration encourages analogies with intergenerational debates or outright conflicts at other times and in other places. Such comparisons have been attempted with what was happening in the 1960s in Western Europe, or even in Poland and Czechoslovakia. Then the post-war boom generation tried to discredit the old for their involvement in the war, contesting their rights to stay in power and at the same time searching for their own place in the society (e.g., Toeplitz, *Przegląd*, May 6, 2007;

Bachman, *Gazeta Wyborcza*, May 8, 2007; cf. *Polityka*, April 24, 2004). As always, however, such coincidences should not obscure the local perspective on what is happening. Polish lustration today has its unique format, too. Quite importantly, and somewhat paradoxically perhaps, lustration cannot be seen as simply a way of getting even with communism. It has often been used as a weapon against those who helped to dismantle communism and who made the new democratic changes possible. "Cleansing" procedures were introduced by or on behalf of the generation that does not remember communism. Some argue, though, (e.g., Reykowski *Polityka*, July 8, 2006) that lustration enthusiasts include people of the older age bracket who were failures in the communist or early post-communist times, and who now want to get even with their more enterprising and successful compatriots. In this way, the elite argument behind lustration may validate age-based polarization of the society, pointing towards the young as proponents of the procedure and stigmatizing the old as its sceptics or outright opponents. On the other hand, however, it gets complicated with the admission of such opinions as above on internal divisions within the older generation of Poles.

More importantly, the elite argument acquired a new meaning with the Kaczyński brothers' dismissive attitude to elites and intelligentsia in general. For many Poles, the intelligentsia, as the educated and opinion-forming elite, has been emblematic of Poland's struggle for survival and national integrity, notably during the Nazi occupation and under the post-war communist regime. Technically, members of this category, the Kaczyński twins have, however, slowly steered their party towards anti-intelligentsia positions, which became evident especially after a life-saving coalition of *Law and Justice* with two small populist parties, a peasant and a nationalist. Two derogatory terms, *wykształciuchy* ('pseudo-educated', 'educatese') or *lże-elity* ('eLIetes', translation according to Agnieszka Szarkowska, personal communication) became symbols of the government's anti-elitist stand, and made a career in the media and in common parlance as well. For lustration, the two words did their own job in stigmatizing the elites as the forces obstructing social consent to the vetting procedure. Linking criticisms of lustration to elites was not unfounded, as many critical words on the quality of the vetting bill came from academics and journalists who exposed the instrumental and selective character of the procedure and its exploitation for fighting political opponents. University senates and departmental committees endorsed documents enumerating drawbacks in lustration procedure and expressing concern with the situation in the country. Under mounting social pressure, talks started between the president and the academic community. An immediate impulse

came after the president first met academics supporting lustration and said that every true Polish intellectual is for lustration (*Jak ktoś w Polsce jest inteligentem, to jest za lustracją* ['In Poland if you belong to the intelligentsia, you are for lustration']). Two weeks later, speaking at University of Warsaw, he opted out of his earlier restrictive evaluation and addressed the audience as "rectors of top Polish universities" and not as lustration sceptics. At the same time, however, he also confirmed that he himself "was" and still "is" for lustration as the only way to reveal "the truth".

From the very beginning the moral argument dominated in the official rhetoric of the President and the Prime Minister, and turned into a leading legitimization strategy for lustration proponents. In this view, the main purpose of lustration was to expose the truth, to do social justice, restore moral order and fairness in social life. The weight of such moralizing was significant in a country where national solidarity, the protection of national integrity and contempt for collaboration with the nation's enemies has always been a highly cherished value (cf. Wierzbicka 1983 on the Polish key genre of *donos*, 'denunciation'; cf. however, its modern vulgarization in public jargon, Duszak 2006). Yet the official ideology of moralization was increasingly linked to other features in the rhetoric of the ruling *Law and Justice* party, and above all to the pervading tone of suspicion and insinuation, almost obsessive search for signs of corruption and conspiracy. For many Poles, this resembled *hate speech* combining vagueness with intimidation. The tenor of such talk is illustrated with an excerpt from a speech by the President at the meeting with Polish intellectuals at University of Warsaw on April 20, 2007 (quoted from *Gazeta Wyborcza* April 21–22, 2007; my translation):

... proces lustracji ma na celu osiągnięcie pewnych zadań w wymiarze przede wszystkim moralnym.

Osoby, które mają w życiu tego rodzaju praktykę czy chociażby incydent, mogą być przedmiotem łatwych działań ze strony tych, dla których Polska jest przeciwnikiem.

W Polsce są określone siły polityczne, które uważają, że fakt, czy ktoś był tajnym współpracownikiem Służby Bezpieczeństwa, wywiadu, kontrwywiadu, jest moralnie obojętny. Jeżeli tak się okaże, to władza publiczna w demokratycznym państwie jest bezradna. Ale nie wiem, czy tak się okaże.

'the goal of lustration is to attain some tasks first of all of a moral character.'

'The people who had in their lives such an act [of collaboration], or only an incident, may become easy targets for those for whom Poland is an enemy.'

‘In Poland there are some political forces that believe that the very fact that someone was a secret collaborator of the Secret Police, intelligence or counterintelligence is morally indifferent. If this turns out to be the case, the civic power in a democratic country is helpless. But I do not know whether this will be the case.’

Through its persistence and salience, this rhetoric explains why the Kaczyński style of public communication was ultimately interpreted as socially divisive, harmful and ineffective. Compare the following:

Sukcesem obecnych rządów jest wprowadzenie pomiędzy ludzi klimatu podejrzliwości, złośliwości, a także powątpiewania w uczciwość i szczerłość innych. [. . .] Czemu to wszystko służy? Oczywiście zakwestionowaniu wszystkich możliwych autorytetów, żywych i martwych, na które orientować by się mogło społeczeństwo w burzliwej erze kontrrewolucji.

‘This government managed to introduce among the people the atmosphere of suspiciousness, malice, and doubt in honesty and sincerity of others. [. . .] What is the purpose of all that? It is indeed to question all possible authorities, whether dead or alive, that could serve as a benchmark for the society in a stormy era of counter-revolution.’ (K. T. Toeplitz, ‘*Zepsucie obyczajów*’, ‘Degeneration of customs’, *Przegląd*, May 6, 2007; my translation)

On the whole public discourses on lustration are often marked by emotionality and involvement. At the same time, from the perspective of their dominant *value* and *orientation* characteristics (cf. Martin and White 2005), they rely on strategies of objectivization and high value modality, implying assertiveness of speakers in terms of what is right and what is wrong, what is the case and what is not the case, or what must be done. Compare some expressions from the excerpts used in the empirical project discussed in the following section:

- (6) The older *are* too entangled in those times. . . . First of all you *must not* have a personal attitude to the issue. This is the attitude that the old *adopt* . . . For lustration new people *are needed*, young and free from corruption coming with birth date . . .
- (7) A young man who did not live as an adult in Peoples’ Poland *is not in the position* to really understand what somebody is trying to explain to him . . . You *may not* judge others if you did not live in those times.
- (8) The lustration offensive *is* first of all an attack on elites.

There is no space here to elaborate on the language of the Fourth Republic – as Poland under the rule of the Kaczyński twins became to be known at least on the domestic front. It should be noted though that this style of public communication has been accused of introducing a new form of *newspeak*, by analogy to the communist political jargon (Głowiński 1990), constructing reality rather than reflecting it, privileging axiology over semantics, and operating with techniques of persuasion and manipulation.

5. Repositioning age for social analyses

We often assume that the media mirror the collective state of the mind of the society. This propensity of public communications in general may not invalidate inquiries into how representative the most mediatized opinions really are, or how legitimate it is to posit at their basis a particular structure of a given social debate. Such questions also apply to the three positions on lustration presented above. What could make such general attributions relative, and how, considering an otherwise natural dynamics and diversification of human stands on socially valid topics? Discourse analytical work needs complementation through ethnomethodological research including data elicitation, interviews, and questionnaires. This task would need to cover at least the following major areas of inquiry. Firstly, the comprehension of what is said in the media on the topic of immediate interest. Secondly, the valuation of the positions voiced or attributed to the main social actors, such as politicians, intellectuals, or leading journalists. And, thirdly, the appraisal of how such interpretations and valuations are located in a broader semiotic landscape of discursive dialogism. The last query calls for anchoring lustration talk in a broader context of inter-discursive communication, and seeking answers to how people understand the communist past in general (e.g., how they judge the removal of all signs of the epoch such as monuments, names of streets, or how they approach the commercial use of communist symbols in the market). The rest of the chapter reports on selected findings from a project whose purpose was to examine social attitudes to lustration and the communist past against such an inter-semiotic and integrated frame of analysis.

The survey was administered on an anonymous basis to 206 participants of varying age groups ranging between 20 and 65, and ranked into six age brackets. For the purposes of this paper the groups were coalesced into two major categories of 20–34 and 35–65 (A1 and A2 respectively), drawing a technical distinction between those who were not eligible for the procedure

and those who stood under the obligation of lustration. In this way two categories of people were created, the “young” and the “old”, making up respectively 62 percent of the total (with 128 subjects) and 21.8 percent (with 45 respondents). The test was carried out using a questionnaire method with closed and open questions based on excerpts from the press and some visual data (photographs of billboards). Below I shall summarize responses to Task One. Here the people were asked to read three texts, translated by me in (9–11) below, and choose the one that they endorse as the best representation of their own understanding of what lustration is all about. The texts, slightly edited fragments from press articles, present the three positions discussed above as emblematic of the national debate on lustration. The first text delegates the rights of vetting to the young, in this way also disempowering the old. The second reverses the position, empowering the old and denying the rights of the young. Finally, the third backgrounds age, relocating attention to the war of elites as an undercover force for the processes at hand:

- (9) The older are too entangled in those times. This obstructs the clarity of vision. First of all you must not have a personal attitude on the issue. This is the attitude that the old adopt as they remember that system and those rather nasty times. The old get emotional, analyze, and contemplate. The young do not have to do this because it does not concern them. The older recall their memories. The younger have no memories. Everybody knows that life in the PPR [Polish Peoples’ Republic] was complex. But the privilege of being born late makes it easier to judge things. For lustration new people are needed, young and free from corruption coming with birth date. [Paweł Smoleński, “Młodzi lustrują” [‘The young are lustrating’], *Gazeta Wyborcza*, August 5–6, 2006]

[Starsi są w tamte czasy zbyt zaplątani. To zaburza jasność widzenia. Przede wszystkim nie wolno mieć do sprawy osobistego stosunku. Taki stosunek mają ludzie starsi, którzy pamiętają tamten system i tamte, paskudne raczej, czasy. Ci starsi wczuwają się, zastanawiają, deliberują. Młodzi nie muszą, bo ich to nie dotyczy. Starsi przywołują wspomnienia. Młodzi wspomnień nie mają. Każdy wie, że PRL-owskie życiorysy były niejednoznaczne. Lecz przywilej późnego urodzenia pozwala łatwiej stawiać oceny. Do lustrowania trzeba ludzi nowych, wolnych od skorumpowania wynikającego z daty urodzenia.]

- (10) A young man who did not live as an adult in Peoples’ Poland is not in the position to really understand what somebody is trying to explain to him – for instance, that you had to talk to secret service officers in order to be able to live and act. From the point of view of the young generation, when we say that

PRL was bad, a question is asked: why did you take part in it to start with? You may not judge others if you did not live in those times. And the young are attacking. A new generation has come and claims power. [Interview with Jacek Kurczewski, "Młodzi chcą galopować", 'The young want to gallop', *Polityka*, January 27, 2007]

[*Młody człowiek, który nie żył w Polsce Ludowej jako dorosły, nie jest w stanie autentycznie zrozumieć, co ktoś usiłuje mu wytłumaczyć – że na przykład trzeba było rozmawiać ze służbą bezpieczeństwa, by w ogóle żyć i działać. Z punktu widzenia młodego pokolenia, jeśli mówimy, że PRL był zły, pojawia się pytanie – to dlaczego w ogóle braliście w tym udział? Nie można teraz ferować wyroków, jeżeli nie żyło się w tamtych czasach. A młodzi atakują. Przyszło nowe pokolenie, które chce uzyskać władzę.*]

- (11) We can observe that a special eagerness in tracing and condemning collaborators characterizes those individuals and groups who until now felt more or less marginalized by elites (or *eLIETes* as they are called today). The lustration offensive is first of all an attack on elites. The postulate for an easy access to portfolios, the tolerance for wild lustration can turn into an effective political instrument serving first of all those who because of their age or inactivity in PPR were not in the sphere of interest of the secret service. And that is why today they may openly demand "truth" and "justice". [Janusz Reykowski, "Zapraszamy na lincz", 'We invite for a lynch', *Polityka*, July 8, 2006]

[Można zaobserwować, że szczególną gorliwość w szukaniu i potępianiu agentów okazują osoby i środowiska, które dotychczas czuły się w mniejszym lub większym stopniu marginalizowane przez elity (obecnie określane jako łąe-elity). Ofensywa lustracyjna jest przede wszystkim atakiem na elity. Postulat łatwego dostępu do teczek, pobłażliwość dla dzikiej lustracji to potencjalnie skuteczny instrument polityczny służący najlepiej tym, którzy z racji wieku lub bezczynności w okresie PRL nie byli przedmiotem zainteresowania tajnych służb. I dlatego z podniesioną przyłbicą mogą domagać się 'prawdy' i 'sprawiedliwości'.]

