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Terrorists, fanatics, and extremists: The language of anti-Muslim prejudice

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Abstract: This paper examines contemporary expressions of anti-Muslim prejudice in Western society. Representations of "Islam" and "Muslim" were collected in a 9.87 billion-word corpus of web-based newspapers and magazines published between 2010 and 2020, in order to identify and analyze usage and connotation. This paper adopts a corpus linguistics approach, in which an analysis of collocation (co-occurring words) and concordance (contextual) data was performed. The results reveal how Islam and Muslim are frequently framed negatively (e.g., as "radical", "extremist", "terrorist", and "violent"), while other negative stereotypes and images of Islam and Muslim people were frequently attested in the data. This paper further explores anti-Muslim linguicism in Anglophone countries and makes an original contribution to the wider debate on the issue of prejudice against Muslim people.

Keywords: Islam, Muslim, corpus linguistics, sociolinguistics, stereotypes, prejudice, linguicism.

1. Introduction

Religious discrimination involves bias, fear, or hatred of an individual or group based on their religious beliefs. It often encompasses prejudice against people based on their race, ethnicity, or nationality, so there is overlapping with racism. Unlike "racism", there is no single label to describe prejudice against religious groups, although specific forms of religious discrimination are so prevalent that they have their own labels, for example, "Islamophobia". Multiple scholars report a global increase in Islamophobia, or anti-Muslim prejudice, over the past few decades (Awan 2014; Esposito and Kalin 2011; Mondon and Winter 2017; Pew 2012; Yilmaz 2016; Zaal 2016).

With 1.8 billion adherents, Islam is the second most popular world religion after Christianity, and it is also the second-most discriminated against religious group worldwide, after Judaism (Lipka 2017). Prejudice against Muslim people goes back as early as the Crusades (the medieval religious wars between Christians and Muslims that were sanctioned by the Latin Church to retake the Holy land from Muslim control) (Mamdani 2005). But in more recent history, since the end of the Cold War (1947-1991) between the United States and the Soviet Union, Islam has been characterized as the current "enemy" of the West (Hippler and Lueg 2007; Kunnummal and Abbasi 2017; Mamdani 2005; Mohideen and Mohideen 2008). Conflicts such as the Iran Hostage Crisis (1979-1981), The Gulf War (1990-1991), and U.S. military operations in Kuwait, Afghanistan, and Iraq have led to stigma against Islam and Muslim people in Western societies. In particular, anti-Muslim language has increased dramatically following the "9/11" attacks of September 11, 2001 against the United States, and subsequent acts of terrorism perpetrated by extremist groups, such as ISIL (Atom 2014; Kunnummal and Abbasi 2017; Sultan 2016; Bukhari et al. 2019). This paper investigates patterns of representation around the words "Islam" and "Muslim" to uncover contemporary portrayals of the religion and its people, and social attitudes towards them.

Previous research that has examined the representation of Islam and Muslim people in the Western news media has generally found evidence for negative bias. Baker et al. (2013b) studied representations around "Muslim" in the British press and found that the collocations *Muslim world* and *Muslim community* were used to collectivize Muslims, both emphasizing their sameness to each other and their difference to 'The West'. Saeed (2007) also examined the representation of Islam and Muslims in the British press, discovering that British Muslims are depicted as the "alien other" through continuous reference to their alleged "deviance" and "un-Britishness". Mishra (2007)

analyzed gendered representations of Muslim men and women in the *New York Times*, finding that Muslim women were obsessively linked to the veil and portrayed as victims in need of Western liberation, while Muslim men were portrayed as violent and dangerous. Ahmed & Matthes (2016) provide a meta-analysis of 345 published studies, which showed that Muslims tend to be negatively framed, while Islam is dominantly portrayed as a violent religion. Akbarzadeh & Smith (2005) examined *The Age* and *Herald Sun* newspapers in Australia, finding that their discourse contributed to the reproduction of negative, Orientalist stereotypes of Islam and Muslim people as violent, intolerant, barbaric, backward, and sexist. Acim (2015) studied representations of Islam and Muslims in the discourse of the *New York Times* Op-Eds, in which he found evidence for overlexicalization, that is, the proliferation of words for designating Muslims, including "Muslim rage", "irate Muslims", and "Muslim suicide bombers". Silva (2017) analyzed *New York Times* articles from 1969-2014, finding that radicalization discourses of Muslim people are not new, but are the result of complex sociolinguistic and historical developments.