The results of the questionnaire indicate quite clearly that a majority of the subjects opted for the position articulated in the second text (10), thus empowering the old and entrusting them with the right for a stronger voice on lustration. This stance was ranked first in both age categories, the "young" (A1) and the "old" (A2):

A1:

- (9) 29 respondents (14.1 percent of all respondents and 22.7 percent of this age group)

(10) **49 respondents (23.8 percent of all respondents and 38.3 percent of this age group)**

(11) 42 respondents (20.4 percent of all respondents and 32.8 percent of this age group)

A2:

(9) 8 respondents (3.9 percent of all respondents and 17.8 percent of this age group)

(10) **20 respondents (9.7 percent of all respondents and 44.4 percent of this age group)**

(11) 311 respondents (5.3 percent of all respondents and 24.4 percent of this age group)

A few respondents marked more than one option, which, however, did not change the original distribution of judgment:

A1:

(9) 31 answers (15.0 percent of all respondents and 24.2 percent of this age group)

(10) **51 answers (24.8 percent of all respondents and 39.8 percent of this age group)**

(11) 42 answers (20.4 percent of all respondents and 32.8 percent of this age group)

A2:

(9) 8 answers (3.9 percent of all respondents and 17.8 percent of this age group)

(10) **20 answers (9.7 percent of all respondents and 44.4 percent of this age group)**

(11) 11 answers (5.3 percent of all respondents and 24.4 percent of this age group)

The results demonstrate that people are not necessarily inclined to hold “the power over lustration” within their own age group, so that the dilemma “to lustrate, or not to lustrate” cannot be directly linked to the respondent’s assessment of his (her) own situation: whether one is or is not directly affected by the sanctions pending. In both age groups the ratio of responses privileging the second argument is comparable and salient if compared to other options. To me this indicates that the older generation does not insist on defending its age rights for speaking up on the issue, and that it does not exclude the younger from having a say in the matter. On the other hand, it is even more significant that the younger group should be ready to acknowledge the primary rights of their parents and grandparents, and to delegate to them the responsibility for how lustration is to be carried out. While anticipating a diversity of positions, further research questions were formulated: how do the members of each group legitimate lustration on social grounds, and how

do they evaluate its relevance from their individual point of view? Elicitation tasks addressing both issues were administered as a follow-up to the read-and-choose task.

The purpose of Task Two was to check how people legitimize lustration from the perspective of its role, significance, and consequences for the society. Three major arguments were selected as expressing the dominant social positions in the ongoing public debate. These are given in (12–14) below. The subjects were asked to select not more than two of the options:

- (12) Lustration will make it possible to restore moral order in the country, truth and justice.
[*Lustracja pozwoli przywrócić w kraju ład moralny, prawdę i sprawiedliwość.*]
- (13) Lustration will contribute to a worsening of the social climate.
[*Lustracja przyczyni się do pogorszenia klimatu społecznego.*]
- (14) Lustration slows down thinking/action oriented towards the future.
[*Lustracja hamuje myślenie/działanie nastawione na przyszłość.*]

The three positions were interpreted as validity claims based on ethical (moral), social, and pragmatic values, respectively. The first argument elevates the validity of justice and truth in any social debate about lustration; the second ranks social solidarity and integrity higher than the benefits of lustration; and the third prioritizes pragmatic behavior, attaching more importance to action and future-oriented performance than to contemplation of the past. If the ethical argument could be interpreted as an imperative for action in the name of higher values, then the remaining two are more ambivalent in that they are likely to endorse the procedure under some conditions only, if not to question its sense altogether in the face of more important social goals. Invoking social and pragmatic aspects of lustration might therefore be seen as a sign of caution in how the relative advantages and disadvantages of vetting could be estimated relative to a general balance of the gains and losses it incurs in the life of a community.

Each of the three arguments has its own historical background and current embedding in the social context. As already suggested, the ethical argument for lustration is highly valued in particular for its historical relevance. It is commonly believed that Poles are past-oriented and strongly attached to their national tradition, much of which connotes the ethos of national loyalty and struggle for independence and freedom from totalitarian regimes. History

justifies, then, a high premium given to ethical conduct in the name of national survival and integrity. It is such morality slogans that flagged the political bandwagon of the ruling party, *Law and Justice*, and turned into a leading weapon in the war over lustration. On the other hand, many younger Poles today seem to reject this patriotic morality to the advantage of more pragmatic and cosmopolitan thinking. The new ideologies of a united Europe and global economy may actually weaken the edge of the ethical argument for lustration.

What counts as “social argument” here invites a special interest because of the ongoing public debate on the social condition of the Polish nation. Many Polish sociologists and social psychologists describe Poland as a nation without a society, a modular culture of individuals and families separated by a social vacuum (e.g., Czapiński 2007; Wojciszke 2008). This non-civic behavior of Poles has been researched throughout the post-communist transformations, also in comparison to data from other countries, leading up to a claim that Polish society is characterized by poor social confidence, weak civic activity and low social awareness in general. This diagnosis has been highlighted in the media as part of a national discussion about the general condition of Polish society in transition. Adding a linguistic perspective to the picture, we might wonder whether this non-cooperative disposition of Poles is related in any way to the typical Polish style of communication (cf. Wierzbicka 1985). Poland is as a culture of disagreement, thriving on involvement as a way of achieving social solidarity, but also using it in ways that antagonize people. Such tendencies affect communication in public contexts especially where more interaction skills are required in order to overcome difference of opinion or establish rapport. Today, many would argue, the new Polish democracy is interpreted too individualistically as giving an uninhibited right to speak one’s mind and fight for it. The typical Polish style of communication is stereotyped as a poor instrument for negotiation, compromise or debating, which could make networking for social causes more difficult.

Task Two was administered, then, not without some anticipation about the preferred distribution of answers. In other words we might hypothesize that the moral argument (12) should be of particular value for the older group, whereas the pragmatic justification for lustration (14) could be especially appealing to the younger population of respondents. The position of the social argument (13) was more difficult to predict in terms of age preferences in the light of such sweeping opinions as signalled above. The distribution of the replies obtained is presented below:

A1:

- (12) 17 respondents (8.3 percent of all respondents and 13.3 percent of this age group)
- (13) 43 respondents (20.9 percent of all respondents and 33.6 percent of this age group)**
- (14) 24 respondents (11.7 percent of all respondents and 18.8 percent of this age group)

A2:

- (12) 14 respondents (6.8 percent of all respondents and 31.1 percent of this age group)**
- (13) 10 respondents (4.9 percent of all respondents and 22.2 percent of this age group)
- (14) 9 respondents (4.4 percent of all respondents and 20 percent of this age group)

As anticipated, the older group opted for answer two (12), upgrading the moral (ethical) argument in lustration. In turn, the younger group valued the social argument most (13), which can be seen as counter-claim for the apparently non-civic disposition of Poles, or, alternatively, as a sign of an ongoing change in the attitudes of the younger Poles to social collaboration and civic involvement. The results show less across-age consistency in comparison to what was observed for Task One.

Some people marked two possibilities, which, however, did not change the general distribution of preferences:

A1:

- (12) 24 answers 24 (11.7 percent of all respondents and 18.8 percent of this age group)
- (13) 77 answers (37.4 percent of all respondents and 60.2 percent of this age group)**
- (14) 29 answers (17.1 percent of all respondents and 22.7 percent of this age group)

A2:

- (12) 17 answers (8.3 percent of all respondents and 37.8 percent of this age group)**
- (13) 16 answers (7.8 percent of all respondents and 35.6 percent of this age group)
- (14) 15 answers (7.3 percent of all respondents and 33.3 percent of this age group)

The purpose of Task Three was to revert the evaluation perspective on lustration from social on to individual. Each respondent was asked to select one answer only, and say how important it was for him (her) that the country would “square up with the communist past”:

- (15) Very important
[bardzo ważne]
- (16) Relatively important
[średnio ważne]
- (17) Not important at all
[zupełnie nie ważne]

TASK 3

A1:

- (15) 15 answers (7.3 percent of all respondents and 11.7 percent of this age group)
- (16) 71 answers (34.5 percent of all respondents and 55.5 percent of this age group)**
- (17) 34 answers (16.5 percent of all respondents and 26.6 percent of this age group)

A2:

- (15) 8 answers (3.9 percent of all respondents and 17.8 percent of this age group)
- (16) 18 answers (8.7 percent of all respondents and 40 percent of this age group)**
- (17) 16 answers (7.8 percent of all respondents and 35.6 percent of this age group)

The results show a general consensus across the two age groups in that the second choice (16) was preferred, suggesting that people on the whole may have less interest in the procedure and its effective application than might follow from a high mediatization of the issue and the ways in which it was used in political squabbling. Somewhat naturally, though, more of the “young” declared limited concern with lustration in comparison to the “old”, who, being directly affected, showed relatively more involvement.

6. Conclusion

There are many reasons why age awareness should be growing in modern societies. Some of them were suggested above. Likewise, age-related aspects of communication make themselves increasingly manifest in many orders of discourse, and in public communications in particular. In this chapter, and throughout this volume, age has been presented as a dynamic social variable. My own focus was on contextual age in its social capacity to characterize groups, generations, and entire cultures in terms of value continuity, change

or subversion. In this sense age is an important component of human social identities, constructed and revised in discourse, where it significantly contributes to the definition of in-group and out-group membership, co-creating the social sense of solidarity, distance or segregation.

For social and discursive analyses age is of interest for its high interactivity with other properties of humans and of contexts. Yet, as pointed out in this chapter, the relative salience of age may vary in the lives of individuals, groups, and entire generations. This chapter attended to circumstances marked by a high relevance of the age factor, situating it in a specific social, historical, and discursive environment. The relative power of age was illustrated with the example of recent socio-political transformations in Poland, with specific reference to *lustration* as a way of squaring up with the communist past and of dealing with its present heritage. Various age-implicating factors have been shown to bear on the social perceptions of national integrity, continuity, and change of values, as well as on the nature of public intergenerational dialogue. It was argued that in critical periods, for which the Polish transformations are an example, cognitive, psychological, and emotional distance between people may lead to major dissonances in how social values are articulated, defended, and disseminated, and that age-related arguments may be genuine or artificially constructed to serve various ideological tasks of dominant social actors.

In contrast to mainstream research on age, attending first of all to "marginalized" social groups, such as children, adolescents or the elderly, the task of this chapter was to explore the social "core" of this category, focusing on people whose "age maturity" makes them in part at least comparable, as well as competitive. Here, however, age, whether biological or contextual, is more "hidden" through its interaction with other dimensions, such as experience, health, professional expertise, institutional power, financial resources, mobility or social networking. The *change of elites* is sometimes used to refer to such an intergenerational tug-of-war. The chapter demonstrates that such processes may coincide with independent pressures of social and political change, complicating the social readings of the actual role of age in generational change and intergenerational dialogue.

Following social constructivists and critical discourse analysts, I have adopted the position that the essential function of language (discourse) is to project the world, as well as to create it:

Viewing language use as social practice implies, first, that it is a mode of action (. . .) and, secondly, that it is always a socially and historically situated mode of action, in

a dialectical relationship with other facets of ‘the social’ (its ‘social context’) – it is socially shaped, but it is also socially shaping, or *constitutive*. (Fairclough 1995: 131; emphasis in the original)

Many would agree that public communication enhances such capacities of discourse, and that the media perform the role of “barometers” of social and cultural change. We might assume that this power of the media could be even more consequential in times of social crises, for which the Polish dispute over lustration could serve as an example. Yet “the proof of the pudding is in the eating”. The question is whether we can establish which “ingredients” make the real texture of the social fabric and which decide on the ultimate “flavour” of social communication. Under the tenet of discursive heteroglossia, media talk cannot be segregated from other “orders of discourse” (according to Fairclough). Discourses are osmotic so that we need to talk about flows of meanings and a permanent recontextualization of senses, attitudes, and styles through linguistic (inter-semiotic) mediation. That is why an integrative approach, powered by heterogeneous theoretical and methodological insights, might provide a better tool for sifting through what is likely to “stay” and what may drop out of what sense people ultimately make of the topics and the rhetoric used in the media. As this chapter tried to show, a sociolinguistic (variationist) approach can complement, if not “control”, what follows from the critical analyses of texts (see also Bastow 2010). In our case, the media coverage of lustration could be said to be sharpening the political and the social edge of the debate, polarizing society, and recontextualizing age for deepening social divisions (cf. Cortese, this volume, for the ambivalent role of the Italian press in alerting society to alcohol problems among the young). Relating press readings to questionnaire elicitation data we were able to demonstrate that the temperature of the debate may have been lower than advertised, and that its ideological orchestration “at the political top” may have met with modest feedback among the public.

In contrast to the divisive image of the lustration debate in the media, the results of the questionnaire point towards moderation in its assessment by the respondents approached. The answer to Question One, inquiring into the preferred agency for the procedure, indicates that there may be less intergenerational tension than could be presupposed on the basis of political and media coverage of the topic. The young are apparently willing to empower the older to have more say in this matter. Still, more data, such as extended interviews, are needed to interpret the outcome of this query. What does it actually mean that many of the young are ready to delegate the power over lustration to the

old? Is this a sign of solidarity with or respect for their grandparents and parents, an indication of rationality in refusing to deal with things they have vague knowledge of, or perhaps a desire to evade responsibility? In turn, the responses to Question Two, point to some dissonance between both groups in how the social consequences of the procedure should be estimated. If the older tend to prefer the ethical rationale for lustration, the younger seem to weigh the social argument most: the integrity of the present society. Still, a question may arise as to whether we are talking here about a real difference of opinion, or rather about various interpretations of what is a civic attitude to socially divisive issues, or what is in the best interest of the society. Finally, the replies to Question Three, inquiring into the weight that individuals attach to the "removal" of the post-communist heritage, reveal a moderate interest in this issue in both groups, and among the young in particular. It may be added that in a recent public poll, 86 percent of the respondents said that they would not change their opinion of Lech Wałęsa, if it turned out that he had collaborated with the communist secret service, with only 9 percent saying that this would make them change their minds, and 6 percent not knowing what they would do (*Polityka* 27, July 5, 2008). This poll was conducted in the wake of new accusations of "contacts" with the communist regime in the 1970s filed against the leader of the Polish *Solidarity* movement in the 1980s, which ultimately led to the downfall of communism in Poland and then in East and Central Europe.

The results of this questionnaire point to age-related differences in how people position themselves towards reality in communist times, what sense they make of what was happening then, what they remember and what they are not in a position to know, considering that they were too young or not even born. The social attitudes to lustration are largely constrained by human cognitive skills to remember and retrieve from memory, on the one hand, and to reconstruct or imagine things on the basis of others' narratives, on the other. The discursive grounding of social collective knowledge elevates the importance of its mediation into the language of the young.

That language is a new concern of the older generation in Poland can be seen in an ongoing debate about how to teach history, or, for all practical purposes, how to educate the new generation so that they know and respect the national traditions. This also means concerns about how to combine the ethos of the past struggle for integrity and independence with the new values and aspirations of young Poles, for whom many of the pressures of historical thinking clash with the new lures of world citizenship and globalization.

The old–young polarization in recent discourses on lustration only confirms that the special attitudes to history are lively and significant among many Poles, and that they are a sensitive barometer of social (intergenerational) relations. For cognitive, psychological, and emotional reasons, collective memory is “tested” against recent times, fascism, and World War II under the Nazi occupation, communism and the Soviet post-war dominance, as well as the post-communist turmoil of the budding new economy and democracy.

Poland has traditionally been a nation oriented toward the past, showing indulgence in the cultivation of tradition and pride over her national (catholic) heritage and love for freedom. It is only natural, therefore, that the recent discussions over lustration should build interfaces with other national themes, overtly or indirectly implicating the age of the discussants. It is largely recognized that education for a new patriotism necessitates a new style of communication. This privileges historical reconstructions, visual instead of written modes of communication, a comic strip, if not grotesque style of narration. If such conventions may be palatable to many older Poles for talking about communist times – despite their hardship and dramaturgy – then they seem less appropriate for dealing with many other national and social issues. At least some of the dissonance in cultural and discursive values in modern Polish society rests on age.

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Chapter 12

“The regime of the adult”: Textual manipulations in translated, hybrid and glocal texts for young readers

Michał Borodo

1. Introduction

This chapter aims at shedding more light on how adult text producers communicate and manipulate children's texts as they cross linguistic and cultural barriers. The primary focus of the first part of the chapter is translated texts for children and the various textual modifications introduced into them by translators. The second part investigates the strategies of communicating texts to young readers in the global age, and while it continues to describe translational interventions, it also analyzes instances of hybrid and glocal texts. The importance of age and power relations informing the child/adult relation is foregrounded throughout the article. Depending on the perception of the capacity, needs, and well being of their intended audience, adults may mould translations for young readers, or provide them, in the age of globalization, with texts in various intensely commercialized forms. The chapter is amply illustrated with instances of textual interventions which demonstrate that child-oriented textual production is a sphere not only controlled but often deeply manipulated by the adult, which is suggested by the “regime” of the title. The academic vantage point of this chapter is the discipline of translation studies, which has developed considerably over the last two decades, gradually beginning to address issues of power, ideology and textual manipulation, on the one hand, and the impact of globalization on the textual on the other.

2. Part one – translational manipulations in child-oriented texts

2.1. Age, ideology, business and translations for children

It is not uncommon to discover textual interventions in translations directed at a pre-adolescent audience. These are conditioned by adult translators' perceptions of children's age and the related abilities, interests, or emotional

well-being, on the one hand, and by the publishing industry or ideologies of a specific time and place on the other.

Thus, if the translator considers a text unsuitable for a younger audience, s/he may mitigate it in translation, removing the content that is perceived as improper, or even moralize, inserting comments absent in the original. If a text is regarded as too complex for a young reader, it may well be simplified in translation or heavily adapted to the reality of the target culture. It may also be the case that the translator, with the aim of increasing the appeal of a text for a young addressee, will amplify and dramatize parts of it or focalize the reader's attention on particular parts of the text. All of these interventions, largely conditioned by translators' perceptions of the age-related capacity of the young addressee, are described in part one of the chapter.

However, it must be added that these interventions may also be constrained in numerous ways which extend beyond an individual translator. Child-oriented translations are frequently acts of negotiation between several intersecting influences, being conditioned by ideological and business factors. This also applies to the production of original children's books. As observed by Sebastian Chapleau, who investigates children's literature employing Jean-Jacques Lecercle's linguistic theory of communication, "... writing of books for children is an act of communication between the adult and the child, an act of communication surrounded by influential discourses" (Chapleau 2006: 47). This would entail the influences exerted on the author by, among others, the educational industry, professional journals, parents' associations, the publisher's profile, the marketing team, or the book designers (Chapleau 2006: 47). In the case of translating for children, it is often the case, as pointed out by Cecilia Alvstad, that the publisher may in fact:

(...) select the translators and decide whether or not to translate the whole text, whether to keep the illustrations from the source text, whether to add illustrations to a text without illustrations, whether to give a style sheet with linguistic or other recommendations to the translator, whether to change the translator's text and whether to publish the book in a series, and in that case, which one, etc. (Alvstad 2003: 268)

The textual modifications resulting from what thus turns out to be a rather complex communicative act have occasionally been dealt with by researchers before and a noteworthy, pioneering study in the Polish context is Monika Adamczyk's *Polskie tłumaczenia angielskiej literatury dziecięcej* (1988). However, unlike the present contribution, her study is not primarily preoccupied with adult/child communication and ideological manipulations. The typology proposed in the present section avoids quantitative categories like

addition or deletion in favor of qualitative ones which suggest semantic consequences of translators' modifications, and it is mostly illustrated with examples from Polish translations.

2.2. *Mitigation*

One of the common interventions which may take place while communicating a text to a child in translation is *mitigation*, which involves toning down potentially controversial issues and taboo subjects such as those related to death, alcohol, sex, the human body, and bodily functions, children's supposedly inappropriate conduct, or criticism directed at adults. For instance, while in the original *Peter and Wendy* the latter character "shudders delightfully" (Barrie 1993: 138) on hearing about her brother killing a pirate, in the most recent Polish translation Wendy's quasi sexual reaction in the context of death is mitigated into *była [z niego] bardzo dumna* ['she was very proud of him'] (Barrie 2006: 196), and it is deleted altogether in the earlier Polish translation of the book produced in the fifties (Barrie 1958: 153). The way Lewis Carroll's Alice touches the ground after her long fall down the Rabbit hole also differs depending on the Polish translator and their intended addressee. Alice actually falls down in only two translations (Carroll 1972: 14 and Carroll 1990: 35), *lands* on the ground in the third one (Carroll 1999: 15), sits down softly in the fourth one (Carroll 1988: 14), and in the fifth translation wakes up to discover that she is safely and comfortably on the ground already (Carroll 1947: 12), with the whole scene of (potentially painful) touching the ground totally deleted. The latter two translations, judging by translators' overall strategies, are the most child-oriented ones. One of the most often quoted examples in the context, perhaps, is the scene in which Gulliver saves the Lilliputian queen by urinating on the palace, which is commonly modified in translation into him making use of a shoe or a hat filled with water. The instances of mitigation are numerous in Polish translations for children and deserve to be discussed in a separate article. Such interventions may be subjectively introduced by individual translators but may also be related to other factors, such as the requirements of a particular publisher, political correctness, etc.

2.3. *Moralization*

While the purpose of the above-mentioned interventions is to spare the child what is, often very idiosyncratically, considered potentially harmful and

controversial, the strategy of *moralization*, which seems much less common today than in the past, aims at imposing certain values on young readers. The strategy can take many different forms and in more extreme cases it may even involve elements of scolding and depreciating. A number of extraordinary instances of this kind are to be found in the 1927 Polish *Alice* translation, in which the translator patronizes and scolds the child, adding numerous comments which are not present in the original (see Borodo 2005 for a more detailed account). One such example is the scene in which the March Hare and the Hatter are treating the sleeping Dormouse as a cushion, resting their elbows on their companion, to which Alice reacts: “‘Very uncomfortable for the Dormouse,’ thought Alice; ‘only as it’s asleep, I suppose it doesn’t mind’” (Carroll 1998: 60). In the Polish text the translator added the following to the above comment: *Nie należy się mieszać do nieswoich rzeczy – dodała ciszej trochę, widać jako przestrożę dla siebie*. [‘I’d better mind my own business – she added more quietly, as a warning for herself.’] (Carroll 1947: 96), thus relegating Alice to the role of a passive and powerless observer. While instances of mitigation may be found in present-day translations, the strategy of moralization appears to be bound to the past when the child construct was different and children’s literature translation norms more liberal.

2.4. *Amplification*

The strategy of *amplification* aims at transforming selected aspects of a text in order to make them more noticeable with a further aim of increasing the text’s appeal for the young reader. This refers to what Birgit Stolt, a children’s literature researcher, describes as “the ambition of many a translator to make everything a bit more beautiful and more full of genuine feeling” (Stolt 1978: 137), as well as to translators’ interventions resulting in making a particular text more dynamic and action-packed in translation. The latter intervention may be illustrated by juxtaposing renderings of the same short excerpt from two different translations of a Polish children’s classic *Król Maciuś Pierwszy*. While “I ought to see what’s going on, thought Matt. He *rose* from his bed, dressed quickly, and *went out* to the corridor.” (Korczak 2004: 7 [emphasis mine]) remains very close to the original “*Trzeba zobaczyć, co się tam dzieje – pomyślał Maciuś. Wstał z łóżka, prędko się ubrał i wyszedł na korytarz.*” (Korczak 1997: 8 [emphasis mine]), the earlier, postwar translation is less literal and presents the major character as more dynamic: “‘I’d better see what’s going on down there,’ he said to himself, and *leaping out* of bed he *ran* down the hall.” (Korczak 1945: 18 [emphasis mine]). If repeated

consistently, as it seems to be the case with the postwar translation, such interventions may to some extent alter the presentation and perception of the child protagonist. The above "dynamizing" passage makes an interesting comparison with the aforementioned "demotivating" *Alice* excerpt, demonstrating how much depends on translators' idiosyncratic perception of age-related needs of the young reader.

2.5. *Focalization*

The strategy of *focalization* denotes, through analogy with the narratological meaning of the concept, establishing a perspective from which the reader is invited to view the events in a story. However, while in narratology focalization implies presenting events through the eyes of a particular character, in the present typology it mainly stands for the strategy of modifying chapter headings or book titles as well as introducing chapter headings when they do not appear in the original text and thus inviting the young reader to approach the whole text, or portions of it, with certain expectations. As examples may serve two chapter headings, both referring to the first chapter of *The adventures of Tom Sawyer*, introduced in two different Polish translations of the book. Thus, while "*Tomek bawi się, walczy i znika*" ['Tom plays, fights and vanishes'] (Twain 1984: 7) highlights a sense of adventure, "*Tomek i ciotka Polly*" ['Tom and aunt Polly'] (Twain 1995: 5) centers around the idea of home and family. The original text, by the way, does not contain chapter headings and these were only introduced by the Polish translators, supposedly to enhance reader-friendliness of the text. A noteworthy instance of title modification may be found in the first Polish translation of *Through the looking glass* rendered as *W zwierciadlanym domu* (Carroll 1936). When translated back into English, the Polish title would rather signify "in a house full of mirrors" or "in a house made of mirrors", both versions removed from the original title, which implies a passage to the alternative world. Being perhaps regarded as too sophisticated or too peculiar for the young reader, the title seems to have been modified by the translator into another one, triggering different expectations regarding the text.

2.6. *Simplification*

The strategy of *simplification* naturally involves deliberate omission of whole excerpts considered too difficult, addition of explanatory comments, as well

as other forms of disambiguating complex passages. For instance, though in the introductory passage of the original *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* it is unclear whether the girl does fall asleep or not, this fact is largely disambiguated in the child-oriented Polish translation produced in the twenties (Carroll 1947: 7). Then, if translation is taken in its broadest possible sense, simplification will relate to a multitude of adaptations, to originals condensed to several illustrated pages only and specially prepared for fast consumption. These are not translations *sensu stricto*, but the phenomenon is worth mentioning since the scale of this sort of child-oriented simplification is unprecedented.