This paper aims to expand on the above research, using a large corpus to collect examples of natural language use in Anglophone countries from 2010 to present day, and to examine the data in light of current events.

2. Definitions and terminology

Before discussing objectives and methodology, it is necessary to explain the language choices used in this paper. Islam is the religious system revealed by the prophet Muhammad. The religion arose in the early seventh century in the community of Mecca (which is in present day Saudi Arabia) (Esposito 1999). The name "Islam" dates back to the seventeenth century in English and is a borrowing from Turkish *islām* ("the Muslim religion") and also Arabic *islām* meaning "submission or resignation (to the will of God)" (OED 2019). It is often claimed that Islam means "peace" in Arabic, and while this is not technically correct, the word is related to *salaam*, literally meaning "peace", which is a Muslim greeting (cf. Hebrew *shalom*). Early English names for the faith that are now obsolete include the fifteenth century term *Mahometry*, and the sixteenth century names *Mahometism* or *Mahometanism* (these terms were prejudiced in that they referred to "idolatry"). In the sixteenth century, *Ismaelite* referred specifically to Arab Muslims, who were said to be the decedents of the Biblical character Ishmael (Websters 1913). *Muhammadism* and *Mohammedism* were used in the seventeenth century, while *Islamism* emerged in the eighteenth century. Today, the religion is known as "Islam" and a follower is called a "Muslim", which comes from Arabic *muslim*, "one who submits" (to the faith) (OED 2019). The variant *Moslem* was formerly common in English, but is now considered to be outdated, and is often offensive to stakeholders. "Muslim" is both an exonym used outside of the community and also a self-identifying label that is preferred by stakeholders.

In Anglophone countries, anti-Muslim sentiment is so common and normalized that a specific term emerged for the phenomenon: "Islamophobia" (Mondon & Winter 2017). The phrase "Everyday Islamophobia" (which is modeled after colloquial terms to refer to related forms of discrimination "everyday racism", "everyday sexism", and "everyday ableism") describes the discrimination and prejudice that are daily experiences for Muslim people living in the West, and anyone perceived to be Muslim (Davids 2009; Beshara 2019). "Islamophobia" is not a recent innovation but has been in use since the 1920s (OED 2019). The term was probably modeled after "Germanophobia" ("a strong dislike of Germany or Germans"), Francophobia ("an intense dislike of France or the French"), and "xenophobia" ("a deep antipathy to foreigners"), which are terms that can be traced to the nineteenth century (OED 2019). The suffix *–phobia* has since been used to label other forms of prejudice, including "homophobia" (prejudice towards LGBTQ+ people) and "transphobia" (prejudice towards transgender people). "Phobia" can imply a clinical disorder involving an extreme or irrational fear of an object or a situation (cf. claustrophobia, agoraphobia, etc.). Islamophobia is not purported to be a psychological condition, but describes prejudice against Muslim people.

"Islam" is often conflated with "Muslim", although Islam is an ideology while Muslim is an identity (Gottschalk et al. 2008; Imam 1997). Islam and Muslim are not synonymous although negative attitudes towards the religion are frequently conferred to Muslim people who are criticized by way of their religion. The label "Islamophobia" purportedly does not refer to disagreement with or legitimate theological or political criticisms of Islam. However, to delegitimize the term and deny racism, some argue that they criticize Islam as a religion, but do not intend to criticize Muslim people and culture (Rizvi 2016). "Islamophobia" is also criticized as an accusation that shuts down debate (Versi 2018). Attacking Muslim people via Islam is then variously defended as "freedom of speech", "artistic expression", and "democracy" (Mohideen and Mohideen 2008). "Islamophobe" and "Islamophobic" are often construed as slurs, in the same way that people often reject the labels "racist" or "bigot" (Stollznow 2020). To deny the accusation of Islamophobia, some speakers claim, "I'm not an Islamophobe, but…" to precede anti-Muslim rhetoric. Given these ambiguities surrounding the use of "Islamophobia," and the manner in which criticizing Islam as a religion has been used to justify criticizing Muslim people, this term is often dispreferred by stakeholders. For these reasons, this paper favors specific terms such as "anti-Muslim prejudice" and "anti-Muslim violence" over "Islamophobia".