2.7. *Cultural adaptation*

The strategy of simplification often goes hand in hand with that of *cultural adaptation* (usually referred to as domestication in translation studies). The strategy is still observable in contemporary translations but seems to have been more common in the past. An example of a particularly interesting, though less known, culturally adapted children's book is the translation of *My friend Mr Leakey* produced in Poland during the fifties. Thus, while in the original text one of the chapters begins "Once upon a time there was a man called *Smith*. He was a greengrocer and lived in *Clapham*." (Haldane 2004: 105 [emphasis mine]), its Polish translation begins "*Żył sobie kiedyś człowiek, nazwiskiem Kowalski. Był ogrodnikiem i mieszkał na Oksywiu.*" (Haldane 1947: 7 [emphasis mine]). Kowalski, no longer an Englishman but a Pole, now lives in the district of the Polish city of Gdynia. At a different point, the original sentence "He had a great-aunt Matilda who was so old that she said she could remember the *railway from London to Dover* being built." (Haldane 2004: 108 [emphasis mine]) is translated as "*Jego ciocia-babcia Matylda była tak stara, że podobno pamiętała czasy, kiedy budowano kolej warszawsko-wiedeńską*" (Haldane 1947: 9 [emphasis mine]), which is all in all an accurate translation with the exception that the railway now links . . . Warsaw and Vienna. With a growing dominance of English, the strategy of cultural adaptation seems to have lost its centrality and a partial shift from cultural adaptation to foreignization seems to have taken place in the realm of child-oriented translation. Stating this alone, however, is not much of a significant discovery. Investigating present-day translations through the binary opposition of foreignization vs. cultural adaptation only is not going to lead to fascinating discoveries either. It is a rather limited perspective, not necessarily suitable to account for the various strategies of communicating

children's texts currently crossing cultures. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, we need a new perspective capable of embracing translation and various other forms of textual production appearing under the influence of globalization. Such a perspective is introduced in part two of this chapter.

3. Part two – child-oriented textual manipulations in the global age

3.1. The textual patterns approach

This part briefly introduces the textual patterns approach, which is then employed to illustrate how adult text producers communicate children's texts crossing linguistic and cultural barriers. The notion of textual patterns is employed in accordance with Anna Duszak and Urszula Okulska, who elucidate their approach in *Speaking from the margin: Global English from a European perspective*, a 2004 volume which they co-edited.

Textual patterns might be perceived as a linguistic manifestation of globalization. Emphasizing that globalization largely takes place through language, Duszak and Okulska refer to it as "a sweeping *language change-in-progress*" (2004: 7 [emphasis in the original]) and "a major qualitative change in the structuring and the functioning of modern discourses" (2004: 8). The change, propelled by global English, takes place through the global spread of certain uniform textual phenomena, mainly exported from the Anglophone center, and leads to a growing linguistic standardization but also to the formation of diverse, hybrid textualities. Tracing the actual textual realizations of this large-scale ongoing change appears to be a stimulating linguistic approach. As observed by Duszak (2004), "Today the research agenda is expanding to include topics going beyond the most obvious manifestations of global linguistic borrowing, such as lexical loans or syntactic accommodation. Changes in speech ways are scrutinized in search for global patterning" (Duszak 2004: 118).

These assumptions are illustrated by the researchers' own contributions to the 2004 volume. Duszak refers to her article as "a *glocal* perspective on global change" (Duszak 2004: 118 [emphasis in the original]) and investigates Polish roadside talk as an example of a global intertext, that is a text combining the elements of the global textual other and the local own in a new hybrid form (Duszak 2004: 119). This textual material, marginal in terms of roadside talk being an off-center discursive practice, reveals the increasing

presence of global conventions through which local meanings are communicated. Okulska (2004) is preoccupied with a more central discursive practice. She investigates the structuring of Polish political interviews searching for new patterns taken over from Western media discourse, demonstrating that they may be described as hybrid texts mixing the colloquial and the formal, the public and the private, as well as the global and the local in the sense of Western textual patterns being incorporated into textualities in the Polish context.

It is argued that the textual patterns approach may also be fruitfully applied to the sphere of increasingly global and glocal child-oriented textual production. It may be employed to investigate translators' treatment of culture-specific items, at the same time moving beyond "the most obvious manifestations of global linguistic borrowing", to analyze local texts modelled on global "originals" and texts produced with the aim of being translated for a large international audience. This approach may also be revealing with respect to the ideologies of adult text producers behind the scenes. Below, the author identifies such textual patterns as name-brandization, hybridization, glocalization, deculturation, and Anglophone foreignization. The patterns are mainly illustrated with texts available in Poland at the beginning of the twenty-first century.

3.2. *Anglophone foreignization*

The first textual pattern in the typology is *Anglophone foreignization*, which simply stands for foregrounding English linguistic items in translation. Anglophone foreignization is by no means a new pattern, but it is only recently that it has become more central – for decades the strategy most commonly associated with children's literature was cultural adaptation. Around the turn of the century a shift from cultural adaptation to foreignization seems to have taken place in child-oriented translation in Poland, however, a trend which may also be observable in various other localities penetrated by global English. Present-day foreignization differs from what it stood for in the past, being now more intense, closely related to globalization, and decisively determined by business factors.

Power rangers, *W.I.T.C.H.*, *Monster warriors*, *Star racers*, *X-men*, *Team galaxy*, *Spiderman*, *Hulk*, *Megaman*, *Wolverine*, *The punisher*, or *Robotboy*, frequently bearing unchanged Anglophone names and titles, now dominate linguistic landscapes globally through a broad panorama of texts and various related products marketed towards young readers as part of the same brand.

The strategy of retaining foreign-sounding Anglophone titles and names is also observable in texts directed at very young addressees and may be illustrated, in the Polish context, by such examples as *Noddy*, *Franklin*, *Bob*, *Pat*, or *Andy Pandy*, to mention just a few. This *name-brandization* could be perceived as a textual subpattern in itself. The pattern is observable in a variety of texts such as comics, magazines, websites, television cartoons, cinema animations, computer games, interrelated with many other spin-offs, such as cartoon-related toys, stickers, bags, or snacks which together form what the Polish researcher Michał Zajac labeled as Total Product – an extensive network of interrelated texts and products skilfully marketed for children (2000: 163–174). In such a sophisticated commercial network a character's name is often no longer just a name of a literary character but increasingly a brand, which is naturally retained in translation. The reason behind retaining foreign-sounding characters' names in some translations aimed at young readers is thus not only children's greater awareness of English but name-brandization resulting from the inter-connectedness of books, films, and other products.

Anglophone foreignization appears particularly noticeable if one juxtaposes contemporary global bestsellers with comparable translations from the past. Such a comparison can be drawn between *Harry Potter* and *The chronicles of Narnia*, fantasies which have both been translated in Poland by the same translator – Andrzej Polkowski. While translating *The chronicles of Narnia*, Polkowski in many cases adopted the strategy of creative cultural adaptation of names, with some of the more ingenious examples being *Rycypisk*, *Świdrogrzmot*, *Gromojar*, *Sobiepan*, *Podlizar*, *Trajkowitka*, *Łamigłówek*, or *Blotosmętek*. In theory, the translator could treat *Harry Potter* in the same manner but after an interval of about two decades many descriptive or quasi-descriptive names such as *Moody*, *Sinistra*, *Ravenclaw*, *HufflePuff*, *Longbottom*, *Sprout*, or *Filch* received a very different treatment in being retained in their original forms.

What makes another interesting comparison is the popular *Alice* series (Naylor 2006), boldly foregrounding the foreign-sounding name of the main protagonist in the Polish translation, and inescapably bringing to mind her Victorian namesake created by Lewis Carroll, invariably Polonized into *Alicja* in all Polish translations. Most names in the above-mentioned series, by the way, are treated in the same fashion, which sometimes results in intensely foreignized passages such as: "*Alice!* – *zawolał wujek Milt.* – *Sal, dzwoni Alice. Tak, Alice, z Silver Spring.*" [*"Alice!" exclaimed uncle Milt. "Sal, Alice's calling. Yes, Alice, from Silver Spring."*] (Naylor 2006: 30). The Polish translation of the contemporary *Alice* series also stands in sharp

contrast to earlier translations for girls produced in the twentieth century, many of which employed Polish and not original names.

Yet another example of a child-oriented translation exhibiting the pattern in focus is Madonna's picture book *The English roses* (2003). The book was launched in 2003 simultaneously in as many as 30 languages and 100 countries, thus becoming a global translation par excellence. The Polish translation of the book, though directed at a very young audience, is an example of a decisively foreignized text – not only are the characters' names retained in their original forms but the text also contains numerous English words already incorporated into pictures with one of the pages forming a collage of English phrases such as *hullabaloo*, *tickety-boo*, *night fever*, *techno*, *vogue*, etc. (Madonna 2003: 10–11). Thus at the beginning of the twentieth century young Polish readers are frequently confronted with intensely foreignized texts filled with brands, which remains in stark contrast with pre-90s Poland.

3.3. *Hybridization*

The second textual pattern proposed in the present categorization is hybridization. It is no doubt a very broad phenomenon, discussed in the context of translation and (post)colonialism, in reference to translation of such experimental literary texts as *Clockwork orange*, as well as in relation to non-literary translated texts functioning in the commercial and public domain. In the context of child-oriented translation the pattern may be illustrated with the *W.I.T.C.H.* series (Maviangela et al. 2005), a truly global text, popular in Poland as well as in around seventy other countries, which consists of books, diaries, magazines, sticker albums, accompanied by numerous other products.

The hybridity of *W.I.T.C.H.* manifests itself in several ways – on a lexical, cultural and textual-structural plane. Its hybrid character is already observable in the title, which is in fact an acronym composed of the initial letters of the main protagonists' first names, Will, Irma, Taranee, Cornelia, and Hay Lin, and this blend of a title is in a way a foretaste of the hybrid nature of the series as a whole. As regards the lexical plane, most of the books in the series mix two languages, Italian, the original language of most of the series, and English, which is foregrounded throughout since characters' and place names are, because of the story's Anglophone setting, predominantly English. In this sense, the pattern partly overlaps with the aforementioned Anglophone foreignization, but in the case of *W.I.T.C.H.* the English names are not merely retained in translation but are inserted in the original, produced in Italian, already at a pre-translation stage and only then marketed in around seventy

different countries worldwide. The use of Anglophone items may be illustrated with the following brief example from *Miej swój styl* (Maviangela et al. 2005), the Polish translation of the Italian *Witch, cento magie per trovare il tuo stile*:

Piątkowe popołudnie w redakcji *Sheffield News*. . . . Przeprowadzimy wywiad z niesamowitą *Alisha Flash*, która stworzyła linię *Young & Trendy*" [emphasis mine] (Maviangela et al. 2005: 7) ['Friday afternoon in the editorial section of *Sheffield News*. . . . We are going to interview the amazing Alisha Flash who created the *Young & Trendy* collection'].]

Many of the English names, such as Matt, Peter, Nigel, Lilian, Cedric, Eric, teachers' surnames, like Collins, Temple, Knickerbocher, or place names, such as Heatherfield and Sheffield Institute, are similarly retained unchanged in translations into Polish. Even the word *institute* is retained in its English form though a Polish equivalent could be employed instead.

The text is not only hybrid as regards lexis but also culturally hybrid in terms of style of illustration and race. The group of friends is multiracial, which also applies, by the way, to *The English roses* briefly discussed in the previous section. The style of illustration resembles Japanese *manga*, though it is not *manga* proper. The series may rather be characterized as *manga*-stylized, but at the same time it possesses features of Disney style. The style of illustrating may therefore be described as a hybrid of Disney and *manga* with a European tinge. In "Globalization as hybridization", Pieterse employs the following example of the hybrid nature of contemporary cultural phenomena for effect: "Thai boxing by Moroccan girls in Amsterdam, Asian rap in London, Irish bagels, Chinese tacos and Mardi Gras Indians in the United States" (1997: 53), to which we could add, drawing from the sphere of contemporary children's literature, a globally marketed Italian series about a multiracial group filled with Anglophone lexis and illustrated with Westernized *manga*.

Setting lexical and cultural aspects aside, some of the structural properties of the text only reinforce the overall hybridity of the series. It is often the case that within a single text, be it a book or a magazine, short stories are intertwined with comics, diary entries, letter excerpts, quizzes, jokes, anecdotes, tests, horoscopes, and sections devoted to fashion and looks. A novel may open and end with a few pages of comics, and one may come across, within a single book, short stories and advice sections alongside stickers and a poster. At times it is problematic to classify particular texts using traditional

terms, as they escape well-established categorizations into prose/comics or books/magazines.

What does the hybridization pattern tell us about the motivations of text producers and why are the texts hybridized in so many planes? The aim is no doubt to produce texts of maximum appeal to young readers – the texts are made hybrid in terms of language, race, or illustrations to appeal to a large international audience, and they are produced in new, unconventional formats in a constant endeavor to surprise the reader already faced with a broad range of increasingly commercialized texts.

3.4. *Glocalization*

The third textual pattern, glocalization, though also hybrid by nature, possesses textual features which make it distinct from the rather general hybridization pattern presented above. The pattern could be defined as a mixing of the global, which in most cases stands for Anglo-American language and culture, with the local on the textual level. In such a configuration the local does not merely stand for the language of the local culture, as this would relate to numerous translations, but also for the genuinely local traces of that culture inserted within the textual. The glocal text is not just a global text made available locally but a text partly rooted in a particular local culture. Thus the Polish translations of *Harry Potter*, for instance, do not qualify, as, though the original texts are made available on a global scale, there is nothing particularly local about the translated texts.

One example illustrating the glocal pattern are two books titled *Prawie czarodziejki* [‘Almost witches’] (Nowak 2005, 2006), which came into being on the rising tide of the popularity of the *W.I.T.C.H.* series in Poland. The texts were originally produced in Polish by the Polish author Ewa Nowak, who, as claimed on the back cover, was largely inspired by *W.I.T.C.H.* fans’ letters they wrote to the *W.I.T.C.H.* magazine and by the stories they told her during *W.I.T.C.H.* fans-rallies. The two texts are firmly grounded in Polish reality and deal with the everyday life of five Polish girls. At the same time they contain numerous intertextual references to the mainstream global text, with the “global original” being in a way interwoven into the Polish text. This relation is already emphasized on the front cover, where the global logo of *W.I.T.C.H.* is to be seen, as well as in the characters’ conversations and in the narration.

The five Polish protagonists are presented as almost living a dual life – their own, and that of the original characters. They strongly identify with

their counterparts and, though bearing Polish names, frequently address each other employing the names of global characters as well as striving to resemble the "original girls" mentally and physically. The Polish characters may thus well be likened to local doubles or local alter-egos of the multiracial group of friends from the global series. In the fictional world around them, they also look for more look-alikes of other characters appearing in the series and thus several other names are borrowed from the global text into the local version.

Readers of these two peripheral local versions are also continually referred intertextually to concrete mainstream *W.I.T.C.H.* texts, which are generally presented as must-haves. At the same time, they are repeatedly reminded of a variety of gadgets attached to comic book magazines, or about fan-rallies and websites. The two glocal texts, being of rather low literary value, are to an extent camouflaged advertisements of the global series and the following three examples may be revealing in this respect:

Pismo W.I.T.C.H. w ich miasteczku ukazuje się zawsze w sobotę. Tylko Emila je prenumeruje. Ance kupuje pismo mama, bo w sobotę bardzo wcześnie idzie do pracy. Reszta dziewczyn wyskakuje z łóżek skoro świt i leci od razu do kiosku, żeby zdobyć kolejny wyczekany numer. (Nowak 2005: 44)

[*'W.I.T.C.H. magazine appears in the town every Saturday. Only Emila has subscribed to it. Anka has it bought through her mum, as she goes to work very early on Saturday. The other girls jump out of bed at dawn and rush to the newsagent's right away to get the new, longed-for issue.'*]

Czytała W.I.T.C.H. od dawna i zawsze, gdy do pisma były dołączone karty, godzinami układała sobie wróżby, zapisywała je, a potem z wypiekami czekała, czy się sprawdzą. (Nowak 2006: 23)

[*'She has been reading W.I.T.C.H. for a long time and each time there were cards attached to the magazine she spent hours fortune-telling, then writing it all down, and waiting with flushed cheeks to see if it would come true.'*]

... Monika zbierała zawsze po dwa numery. Z jednego wycinała obrazki, z których często sama coś tworzyła. Drugi, święty i nietknięty, leżał na wyższej półce regału. (Nowak 2006: 5)

[*'Monika always bought two issues. From one issue she cut out pictures to create something out of them herself. The other one, sacred and untouched, lay on the upper shelf of the bookcase.'*] [emphasis mine]

As appears from the latter example, the series is in a way fetishized by the author. As is clear from all of these quotations, the two glocal texts are an example of crude commercialization of literature for young readers.

The glocal pattern may also be illustrated with several books from the educational *Horrible histories* series, one of the most successful non-fiction series for young readers globally. Dealing with the history of various countries or historical periods, the British series was first made available in Poland in translation with the title *Strrraszna historia*. As its popularity grew, books on Polish history created by Poles (Fabianowska and Nesteruk 2000, 2001, 2002) were published as part of the series. The Polish books, so far seven of them, are not translations in the strict sense of the word, but they are also not straightforward examples of original writing either. Though dealing with genuinely “local” issues, the books retain all the textual properties of the global series, such as the cover design, the alliterative title, as well as the whole panorama of diverse genres including comics, fabricated and jocular newspaper excerpts, adverts, billboards, catalogues, or even television interviews with major historical figures from the distant past. The series thus communicates the past through contemporary textual practices, presenting historical facts through a modern, familiar form.

Just like Terry Deary, the author of the global “original”, the Polish authors present the reader with the cruelties and horrors of the past frequently overstepping the boundaries of good taste. Historical facts, just as in the global mainstream text, are communicated in a provocative and humorous way through a combination of gallows humour, irony, and colloquial, lively language bustling with wordplay. This is no doubt a new way of communicating history to young readers in Poland and the creation of the local Polish versions may be seen in the light of the exportation of discursive practices from the powerful Anglophone center to other parts of the globe. These glocal texts, in which the local content is inserted into the global textual frame, are also a much more successful attempt to cash in on the popularity of the mainstream text than the glocal off-shoot of the *W.I.T.C.H.* series.

Finally, among the most spectacular examples of the glocal pattern are Polish translations of American animated feature films. Though frequently filled with references to an American culture, these animated films are produced for a global audience and almost simultaneously translated in a large number of cultures worldwide. References to the local culture are an inseparable part of numerous Polish translations, which makes them yet another instance of a glocal text available in turn-of-the-century Poland. These translations are also characterized by the strategy of amplification (discussed in part one of this article), which mainly involves introducing various colloquialisms, and, occasionally, vulgarisms, when these do not appear in the original. Though this is no doubt done with the aim of producing an even funnier

and more appealing text, the use of these vulgarisms may appear dubious in translations mainly directed at younger readers.

3.5. *Deculturation*

The fourth textual pattern proposed in the typology, deculturation, differs from all the other patterns as it is not defined by the presence of a specific type of textual items but marked by their absence. It refers to the strategy of making a book culturally neutral as early as at the production stage to ensure its appeal to a large international audience. It denotes producing a book maximally digestible from a cultural point of view, or, viewing it from a different angle, culturally impoverished. The pattern is mostly the result of international co-production between several publishers set in different countries, as producing a large number of illustrations at one printing session makes the whole process less expensive. As early as in the seventies the phenomenon of making children's texts culturally neutral is mentioned by Weinrich, who observes that "moral and political attitudes may be more or less tabooed in different countries. In certain countries a book is not allowed to show the human body. . . . Religious and ethical problems are as a rule removed. And death is not everywhere a subject of conversation" (Weinrich 1978: 152). Twenty years later Ronald Jobe, another children's literature researcher, continues to write of "the dramatic increase in the co-production of books" (Jobe 1996: 527), observing that, though texts can travel even more easily across cultures, children's literature writers and illustrators, in order to appeal to a wide international audience, produce works that are increasingly "general in nature" and "bland" (Jobe 1996: 526). The same tendency is discussed by O'Sullivan, who writes of publishers' preference for texts which are "non-provocative, unlikely to offend, and adaptable in streamlined form to the requirements of the international market", to which she refers as a form of "pre-censorship" (O'Sullivan 2005: 101). Though deculturation mainly relates to the treatment of illustrations, it may also exert an impact on language. O'Sullivan mentions a set of guidelines circulating in German publishing houses advising the avoidance of "pictures containing typography, for instance labels, notices, advertising posters, newspapers, magazines, books, shop names, car registration plates, etc." with the exception of "internationally used and easily understood words such as 'Hotel'" (O'Sullivan 2005: 102). Additionally, the textual must be fitted into the very same space in all co-produced books, regardless of the language, which may pose problems in the case of some languages.

Though the pattern most probably does appear in Polish translations, it would be risky to discuss any concrete examples with certainty, as this would require the knowledge reserved for “an insider” well acquainted with the decisions made in specific publishing houses.

4. Conclusion

As has been demonstrated throughout this article, there are numerous ways in which adult text producers may mould child-oriented texts as they cross cultures. Depending on how they perceive the age-related capacity of the young reader, adults may decide to mitigate, simplify, amplify, focalize or adapt a text culturally. More recently, in the global age, child-oriented textual production appears to have in many ways become the arena of crude commercialism, which is well observable in such patterns as name-brandization or deculturation, or in the case of the aforementioned glocal novels being in fact camouflaged advertisements of a global series. Not to sound too pessimistic, sometimes texts are also manipulated in a positive sense, and the glocal versions of *Horrible histories*, for instance, may be perceived as in some way enriching the local textual repertoire. What seems undeniable, however, is that young readers in Poland are now faced with new types of texts and new textualities, which are frequently foreignized, glocalized, deculturized, hybridized, or filled with brands. This makes their entry to the world of texts very different. This also makes it an interesting field for further analysis.

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Chapter 13

Age and the codification of the English language¹

Ingrid Tieken-Boon van Ostade

1. Introduction

In June 2007, a copy was auctioned at Christie's in London of Lady Ellenor Fenn's (1743–1813) *Grammar box*, at the estimated price of four to six thousand pounds. As only three other copies are known to exist (McCue 2006), this rare item, which was said to be in very good condition, fetched as much as £16,800.² The box dates from ca. 1780, and it is described by Immel (1997) as being part of a chest of

three wooden boxes stacked on top of one another, rather like a Japanese picnic basket. Each of the boxes is devoted to a different subject – spelling, grammar and arithmetic – and its contents identified by an oval label engraved on pink paper. The individual boxes are divided into different-sized compartments, and each compartment filled with cards, Fenn's preferred aid for teaching small children because cards allow them to concentrate on the single letter, word, or image. The card sets include everything from little alphabets of roman, italic, and black letters for spelling out words; tables for ciphering; illustrated and labeled flash cards for the identification of the parts of speech; and cards illustrated with pictures of birds, animals, games, and objects like a knight's helm, a steam engine, or a water pump. (Immel 1997: 222)

There is evidence that the *Grammar box* was used to teach the royal children (Shefrin 2003, see also Navest 2008a) by their governess Lady Charlotte Finch (1725–1813). Charlotte Finch was interested in teaching through play, which was quite an enlightened notion for the period in which she lived, and which created a new fashion in education (ODNB, s.v. "Finch").

Apart from the *Grammar box*, Fenn also produced actual grammar books, such as *The child's grammar* (1799?) and *The mother's grammar* (1798), alongside various other educational textbooks (Navest 2008a). Fenn was neither the first eighteenth-century female English grammarian nor the only one (Rodríguez-Gil 2002; Percy 1994; Tieken-Boon van Ostade 2000; Cajka 2008), but she can be reckoned among one of the most popular grammarians

of the age if we consider the vast number of editions and reprints of her grammars, which seem to have consisted of print-runs of many thousands of copies (Navest 2008a). *The child's grammar* was part of a set of books published specifically for children, as their size, 16°, indicates; it is much smaller than most contemporary grammar books. Only seven copies have come down to us from different editions, running down to the 26th edition which was published in 1820 (Alston 1965: 105). I happen to possess a copy of this little grammar; its pagination matches neither the first nor the second edition listed by Alston, but as it looks more similar to the first edition, and as the first edition must have been a pirated edition, printed in Dublin in 1799 by Robert Napper instead of by the regular publishers Elizabeth Newbery and John Marshal (Navest 2008a), I believe that my copy may be older than the ones in Alston, and that it was published perhaps a year earlier than the pirated copy, in 1798.³ For the purpose of the present discussion, it may suffice to point out that the size of the grammar, as well as the very fact of its existence, shows that Fenn had the interests of young children in mind, as well as those of their mothers, who needed coaching when they were to teach their children the rudiments of English grammar. I do think, however, that the contents of this little grammar are a rather mixed bag of grammatical information and advice to mothers on how to teach grammar to their offspring, and I cannot help wondering how they would have coped. But it was a start, and a better one than other grammars published for the same purpose, as I will show in the course of this paper.

From around the 1770s onwards, the writing of grammar books for children reflects the rise of interest in the scientifically informed and methodologically structured teaching of “proper” English to young learners. As is shown by Cajka (2008) and Navest (2009), the handbooks emerging at that time attempt to develop distinct methodologies for the teaching of grammar to children, and a market developed for textbooks specifically for children. Earlier attempts, as we will see, generally showed little awareness of the specific requirements of an audience consisting of young learners, or, indeed, the needs of their tutors, resulting in what might be called hybrid grammars, amalgamating material suitable for children as well as that addressed to adult readers with a high level of (professional) linguistic knowledge. The teaching of English did not become compulsory until after 1870, and there were as yet no teacher training colleges at the time. The diversified approaches to grammar pedagogy characterising this period reveal the educators’ different conceptions of the linguistic capacities of children as well as the writers’ changing attitudes to child-oriented language teaching. Motivated

by various incentives, including the authors' personal circumstances and current market forces, the production of grammar books in Late Modern England testifies to adults' – as parents with the social and educational interests of their children at heart – engagement in and contribution to the linguistic and intellectual formation of the young generation. As a result of innovations in the English grammatical tradition, we see the beginnings of new standards, procedures and means of the linguistic education of children that would continue to develop further during the centuries to come.