3. Objectives

The goal of this paper is to examine representations of "Islam" and "Muslim" in a large corpus, to identify contemporary anti-Muslim expressions. Specifically, this study examines authentic language that occurred on the web from 2010 to present day. The study explores language use within the context of Anglophone countries. That is, countries with a majority of native English speaking people, including the United States, United Kingdom, Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and the Republic of Ireland. This study analyses anti-Muslim language by observing and interpreting common patterns across these expressions using corpus linguistic techniques, in particular, word frequencies, collocation analysis, and concordance data analysis.

4. Methodology

The data collected and analyzed in this paper was retrieved from the NOW corpus (News On the Web), which is freely available and searchable online through www.english-corpora.org/now/, a corpus manager and text analysis software (Davies 2013). The NOW corpus is a database of modern language in usage, compiled from web-based newspapers and magazines from 2010 to present day. These samples of natural text include written and spoken registers, and come from across multiple varieties of English used in Anglophone countries, including U.K. English, U.S. English, Australian English, New Zealand English, and Canadian English. The current version of the corpus contains over 9.4 billion words, while the database is added to on a monthly basis. The data were retrieved from the NOW corpus during November 2019-April 2020 and form the basis for the present study.

This paper adopts a qualitative corpus linguistics approach, specifically, citing frequency data, and using methods of collocation analysis and concordance analysis (Barlow 2011; Gries 2013; Hunston 2006; Pollach 2011; Stubbs 2001). The frequency count tallies the number of instances of words in a corpus. Collocations (co-occurring words) are common or fixed expressions consisting of two or more words that correspond to some conventional way of saying things (Sinclair 1991; Manning & Schütze 1999). For example, the adjective "strong" is frequently combined with certain nouns to form collocations such as *strong argument*, *strong accent*, *strong wind*, and *strong coffee*. Collocational analysis postulates that the meaning of a word can be determined by its immediate textual environment, or that "you shall know a word by the company it keeps" (Firth 1956). A collocational profile of a word provides a deeper understanding of the meaning of the word and its contexts of usage, especially when used in tandem with concordance analysis. Concordance searches generate authentic examples of a search term in context, to provide further semantic insight.

Using the NOW search interface, I performed list searches for the nodes "Islam" and "Muslim" to generate frequency data. Then I used the collocates search feature to generate lists of words that co-occur with these nodes, using the default value of '5' for the window span. The collocates were sorted by relevance, to measure the strength of association between the co-occurring words (NOW uses the Mutual Information Score). The options tab for searching collocates was set to 500 results. These searches also supplied concordance lines to show context, from which salient examples were extracted to demonstrate usage. From this data, I compiled tables of the query word frequency and their top collocates. All collocates were then examined and put into thematic categories through manual concordance analysis. The data are presented, analyzed, and discussed below.

5. Data and Analysis

5.1 Frequency

For the purposes of this article, the analysis focuses on the nodes "Islam" and "Muslim", which are frequent in the corpus data and also highly salient as terms related to the religion and identity. Using the frequency list feature, these query words were initially searched for occurrences within the corpus.

Table 1: Corpus frequency of nodes

Node	Part of speech	Frequency
Islam	Noun	355,126
Muslim	Adjective	551,097

In the NOW corpus, nominal "Islam" appears with a total corpus frequency of 355,126 and adjectival "Muslim" appears 551,063 times.

To give context to the findings, "Muslim" (adj.) appears in the corpus with high frequency in comparison to searches for "Christian" (468,024), "Jewish" (260,839) or "Hindu" (211,216). "Islam" (n.) appears with a higher occurrence than "Christianity" (57,385), "Judaism" (16,241) or "Hinduism" (18,828). Similarly, "Muslims" (n.) appears with greater frequency (365,503) than "Christians" (155,989), "Jews" (136,283) or "Hindus" (64,143). That Muslim and Islam are over-represented as descriptors compared to other major world religion names is suggestive of overlexicalization. Teo (2000:20) explains that overlexicalization "results when a surfeit of repetitious, quasi-synonymous terms is woven into the fabric of news discourse, giving rise to a sense of 'over-completeness' in the way participants in the news discourse are described". This issue is further considered in the discussion section.

5.2 Common collocates of Islam and Muslim

Within the corpus, the nodes were then searched to find co-occurring words, with the options tab set to a maximum of 500 results per word. Below is a list of the top ten collocates for each query word, which were sorted by relevance.

Table 2: Most frequent collocates of Islam (noun) and Muslim (adjective)

Node	**Collocate**	**Frequency**
Islam	religion	9,717
	state	6,609
	Christianity	6,319
	group	5,931
	Pakistan	5,612
	radical	5,601
	Iraq	5,598
	movement	5,337
	converted	4,009
	militant	3,866
Muslim	community	34,441
	women	27,298
	countries	26,446
	world	17,132
	group	16,859
	faith	15,944
	people	15,350
	Christian	12,045
	population	10,960
	extremist	10,678

Radical and *militant* (Islam) and (Muslim) *extremist* have explicit negative connotations; although most of these top collocates appear to have neutral connotations on the surface, e.g., (Muslim) *community* and *countries*. However, upon closer examination of the concordance data it was revealed that many seemingly unbiased phrases actually reveal negative bias in context. For example, *converted* is often framed negatively as "forcibly converted to Islam", *Christianity* is used in such phrases as "Islam is the enemy of Christianity" while *religion* reveals negative bias in constructions such as "Islam is a violent religion". The following example of *religion* as a collocate of Islam, extracted from the concordance data, exemplifies this usage.

> Islam is not a religion of peace. It is rooted in worship of Allah, recognition of Mohammad as Allah's prophet and murdering non-Muslims in the most cruel of ways in the name of Allah (Ballantyne 2015).

Implicitly negative usages in public discourse can create an "us and them" dichotomy and lead to the othering of Muslim people. For example, two word clusters such as *Muslim world* and *Muslim population* can also appear to be neutral when considered alone, but in context they can be used to unfairly collectivize Muslims as a homogenous group (Baker et al. 2013b). These usages can have significant influence on the way we think and talk about these groups of people, and contribute to a negative semantic prosody of these terms. Technically, these usages are not neutral at all.

5.3 Categorizations of collocates

This subset of collocates provides strong initial indications regarding the main topics indexed by the

use of Islam and Muslim, including conflict and violence (*radical*, *militant*, *extremist*) and Islam as a homogenized organized entity (*movement*, *community*, *world*) (cf. Baker et al. 2013b). However, to obtain a bigger picture of the situation, all 1000 collocates were examined and categorized through manual concordance analysis. This exercise revealed that the most salient collocates of Islam and Muslim can be sorted into a small number of thematic categories (summarized in Table 3).

Table 3: Categorized collocates of Islam and Muslim

Categories	**Examples of salient collocates**
Religion	*converted, Christian, belief, faith, teachings*
National entity	*community, countries, population, nation, world*
Culture	*values, headscarf, veil, tradition, incompatible*
Immigration	*immigrants, migrants, refugees, asylum, ban*
Conflict	*violent, terrorist, extremist, radical, fanatical*
Group/organization	*state, rebels, movement, regime, insurgents*
Language	*Arabic, words, speaking, writing, profiling*

What emerges from the examination of these categories is that Islam and Muslim are often constructed negatively, in both explicit and implicit ways.

These thematic categories and the analysis are discussed in more detail below.

6. Discussion

In examining the frequency of the query words in the corpus, it was determined that there is an excess of occurrences of "Islam" and "Muslim", in comparison to other major religions (e.g., Judaism, Christianity, and Hinduism). This can be interpreted as possible overlexicalization, which often occurs when a subject is deemed to be problematic or contentious. The evidence that Islam and Muslim are overlexicalized appears in the data, in which the words are highly productive in pejorative phrases, such as *violent Islam*, *Islamic violence*, *violent Muslim*, and *Muslim violence*. This overlexicalization of Islam and Muslim is borne out in previous studies in which the terms are used excessively in labeling (Mayr & Machin 2012; Malik 2013; Acim 2015).