When it comes to Fenn's grammatical activities, her publications filled a gap in the market, something of which she was aware herself, as becomes clear from the Preface to the *Child's grammar*. Referring to the grammar of Robert Lowth (1710–1787), which had first come out in 1762 and which developed into one of the most authoritative grammars of the eighteenth century, she noted:

Dr. *Lowth* speaks of his Introduction to English Grammar as being calculated for the Use of the Learner, even of the lowest Class: but a Perusal of it will convince any Person conversant with *such Learners*, that the Doctor was much mistaken in his Calculation. It is a delightful Work! highly entertaining to a young Person of Taste and Abilities, who is already initiated: and perhaps in the *private* and *domestic* Use for which it was designed; his Lordship's Commentary might render it intelligible to those of his own family; but for general and public Use there is certainly Need of an Introduction to it: – There must be a DAME to prepare a Scholar for the Lessons of such a Master: And should I be gratified in my Wish to supply that Office, I shall think myself highly honoured. (Fenn [1798?]: vi)

Lowth had died in 1787, and this comment demonstrates that ten years after his death and well over thirty years after its original publication his grammar was still recognised as an important work. It also shows that in Fenn's eyes Lowth's grammar was too difficult for children, contrary to the claim made by Lowth in his own preface (1762: xiv). This is indeed how Lowth's grammar was received when it came out, for in 1762 the *Critical review* described the grammar's "method of arrangement" . . . as 'a little embarrassed, so as not to be comprehended, or retained, by young beginners' (Percy 1997: 131). What is also of interest in Fenn's quotation is its reference to Lowth's family, and the suggestion that he might have used his grammar to teach his children. This is indeed how the grammar had its beginnings, though whether it was actually used as such I do not know. Like Fenn, I would tend to think that Lowth's private "Commentary" would have been indispensable

in “rendering [the grammar] intelligible to [the members] of his own family”, as it is rather a grammar for scholars than for young children.

2. The origin of Lowth’s grammar

Among language historians, Lowth is best known for this grammar, which became very popular at the time, and which was a source of influence for many subsequent grammars, some of which became extremely popular (Tieken-Boon van Ostade 2008; Percy 2008). A good example of this is Lindley Murray’s *English grammar* of 1795, of which altogether possibly around two million copies were sold by 1850 (Tieken-Boon van Ostade 1996a: 9). Outside the field of linguistics Lowth is best known for his activities in the field of Hebrew scholarship. He was, for instance, the first to treat the language of parts of the Bible, in particular the Book of Isaiah, as poetry, which brought him considerable fame in England and abroad.⁴ Lowth is referred to in the *ODNB* as “biblical critic and bishop of London”, and it is to his latter position in life that many linguists today, such as Aitchison (1981 and all later editions), attribute the popularity of his grammar. But Lowth wrote his grammar well before he became a bishop, and the grammar had gone through five editions – in an equal number of years – before he was made Bishop of St David’s in 1766 and later that year Bishop of Oxford, a more prestigious appointment. He ended his life as Bishop of London, to which see he had been nominated in 1777. The grammar’s popularity thus had nothing to do with his high position in the Church, nor, I am quite confident to say, did it influence his career in the Church. The grammar was quite incidental to his career as such, though in his *Memoirs*, which he wrote at the end of his life, he proudly noted that 34,000 copies of it had been published during his lifetime (Tieken-Boon van Ostade 2008: 102). This is indeed quite a substantial achievement (though insignificant compared to the figures for the grammars by Fenn and Murray many years later), and little could Lowth have guessed that he was to be abused by modern linguists such as Aitchison precisely on account of this grammar.

For the past ten years I have been collecting Lowth’s letters, and I have located about three hundred of them, out-letters as well as in-letters. In the correspondence, references to the grammar mostly concern publication details (Tieken-Boon van Ostade 2000: 23; 2001), such as when he completed the first draft of the grammar (November 1759); when he submitted the revised version of the grammar (January 1761);⁵ when the grammar was

published (early February 1762); when to publish a second edition of the grammar (March 1762); an acknowledgement of comments received (October 1764); the size of later reprints (October 1773); and the question of whether the grammar should be reprinted with an index (July 1778), or, more likely, a “Table of Contents” (cf. *OED*, s.v. *index* n. 5). Lowth, however, believed an “Index” to be unnecessary: “An Index to a Grammar, especially so short a one, is for that reason a very uncommon thing”, he replied to his publisher, adding: “A Grammar always is, or ought to be, ranged so exactly under its proper heads in so clear a method, y^t. no one can be at a loss to find y^e. part on w^{ch}. it is to be consulted” (21 July 1778, Lowth to James Dodsley;⁶ BL Add. MS 35,339, f. 49). No index was added, but whether Lowth was justified in his claim is something I will come back to below.

There are a few other references to the grammar in the correspondence, some of which are of interest to this paper. They concern the grammar’s origins: in a letter to a fellow scholar, James Merrick (1720–1769), Lowth announced:

I shall desire M^r. Dodsley to send to You A Short Introduction to English Grammar, w^{ch}. I suppose may by this time be ready for publication. The history of it is this: I drew it up for the use of my little Boy, for the reasons mentioned in the Preface. M^r. Legge desired to have it for his Son; w^{ch}. purpose it could not well serve without being printed. I therefore finished it, as well as I could for the present; & have printed an Edition of no great number, in order to have the judgement of the Learned upon it. It is capable of considerable improvements, if it shall be thought worth the while. You in particular are desired to comply with y^e. Request at y^e. end of the Preface. (Lowth to James Merrick; February 1762. Bodleian Lib. MS. Eng. Lett. C. 573, f. 10)

In another letter, to his friend the literary scholar and anecdotist Joseph Spence (1699–1768), Lowth wrote:

I am very glad You approve of Tom’s Grammar, on its appearance in y^e. world: You do very well in laying in materials for the improvement of it. (Lowth to Joseph Spence, 2 March 1762; Beinecke Library, Joseph Spence papers, Osborn MS 4, 21)

These quotations indicate that Lowth had originally intended his grammar for his eldest son Thomas Henry (1753–1778). When exactly he embarked on the project is unclear, but there is evidence from his correspondence that he was engaged on it by August 1757 (Tieken-Boon van Ostade 2000: 23), when Thomas Henry was not yet four. From the letter referred to, it appears that a

copy of the grammar had been requested by Henry Bilson Legge (1708–1764), and that this induced Lowth to try and get the grammar published. Bilson Legge was at that time Chancellor of the Exchequer (see *ODNB*, s.v. “Legge”); he had been one of Lowth’s powerful friends who had helped him advance his career in the Church (Hepworth 1978: 33). Bilson Legge and his wife Mary Stawell (1726–1780) had one child, a son also called Henry, like his father, who was about three years younger than Thomas Henry. Bilson Legge’s request for a copy of the grammar was thus made very soon after his son’s birth on 22 February 1757, and to meet his patron’s request, Lowth approached Robert Dodsley, who had published an earlier book of his. Dodsley must have jumped at the suggestion, for he had previously published (and initiated) Dr Johnson’s famous *Dictionary of the English language* (1755) (Reddick 1990: 17). Dodsley had a good eye for the market, and knew what would sell well (Tierney 1988: 29), and it appears that he was also on the lookout for an authoritative grammar of English, so Lowth’s request came at the right moment. What made Lowth authoritative as a grammarian in Dodsley’s eyes would have been his competence in Latin (which Dodsley did not possess). Indeed, a large number of eighteenth-century grammarians were clergymen (Tieken-Boon van Ostade 2000), who like Lowth had had a thorough grounding in Latin as part of their education. Many of the early grammars of English therefore had a strong basis in the Latin tradition. It is striking in this light that the title of Lowth’s grammar echoes that of the most popular Latin grammar of the period, Lily’s *Short introduction to grammar* of 1548 (Percy 2008). As it is not unlikely that Lowth learnt Latin from this grammar, he may have been inspired by it for the title of his own; apart from that, there is very little trace of Lily’s grammar in the one by Lowth.

The reconstructed origin of Lowth’s grammar presents us with a picture of Lowth and Bilson Legge as two young (but not so young) fathers wishing to teach their sons English grammar at a very early age indeed. Today, teaching grammar to a four-year-old child seems extraordinarily young, but in the eighteenth century it became quite normal to embark on this at such an early age. Another eighteenth-century grammarian, John Ash (1724–1779), published a grammar called *Grammatical institutes* in 1760, which he “had written originally for his five-year-old daughter, and had printed . . . for the use of schoolmaster friends” (Michael 1970: 278). The story, in other words, is almost similar to that of Lowth. Similarly, Hester Lynch Thrale (1741–1821), writer and society hostess (founder of the Streatham Circle), took the education of her eldest daughter Queeney (1764–1857) into her own hands, and Queeney “was four Years and nine Months old when I lay in of

Lucy; and then I first began to teach her Grammar [presumably Latin grammar] shewing her the Difference between a Substantive and an Adjective as I lay in Bed” (Hyde 1977: 34, see also Navest 2003: 29). Mrs Thrale is often depicted as a harsh mother, especially in her relationship with Queeney, but in her views on education at least she was not exceptional. The evidence also shows, interestingly, that the teaching of grammar was not limited to boys.

My collection of Lowth’s correspondence includes 64 letters to his wife Molly, written during the year 1755 when Lowth was away from home. None of the letters she wrote to him in return, about equally many of them, appear to have survived, but the exchange of news between them suggests that Thomas Henry’s education was started before he was even two. Tom had been born on 16 December 1753, and already on 13 August 1755 Lowth ended a letter to his wife as follows: “My Love to all in the Close & at home to y^e. little Mollykin, & y^e. Dear Boy Tom, with thanks for his fine Letter” (Bodleian Library, MS Eng. Lett. C 572 f. 76). This letter might have been anything, ranging from a little drawing Tom had made for his father, a letter in Tom’s name but in his mother’s hand,⁷ or an actual piece of writing, showing that he had been practising his letters. One month later Lowth commented: “I am very glad to hear that the dear Tom learns his book so well” (26 September 1755; Bodleian Library, MS Eng. Lett. C 572 f. 101), which looks like a reference to Tom being taught to read by his mother as well. Children were expected to learn the letters of the alphabet before going to school, and Michael (1987: 59) reports that one “Henry Wooton, writing about 1672, described how his prodigious son William learnt the alphabet at the age of three from inscriptions on gravestones and from capital letters that the father wrote on walls”. Thomas Henry appears to have been equally prodigious or even more so, as he was a whole year younger. His parents seem to have had high ambitions for him.

Lowth’s later correspondence gives little evidence of his wife teaching the other children as well. This is due to the fact that he did not spend long stretches of time away from home, which would have produced letters documenting his children’s progress in education. There is, however, one small scrap of evidence which tells us that Tom’s sister Martha (1760–1812), the Lowths’ fourth child, was able to write fairly well at the age of almost five. On 5 August 1765, Lowth wrote a letter to Joseph Spence, which he concluded with some information about Martha, who was Spence’s god-daughter: “Your little Friend gives a sharp look out & thinks of nothing but of being within reach of Tommy” (Bodleian Library MS. Eng. Lett. C. 574, f. 89). In the

space above Lowth's concluding sentence we find the words "& You M^r. Spence" in a different hand, which, given the context, can only be that of little Martha. This letter is particularly appealing in that it shows a picture of Lowth as a family man rather than as the formidable grammarian that he is usually made out to be. And, what is more, it shows that Martha was able to write at the age of nearly five.

There are more references in Lowth's letters that testify to his interest in the education of his children – as well as in those of others. In 1761, Robert Dodsley published *Select fables of Esop and other fabulists*. The work consisted of three volumes, with the first containing the fables of Aesop, the second, fables of modern writers and the third, fables written by Dodsley and a number of his friends, including Lowth (Tierney 1988: 16). Tierney even believes that the idea for the fables came from Lowth (1988: 147n). On 9 January 1761, Lowth wrote to Dodsley, informing him that "My [little man] [Thomas Henry] is impatient for [the Fables]; he presents his Comp^{ts}. & desires you to make haste" (BL Add. MS 35,339, f. 31). Fables were popularly used to teach children to read in those days (Calder 2001: 9, cf. Michael 1987: 161, see also Chaves McClendon 1985), and as Lowth's grammar came out a year later, the two works were possibly intended to form a kind of set of educational works. In the same letter Lowth asked Dodsley to send a copy of his Fables "as soon as they are ready . . . very ha[nd]somely bound, with a Note in *my Name* To the Hon^{ble}. Master Legge [Bilson Legge's son Henry]; To M^r. Legge's House at the Treasury" (Tierney 1988: 446), and, he added, "one neatly bound, in *my Name* likewise, To M^{rs}. Galand at the Boarding School at Newington Butts: and also to send to me here Six neatly bound" (Lowth to Robert Dodsley, 7 January 1761). Lowth thus tried to promote the *Select fables* for use in schools and at home, whereas his grammar, as he stated in its preface, was "intended merely for a private and domestic use" (1762: xiii).