Overlexicalization can be an indicator of prejudice (Delcour & Hustinx 2017; Suleiman 2008). Prejudice is a recurring theme throughout the data, with the collocates *discrimination* (1,025), *prejudice* (332), *stereotypes* (308), and *misconceptions* (267) appearing with "Islam", while the phrase "anti-Muslim" appears 16,361 times in the corpus. In examining the collocates and concordance data, a number of themes emerge surrounding representations of Islam and Muslim people. In particular, the religion and people are frequently portrayed as "violent", and linked to "terrorism" and "extremism". The data further provide insight into popular Western perceptions and negative stereotypes of Islam and Muslim people regarding issues of religion, identity, immigration, conflict, culture, and language.

6.1 Islam and Muslim people portrayed as "violent"

In the mainstream western media, Islam is frequently vilified as an inherently "violent" religion, while Muslim people are often associated with violence and aggression (Ahmed & Matthes 2016; Bail 2012; Baker et al, 2013a; Ibrahim 2010; Powell 2011). This perception is borne out by the data in which the collocates *violent, violence,* and *violently* appear with high frequency with Islam and Muslim. The following example is found in the corpus.

> It is foolish to deny that there is a violent edge to Islam (Almond 2019).

In accordance with Mishra's (2007) study, Muslim men are especially associated with violence, and often linked to words such as *rage, anger, aggressive, dangerous, violence,* and *violent.*

> The more devout a Muslim is, the more likely he is to be violent (Rab 2012).

In the data, Islam and Muslim are commonly described by violence-related collocates, including *cruel, brutal, vicious, evil, Satanic,* and *savage*. In response to this common Western perception, followers of Islam often defend their religion as "peaceful". As noted above, a folkloric etymology of "Islam" claims that the word means "peace" in Arabic. In the data, adjective predicates of Islam as *peaceful* (234) are outweighed by negative descriptors of Islam as *violent* (848). Similarly, "Muslim" is associated with *violence* (3,056) more frequently than *peace* (46). Furthermore, the concordance data reveals that pragmatically, not all usages of "peaceful" as a co-occurring word have positive connotations.

> Islam is violent it is NOT a peaceful religion! There are over one hundred verses in the Quran that tell Muslims to wage war and kill non-Muslims (Atheist Republic 2018).

In the conservative U.S. media, Islam is frequently portrayed as "violent" and contrasted against "Christian America", which is represented as "peaceful" (Powell 2011). On the television show *The 700 Club*, Evangelist Pat Robertson warned that Americans need to "wake up" to the "danger" that Islam presents and added, "Who ever heard of such a bloody, bloody, brutal type of religion? But that's what it is. It is not a religion of peace" (Media 2006). Ironically, the vilification of Islam as "violent" has escalated violence against Muslim people in Anglophone countries in recent years (Rizga 2016). The data often refers to *mobs attacking* Muslim people (301) and *mob violence* (550) against Muslims. This is also represented as *anti-Muslim violence* (which appears 218 times in the corpus).

> Attacks on Muslim are often called hate crimes instead of terrorist attacks, so news audiences may not be aware of the prevalence of anti-Muslim violence (Herrera 2019).

On March 15, 2019, such an incident of anti-Muslim violence occurred in Christchurch, New Zealand. On that day, a terrorist stormed the Masjid al Noor Mosque and Linwood Islamic Centre (Elmasry 2019). Armed with semi-automatic weapons and shotguns, he opened fire on the worshippers, killing 50 people and injuring 50 more. These events occurred during the *jummah* (or *jum'ah*) prayers and sermons on Fridays at noon, which are particularly important for Muslims and involve large numbers of worshippers. The first 17 minutes of the attack was live-streamed on social media in a graphic video. Prior to the attack, one of the perpetrators posted to Twitter and 8chan an 87-page manifesto filled with anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim rhetoric. He revealed himself to be a white supremacist and part of the "alt-right", while he cited United States President Donald Trump

as a "renewed symbol of white identity" (Abdelaziz et al. 2019). During the media coverage and political commentary that followed, the events were characterized as a "hate crime" or "mass shooting" rather than a "terrorist attack", while the label "gunman" was favored instead of "terrorist".

> At least 50 people were killed at two mosques in *Christchurch*, New Zealand, by accused *gunman* Brenton Tarrant in a mass *shooting* on Friday, March 15th (NBC 2019).

6.2 Islam and Muslim people linked to "terrorism"

This highlights a bias in the labeling used in the news coverage of terrorist attacks and media representations of Muslims versus non-Muslims. The word "terrorism" is typically ignored in the context of violence committed by non-Muslim people, although used liberally in news reports covering crimes committed by Muslim perpetrators (West & Lloyd 2017). In the data, *terrorism*, *terrorist*, *terror*, and *suicide bomber* are strongly associated with Islam and Muslim people, and especially Muslim men. The collocates *terrorism* (6,141) and *terror* (3,417) appear with Islam, while *terrorist* (1,757) and *terrorists* (1,151) are common collocates of "Muslims".

> To a *Muslim terrorist*, unbelievers are unbelievers, be they children, women, or men, and killing them is doing *Allah's* work (Brown 2016).

In contrast, when a terrorist act is committed by a non-Muslim, the perpetrator's religion is generally not invoked, even in cases of domestic terrorism. For example, the Irish Republican Army (IRA) has carried out numerous acts of terror over the past 50 years, although the media does not refer to the group by their religious affiliation (the group is rooted in Catholic Irish nationalism). Similarly, acts of domestic terrorism are cast as minor threats and perceived as isolated incidents committed by troubled individuals or a "lone wolf" (Powell 2011). But in the case of violent acts committed by groups with a connection to Islam, they are seen as organized acts of terrorism, while individuals are invariably reduced to their religion (Mohideen and Mohideen 2008).

In general, the western conception of terrorism is currently linked to Islam and Muslim people (Powell 2011; West & Lloyd 2017). In recent decades, incidents such as the September 11 attacks, attacks linked to ISIL in the U.S., U.K., Canada, and Australia, stories of suicide bombings, and the Charlie Hebdo shooting in 2015 loom large in the public consciousness as evidence of this connection. In the corpus, *terror*, *terrorism*, and *terrorist* appear in various contexts with different connotations. Some usage reports current events, while other usage reveals negative bias. For example, the phrase "Muslims are terrorists" (355) holds all Muslims complicit in the creation of terror. Other examples argue the claim using negation.

> It is certainly true that not all Muslims are terrorists, however, sadly we say that the majority of terrorists in the world are Muslims (al-Rashid 2004).

This phrase still implies that *some* Muslims are terrorists, or *all* terrorists are Muslims, which invariably associates terrorism and terrorists with Muslim people. In response to attacks on Muslim people in the aftermath of 9/11, British Prime Minister Tony Blair stated, "What happened in America was not the work of Islamic terrorists, it was not the work of Muslim terrorists. It was the work of terrorists, pure and simple" (Guardian 2001). However, crimes that are complex politically, historically, and socially are naively blamed on Islam and Muslim people. On an episode of the ABC's *The View*, Bill O'Reilly stated "the Muslims killed us on 9/11!" (Ostroy 2017). In response to the events of 9/11, then President of the United States George W. Bush declared the "War in Afghanistan", although much of the general public interpreted this as a war against Islam and Muslim people.

Colloquially known as the "War on Terror", this was perceived as retaliatory to what was referred to as "Islam's War against the West".

6.3 Muslim people portrayed as "extremists"

In Anglophone countries there is a social construction of only two types of Muslim people: "moderates" or "extremists" (Mamdani 2005; Mondon and Winter 2017). "Moderate" tends to imply "liberal", "tolerant" or "open-minded", while so-called "extremist Muslims" are depicted as "radical", "fundamentalist", "intolerant", or "Islamist". These stereotypes have formed a simplistic binary, creating a distinction between "good" and "bad" or "evil" Muslims. Whether a Muslim is categorized as moderate/good or extremist/bad/evil appears to be the based on the individual's religious or theological practices, political position, proclivity towards violence, and goodwill or animosity towards the West (Ramadan 2009). In the data, the collocation "moderate Muslim" (1,036) appears less frequently than "extremist Muslim" (1,740). In general, "moderates" are perceived positively although the concordance data shows that in usage, "moderate Muslim" is often framed negatively.

> There is no such thing as moderate Islam… When people talk about moderate Muslims they are making an error. It is like saying Hitler wasn't such a bad fellow (Devlin 2019).