3. A children's grammar?

If Lowth's grammar originated as a grammar for his eldest son, was it also a children's grammar? I have already referred to the reception of the grammar by the *Critical review* in 1762, which criticised it for being too difficult for children. The same reviewer noted that though "some parts of it seem calculated for children only, others cannot be understood without a previous knowledge of logic and critical learning" (Percy 1997: 131).⁸ John Ash, or

his publisher, must have been familiar with this criticism, for in 1763 a new edition of his *Grammatical institutes* came out with the subtitle “an easy introduction to Dr. Lowth’s English grammar” and a few years later even as “the easiest introduction to Dr. Lowth’s English grammar” (Alston 1965: 33; Navest 2008b). In this, we witness the beginning of an awareness that grammars for children should meet with special requirements, as well as the fact that there was a certain amount of competition among publishers, E. & C. Dilly in the case of Ash, and the Dodsleys and Andrew Millar in Lowth’s case (Tieken-Boon van Ostade 2008a).

Another grammar writer who, like Ash and later on Fenn, considered his own work to be suitable as an introduction to Lowth’s grammar was the Methodist John Wesley (1703–1791). Wesley wrote his *Short English grammar* (1748) as part of a series of textbooks for Kingswood School (Vallins 1957: 9–10), a school for Methodist children which he had founded in 1748. Though he evidently thought highly of Lowth’s grammar, calling it “the best English Grammar that is extant” in a letter to his brother Charles of 12 February 1767 (Telford 1931), he considered his own grammar to be a suitable introduction to the one by Lowth, as appears from letters of advice to Margaret Lewen (ca. 1744–1766) and his niece Sarah Wesley (1759–1828) (Telford 1931).⁹ Both women were in their twenties at the time, rather old compared to the other children discussed so far. But what should we think of the Kingswood School lesson plan (Wesley 1768: 10), according to which pupils had to study Lowth’s grammar in their first year, when they were six years old?¹⁰

The reviewer of Lowth’s grammar in the *Critical review* noted that the grammar was a mixture of material suitable for children and for more advanced readers. The following quotations from the grammar confirm this (emphasis has been added):¹¹

the relation of Possession, or Belonging, is often expressed by a Case, or a different ending of the Substantive. This Case answers to the Genitive Case in Latin, and may still be so called; tho’ perhaps more properly the Possessive Case. Thus, “*God’s grace*,” which may also be expressed by the Preposition; as, “the grace *of God*.” It was formerly written *Godis* grace: we now very improperly always shorten it with an Apostrophe, even tho’ we are obliged to pronounce it fully; as, “***Thomas’s book***,” that is, “***Thomasis book***,” not “*Thomas his book*,” as it is commonly supposed. (1762: 25–26)

A Verb Active expresses an Action, and necessarily implies an agent, and an object acted upon: as, *to love*; “***I love Thomas***.”

A Verb Passive expresses a Passion, or a Suffering, or the receiving of an Action; and necessarily implies an Object acted upon, and an Agent by which it is acted upon: as, *to be loved*; “**Thomas is loved by me.**” (1762: 44)

1st Phrase: The Substantive before a Verb Active, Passive, or Neuter; when it is said what thing *is*, *does*, or *is done*: as, “I am;” “Thou writest;” “**Thomas is loved.**” where *I*, *Thou*, **Thomas**, are the Nominative Cases, and answer to the question *who*, or *what*? as, “**Who is loved? Thomas.**” (1762: 96–97)

The Participle frequently becomes altogether an Adjective; when it is joined to a Substantive merely to denote its quality; without any respect to time; expressing not an Action, but a Habit; and as such it admits of the degrees of Comparison: as, “a learned, a more learned, a most learned, man; **a loving, more loving, most loving, father**”. (1762: 114–115)

The only parts in these quotations that would seem suitable for children are the brief examples, which are easy to memorise. The rest of the text in these passages suggests that Lowth was addressing an audience of scholars, who would be expected to show an interest in the history of the genitival suffix, or in the observation that participles in English can sometimes behave like adjectives. After he got in touch with Dodsley about publishing his grammar, Lowth either lost sight of its original purpose, or he simply had no idea about the needs of very young children with respect to the acquisition of grammar.

4. Lowth’s approach to grammar

The Oxford companion to the English language (McArthur 1992) notes that “Lowth’s name has become synonymous with prescriptive grammar”. Lowth’s grammar was a normative grammar, as were most other grammars written during the eighteenth century (Tieken-Boon van Ostade 2000). This means that grammarians advocated a norm of correctness in their grammars which was to be followed by people with social aspirations at the time (Fitzmaurice 1998), and this appears to be the reason why Lowth wrote the grammar for his son to begin with. A normative approach involved informing the reader about what was correct and what was not, and the grammars consequently include prescriptive as well as proscriptive rules, rules informing readers what was correct and what was not. Not every rule need to have been formulated prescriptively, as in the case of the following example, which merely provides a descriptive account of the phenomenon in question:

A Noun of Multitude, or signifying many; and two Nouns in the Singular Number, joined together by a Conjunction Copulative; have Verbs, Nouns, and Pronouns, agreeing with them in the Plural Number: as, "When the King's trump, the *mob are* for the King." (Lowth 1762: 104–105)

The grammars' prescriptive function derived from the use to which they were put: they would be consulted from the point of view of what was correct usage. An example of a proscriptive stricture is Lowth's condemnation of *you was* as "an enormous Solecism" (1762: 48). A normative approach to grammar does not, however, rule out the possibility that the grammars were descriptive, a strict requirement of present-day linguistics, but modern linguists often take for granted that normative grammarians were not descriptive because of the nature of their rules and strictures. This is one of the reasons why normative grammars are in such disrepute today (Pullum 1974). In their condemnation of grammatical errors, the grammarians often expressed themselves in no uncertain terms, as indeed the example of Lowth's condemnation of *you was* illustrates. Sundby et al. (1991), who made an inventory of all critical terminology in eighteenth-century grammars of English, record: "mere shopkeepers cant", "childish phrases", "shamefully adopted by the ignorant", "vulgar error" and the like. Though Lowth rarely expresses himself as strongly as in the case of his condemnation of *you was*, his approach is primarily proscriptive, particularly in the footnotes to his grammar, where he lists numerous grammatical errors of contemporary if no longer living authors (Percy 1997: 134), as in:

Let Thee and I, my fair one, dwell." Prior.
It ought to be *Me*. (Lowth 1762: 117, note)

Lowth is usually regarded as an icon of prescriptive grammar, but his condemnations are nowhere as strong as the ones cited from Sundby et al.: he usually confined himself to terms like *improper*, *mistake*, *inaccuracy* and *superfluous*. What is more, he frequently hedged his comments, writing "ought it not to be . . . ?" (1762: 19), ". . . would have made the sentence more strictly grammatical" (1762: 35), "I doubt much of the propriety of . . ." (1762: 63), "perhaps ought to be written in this manner" (1762: 68), "it would have been equally right, if . . ." (1762: 136). To be sure, there are stronger condemnations, such as "obsolete, or at least vulgar; and we may add likewise improper" (1762: 20), "this abuse has long been growing upon us" (1762: 88), "Some of our best Writers have frequently fallen into this" (1762:

122–123) and “The Construction is hazardous, and hardly justifiable” (1762: 137), but of someone of Lowth’s reputation one would have expected him to use the injunction “should be” more frequently, whereas this phrase occurs only once, as against 21 instances of the weaker “it ought to be” and two instances of even weaker “ought it not to be . . . ?”.¹² Murray, by comparison, expresses himself much more forcefully: Vorlat (1996: 168) notes that his grammar contains “62 occurrences of deontic ‘should’, 52 of ‘ought to’, 21 of ‘must’, 12 of deontic ‘cannot’ (i.e. it is ‘forbidden’), 5 of ‘to be to’, 2 of ‘might have been’ and 1 of ‘shall’”. Murray had based much of his grammar of 1795 on Lowth’s (Vorlat 1959), and in doing so he regularly converted Lowth’s strictures into straightforwardly proscriptive rules.

An analysis of Lowth’s actual words of condemnation in relation to the survey by Sundby et al. (1991) shows that he hardly deserves the epithet that has come to attach itself to him in the course of history (see also Yáñez-Bouza 2008; Chapman 2008). The question is how his name has come to be so strongly attached to the notion of prescriptivism. I believe the answer may be found in the reception and immediate popularity of his grammar combined with his request at the end of the preface to the first edition of his grammar, which reads as follows:

The following short System is proposed only as an Essay, upon a Subject, tho’ of little esteem, yet of no small importance; and in which the want of something better adapted to real use and practice, than what we have at present, seems to be generally acknowledged. If those, who are qualified to judge of such matters, and do not look upon them as beneath their notice, shall so far approve of it, as to think it worth a revisal, and capable of being approved into something really useful; their remarks and assistance, communicated through the hands of the Bookseller, shall be received with all proper deference and acknowledgement. (1762: xv)

These words also show that his ambitions with the grammar reached well beyond that of a piece of work “drawn up for the use of [his] little Boy”. He had admonished his friend James Merrick to read his grammar critically, and to Joseph Spence he had written similarly. Many people complied with his request, sending Lowth comments and suggestions for improvement. A large number of those found their way into the second edition, which should therefore perhaps be considered the first full edition of the grammar proper.¹³ I will return to this below.

As for the reception of the grammar, I have come across an interesting quotation from a letter by a certain Thomas Fitzmaurice addressed to Adam

Smith (1723–1790), who was later to publish *An inquiry into the nature and causes of the wealth of nations* (1776). The letter is dated about three weeks after the publication of the grammar, an extraordinarily short span of time if one takes into consideration the fact that the book had to be ordered from London, despatched to Oxford and was subsequently read. The quotation is important, because it tells us why the grammar was so eagerly received:

Pray have you seen Dr Louths English Grammar which is just come out? It is talk'd of much. Some of the *ingenious men* with whom this University overflows, are picking faults and finding Errors in it at present. Pray what do you think of it? I am going to read Harris's *Hermes* now, having read this Grammar. I heard lately an objection to an Expression in your Book, which I think has some foundation. It is in the Beginning of the 1st Section upon Custom: the Expression is a *Haunch* Button, which is not, I imagine exactly English. (Oxford, 26 February 1762; Mossner – Ross eds. 1987, letter 64)

The grammar thus immediately became the talk of the town, and people were evidently giving it the same treatment as Lowth had given the great authors of the time in his footnotes, i.e. “picking faults and finding Errors in it”. Inspired by the book and the current mood, Fitzmaurice even found fault with an expression used by Adams himself, in his book *The theory of moral sentiments*, which had been published a few years previously in 1759. Lowth's grammar was thus not a grammar for children but for university men.

As a grammarian, Lowth was the first to take the approach of putting “our most approved authors”, as he calls them in his preface, in the pillory because of the linguistic errors they had committed. According to Percy (2008: 137–138), however, it was common practice among periodical reviewers of the time to criticise writers for their grammatical errors, and she notes that “some grammatical shibboleths may even have been cited in reviews before they appeared in grammar books” (see also Percy 1996: 350). Reviewers continued to do so after the publication of the grammar, and we find a large number of added references to grammatical mistakes in later editions of Lowth's grammar (Navest 2006). Lowth's readers must have sent him additional quotations in great numbers, as is clear from the following acknowledgement to James Merrick of 25 October 1764:

I am much obliged to You & Your Friends for the Remarks. In the Paper inclosed I acknowledge the hand of M^r. Loveday, to whom I beg my best Respects & Thanks. On Grammar p. 117, 118. You sent me something, to the same purpose I believe, before, referring to D^r. Birch's *Life of Tillotson*, 2^d Edition; but I c^d. not meet with

y^t. Edition time enough, nor find y^e. place referred to, in y^e. first Edition. The 2 Editions of y^e. Grammar ^{now published} have been finished at the Press some months ago; so that y^e. opportunity of Correction is past. (Lowth to Merrick; Bodl. Lib. MS. Eng. Lett. C. 573, f. 106)

As promised, the comments received were acknowledged in second and later editions of the grammar, though only in the most general terms (Tieken-Boon van Ostade and Navest 2006). “Picking faults and finding Errors” with famous authors as well as with each other was evidently a popular enterprise with writers at the time, similar to the fashion of finding additions to the *OED* for a number of decades after it was first published.

5. No need of an index?

When consulted by his publishers as to whether a reprint of his grammar should be supplied with a Table of Contents, perhaps in order to make the grammar more attractive to the reading public fifteen years after its original publication, Lowth declined, saying: “A Grammar always is, or ought to be, ranged so exactly under its proper heads in so clear a method, y^t. no one can be at a loss to find y^e. part on w^{ch}. it is to be consulted” (21 July 1778, Lowth to James Dodsley; BL Add. MS 35,339, f. 49). The reprint appeared without an “index”, so the publishers took his advice to heart, despite the fact that one had already been prepared.¹⁴ In order to determine to what extent Lowth’s claim was correct and whether the printers did right in listening to him, I will take a closer look at the arrangement of the grammar. By the use of “proper heads” Lowth referred to the fact that the material in the grammar appears under capitalised headings: Letters, Syllables, Words, Article, Substantive, Pronoun, Pronouns, Persons, Cases, Adjective, Verb, to HAVE, to BE, Irregular verbs, Adverb, Preposition, Conjunction, Interjection, Sentences, Phrases, Principal parts, Adverbs, Prepositions, Relatives, Conjunctions, Interjections, Punctuation and Praxis. One would, however, have to know a great deal about how grammars were customarily arranged in order to be able “to find y^e. part on w^{ch}. it is to be consulted”. Grammars were traditionally arranged very similarly, as in the case of Priestley’s grammar (1761), which opens as follows:

Q. WHAT is GRAMMAR?

A. GRAMMAR is the art of using words properly.

Q. Of how many parts doth Grammar consist?

- A. Of four; ORTHOGRAPHY, ETYMOLOGY, SYNTAX and PROSODY (Priestley 1761: 1).

Priestley also lists the parts of speech (“Classes of words”), another element of the traditional arrangement of grammars at the time:

- Q. How many *Classes*, or kinds of words are there?
 A. Eight (b); NOUNS, ADJECTIVES, PRONOUNS, VERBS, ADVERBS, PREPOSITIONS, CONJUNCTIONS, and INTERJECTIONS (Priestley 1761: 2).

Apart from the fact that Lowth used a different system of parts of speech, his grammar is arranged fairly similarly, though this could have been made more explicit in the presentation of the headings. When rearranged and given chapter and section headings, as in a modern publication of the same kind, Lowth’s list of headings may be made to look more self-evident, and the contents presented more logically:

1. Letters	2
2. Syllables	6
3. Words	7
3.1. Article	15
3.2. Substantive	21
3.3. Pronoun	31
3.3.1. Pronouns	33
3.3.2. Persons	33
3.3.3. Cases	33
3.4. Adjective	40
3.5. Verb	44
3.5.1. to HAVE	48
3.5.2. to BE	51
3.5.3. Irregular verbs	64
3.6. Adverb	90
3.7. Preposition	91
3.8. Conjunction	92
3.9. Interjection	94
4. Sentences	95
4.1. Phrases	96
4.2. Principal parts	102
4.2.1. Adverbs	126
4.2.2. Prepositions	126
4.2.3. Relatives	133

4.2.4. Conjunctions	139
4.2.5. Interjections	150
5. Punctuation	154
6. Praxis	173

Lindley Murray's grammar shows considerable improvement on his source, as the book does contain a table of contents, so that the reader knows which page to turn to for a particular subject without having to leaf through it as in the case of Lowth's grammar. Strikingly, this Table of Contents shows that Murray dealt with double negation as a separate subject. The section in question reads as follows:

RULE XVI

Two negatives, in English, destroy one another, or are equivalent to an affirmative; as, "Nor did they not perceive him," that is, "they did perceive him." "Never shall I not confess," that is, "I shall never avoid confessing," or, "I shall always confess." But it is better to express an affirmation by a regular affirmative than by two negatives. (Murray 1795: 121)

The disappearance of multiple negation is usually attributed to Lowth (cf. Baugh and Cable 1993: 274), but he did not deal with it in his first edition. A comparison with the expanded second edition of the grammar shows that a stricture against the use of double negation was added only later (Lowth 1763: 139–140): possibly, one of his readers had pointed out an oversight in this respect. The wording of the stricture is identical to that in Murray's grammar except for the addition of the final sentence. Murray had thus turned what was in effect no more than a decriptive statement into advice to avoid double negation (Tieken-Boon van Ostade 2008b).

The same applies to another "double" construction, the double comparative and superlative, as in *more larger* and *most easiest*; like double negation, these constructions are heavily stigmatised today (González-Díaz 2008). The stricture likewise first appears only in the second edition of Lowth's grammar, in a footnote (1763: 41), and, moreover, not in the section headed "Sentences" where it would be expected to occur and where indeed the stricture against double negation was found; instead, it is found under the heading Adjective, in the first part of the grammar ("section 3.4" listed above).¹⁵ In Murray's grammar the stricture, which reads, "Double comparatives and superlatives should be avoided" (1795: 103), is again formulated in more strongly proscriptive words than in Lowth's case, who had merely observed that "Double Comparatives and Superlatives are improper" (1763: 41) – note in particular

Murray's use of "should" here. Murray's stricture, however, does appear in the Syntax section, where it belongs. I consequently think that Lowth's grammar was not arranged as clearly as it could have been, and as he himself evidently believed it was, and that it would have benefited from the addition of an index after all.

6. Double negation and double comparison in eighteenth-century grammars

That strictures against the double negative and the use of double comparatives and superlatives occur in Lowth's grammar and those of his contemporaries at all is peculiar, to say the least. Both types of constructions had been out of general use since the end of the seventeenth century (Nevalainen and Raumolin-Brunberg 2003: 71–72; González-Díaz 2008). Why would Lowth have added them at all, when they were no longer current? The reason is that, though they were no longer widely used by educated speakers or writers at the time (Tieken-Boon van Ostade 1982, 2008b; González-Díaz 2008), they did occur, as they still do today, in the language of the great majority of other speakers of English. According to Hughes and Trudgill (1996: 22), multiple negation today "can be found in most parts of the British Isles . . . because it is in fact the standard language which has diverged from the other varieties". Though today double comparatives and superlatives are possibly less stigmatised than multiple negation,¹⁶ the same might apply here, too. I believe that the reason that both types of strictures came to be included into eighteenth-century grammars was the way in which middle-class families, for whom the grammars were intended in the first place, raised their children. Children from such families were frequently left to the care of servants, including wetnurses and nannies. See, for instance, the following quotation from a letter by Elizabeth Clift (1757–1818), a servant from Bodmin, in Cornwall, originating from the lower social ranks:

whin I Came home from milkin in the morning they told me that master was Gone to margret and he Left word that **I was to Come down with his diner and bring down the Children** with me they new it was athing I did not Like to work on that day [i.e. Friday, considered to be an unlucky day] so I was not working so **I was to Goe down for a walk with the Children** so I had to Carry down dinner and Every thing to Make tay in the afternoon so I had them to tend to dinner and tay to make for them **I had Fransies an Joseph an John with me** an when Master an the Cilldren had drank tea he said I should Give Mr Conic a bason of tea an Mr Eyre and the Children

went out and I had not time to Power out a Coop of tea be fore the Cildren ware Goot up stares a bout the Mesheen so I went up to the hier End of the Room and thir was a trap hatch an ther was a tabel just under so I steept up to see what they ware about an I Cald to Frances to be quite for his father told me not to Let them Goe in to that Room so Frances an Joseph Run out an John went to run after them an fell down throw the trap hatch an fractuard his scull (14 May 1794; Austin 1991: 95; emphasis added)

Those who were intent on climbing the social ladder might have felt that the language of their children stood the risk of being contaminated by the speech of the lower social ranks, with whom they would be in touch on a daily basis (cf. Crowley 1996: 93–94; Arnaud 1998: 143). In *The art of teaching in sport* (1785), Ellenor Fenn indeed offered the following advice:

A judicious mother, conscious that it is not less her duty to form the disposition and capacity, than the constitution of her offspring, catches innumerable occasions of instilling benevolence, of infusing ideas, which are lost (irretrievably lost!) by her, who *sends* her little ones to take their airings with a nursery maid. Nay, it were well, if this negative evil were the worst; many vulgar habits, many erroneous notions, many evil principles, arise from the single circumstance, of a lady neglecting to accompany her children, when they make their excursions beyond their play-ground; and not a few, from the omission of observing their sports at home.

In short, I view a mother as mistress of the revels among her little people; I say among, since she will find, that to engage, occasionally, in their plays, is the most effectual method of regulating their ideas and tempers. (1785: 5–6)¹⁷

The education of children should be the responsibility of their mothers alone. The Lowths clearly thought similarly, so Molly breastfed her own children – there are several references to this in the exchange of letters between them shortly after the birth of little Molly in 1755 – and taught them to read and write as well, while Robert took it upon himself to teach them grammar, as did Mrs Thrale about a decade later. Possibly, they were pioneers in this movement, which, to judge by Fenn's words, was to become more general some twenty years later.

7. Conclusion

Lowth's grammar was thus not a grammar for children. Murray's grammar, published some thirty years later, was already a considerable improvement.

Murray's grammar is a graded grammar, with rules to be memorised in the main text, for the youngest learners, and with further discussion in smaller print for the more advanced learner (Tieken-Boon van Ostade 1996b: 89). In taking over material from his major source, Murray also omitted the references of the quotations which Lowth had provided, evidently for the benefit of scholars rather than for young children. Murray's rules are consequently very learnable, and we find direct echoes of them in many works of nineteenth-century literature. George Eliot, Dickens, Thackeray and Melville, to mention a few examples, must have spent a lot of time in their youth memorising their Murrays.¹⁸

The new attitude with respect to who was to be responsible for the education of one's children is the result of a different perspective on children in general, which developed in the course of the eighteenth century (Stone 1977). If Lowth did not understand the grammatical needs of young children, he is perhaps not to blame, as he in effect appears to have been no more than a pioneer in this new movement. It is interesting to see, as I have tried to show here, that this development was also responsible for the rise of a new phenomenon in the English grammatical tradition, that of the children's grammar proper. Ash's grammar is a good example of this, as were other grammars, particularly by what Cajka (2008) identifies as a new group of "teacher-grammarians", many of whom presented their work as more suitable to the needs of very young children, and hence as introductions to the study of grammar proper. In this respect, Lowth's grammar may be considered as the source, albeit an indirect one, of a very significant innovation in the history of grammar writing.

Notes

1. This article was written in the context of the NWO funded VICI research project "The Codifiers and the English Language: Tracing the Norms of Standard English". I am grateful to Karlijn Navest and Urszula Okulska for their very useful comments on an earlier version of this article.
2. I owe this information to Karlijn Navest.
3. Alston (1965: 104) dates Fenn's *The mother's grammar* 1798 on the grounds that it is referred to in her *Parsing Lessons* of 1798, though noting that no copy has been located. Cf. the first pirated copy of Robert Lowth's grammar of 1762, which was published in Dublin in 1763 (Tieken-Boon van Ostade 2008a).
4. Lowth was made Fellow of the Royal Society of Göttingen in 1765, and he was elected Fellow of the Royal Society in London that same year (Hepworth 1978: 42).

5. Probably at Lowth's publisher's instigation, Robert Dodsley (1704–1764), the grammar had been read critically by William Melmoth (1710–1799), one of Dodsley's other authors, before it was published.
6. James Dodsley (1724–1797) had taken over the publishing business in 1764 after his brother Robert had died.
7. Cf. Edward Synge (1691–1762), Bishop of Elphin (Ireland), who wrote to his daughter Alicia (1733–1807) on 19 May 1747: "I was much pleas'd with Molly's Epistle. It brought to my mind some of yours about the same age [i.e. four] which your good Mother us'd to write from your prattle" (ed. Legg 1996: 25). See also the following remark by Lowth in a letter to his wife dated 29 May 1755: "I concluded my last in haste, & forgot to acknowledge my dear little Tom's Postscript; for w^{ch}. I am much oblig'd to him. Tom will write like his own dear Mama, for I see already some features of her writing in his" (BL Ms Eng. Lett. C 572 f.34).
8. This is also how the grammar was assessed by Webster (see the *Oxford companion to the English language*, ed. McArthur 1992, s.v. "Webster").
9. As Wesley refers to "*Bishop Lowth's Introduction*" (my emphasis) in the first letter, this letter must have been written in 1766, the year in which Margaret Lewen died, instead of in 1764 as the editor suggests; the second letter, which contains exactly the same advice, dates from 1781.
10. The book is available through ECCO (Eighteenth Century Collections Online). I am grateful to Anita Auer for pointing the book out to me. Here as well as below, whenever I quote from eighteenth-century grammars or other works, I made use of ECCO.
11. The quotations were collected by Karlijn Navest.
12. See Myhill (1995), who observes that *should*, as a modal expressing weak obligation, declined sharply in American English after the Civil War (1861–1865), and that *ought* expressing weak obligation increased. Biber et al. (1999: 208) note that *ought* is rare before 1800 in the text types news, fiction and drama. Lowth's grammar thus provides evidence to the contrary, which is only to be expected in view of its normative nature.
13. This is why Reibel (1995) reproduced the second rather than the first edition for his facsimile edition of the grammar.
14. A table of contents was not as yet a common feature in eighteenth-century grammars. A spot check including the grammars by Fell (1784), Webster (1784), Ussher (1785), Coote (1788), Fogg (1792), Hornsey (1793) and Murray (1795) showed that Murray was the only grammar to have one (see below).
15. Note, that there is no subsection called "Adjectives" in the part in which Lowth deals with "Sentences".
16. Crystal's "Grammatical top ten" includes double negation only (Crystal 1995: 194).
17. I am grateful to Karlijn Navest for providing me with this quotation.

18. See the following quotation from the *ODNB* Online: before the age of ten, Frances Mary Buss (1827–1894), who later became headmistress of a private school, was sent to a “school in Kentish Town kept by a Miss Cook, which she remembered as simply consisting of children learning Murray’s Grammar” (Weblog The Codifiers and the English Language, quote of the month, summer 2006; <http://codifiers.weblog.leidenuniv.nl/>).

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