"Extremist" has negative connotations in most usage and radicalizes Islam and Muslim people. Related collocates found in the data describe some Muslim people as *rebels* (1,498), *fundamentalist* (622), *fanatics* (357), *hardliners* (237), *Salafist* (183), and *Islamist* (121), and refer to Islam as *radical* (5,537), *extremist* (636), *extreme* (477) or *hardline* (338). Collocates of Muslim such as *maniacs*, *fanatics*, *lunatics*, and *loonies* are also suggestive of mental illness or imbalance. *Devout* frequently appears in the corpus (1,521 times) and in some usage the term appears to be a euphemism for extremism (Baker et al. 2013a). Describing Islam as "extremist" conflates the religion with extremist groups that commit violent acts supposedly in the name of Islam. These labels further demonize and vilify Islam and Muslim people as a potential danger and enemy to the West. In the data, Islam is frequently described as a *threat* (943), *problem* (631), *danger* (602), and an *enemy* (549) to the Western world.

> We can not afford to be timid about calling out the threat of radical Islam (Mendoza 2019).

"Extremist" Islam and Muslims are strongly linked to militancy and war. In accordance with Mishra's (2007) study, Muslim men are especially associated with words such as *militant*, *fighter*, and *war*. In the data, Muslim appears with the collocates *killing* (2,148), *militant* (1,151), *hatred* (1,502), *attacks* (1,737), *atrocities* (758), *genocide* (753), and *slaughter* (367). Islam appears with the collocates *militant* (4,389), *death* (672), *fear* (509), *lynching* (400), *murder* (116), and *hates* (302). Political propaganda promotes the idea that Muslim people "hate" non-Muslim people and Western societies, especially America. In a 2016 interview, Donald Trump declared, "I think Islam hates us". (Schleifer 2016). The idea that Muslim people have contempt for non-Muslims fosters suspicion and unease in the West. This is aided by the folk belief that Muslim people denigrate non-Muslims as "kafir" ("unbeliever") or "infidels". This is related to a myth that the Qur'an commands Muslims to kill "infidels."

> Evangelist Franklin Graham has described his horror on finding so many Koranic passages that command the killing of infidels: the Koran, he thinks, preaches violence (Jenkins 2009).

It is interesting to note that "infidel" originally denoted a non-Christian, especially a Muslim (Hughes 2006). Related to the myth that it is doctrine to kill non-Muslims is the concept of an *Islamic bomb* (98), which appears in the data as a collocation. Since the late 1970s, there had been a fear in Western society of an "Islamic bomb", a mythical nuclear weapon developed by an Islamic nation that would be used to wage war against the West (Sanadjian 2008). Following the 9/11 attacks on the United States, the fear of an "Islamic bomb" evolved into the fear of the development of "weapons of mass destruction" ("WMDs") in the Middle East. This became the premise for the 2003 invasion of Iraq, which initiated the Iraq War. In the data, the collocates *nuclear*, *weapon*, *war*, *bomb*, *jihad*, *jihadism*, and *jihadist* appear in association with Islam and Muslim.

> Extremist Muslims have waged a jihad against western civilization because they want westerners to convert or die (Stankiewicz and Panandiker 2016).

Jihad is often mistranslated as "holy war" or "terrorism" although it is more accurately understood as a "struggle" on behalf of Islam or an internal spiritual struggle (Barlas 2003).

Further to being perceived as a military threat, Islam and the Muslim world are frequently characterized in the media by misconceptions and negative stereotypes. They are portrayed as archaic, opposed to modernity, and regressive (Uenal 2016). In the data, Islam is variously described as *monolithic*, *barbaric*, *backward*, *primitive*, *ultraconservative*, and *medieval*. Islam is further stereotyped as chauvinistic and is described in the data as *strict*, *oppressive*, *patriarchal*, *puritanical*, *polygamist*, *misogynistic*, and *sexist*. Mishra's (2007) study shows that women are often portrayed as victims of Islamic practices, including such horrors as rape, torture, stoning, and enduring patriarchal oppression, as evidenced by the following quote from the data.

> The reason that Islam is called out for being sexist is because Islamic fundamentalists place restrictions on how women can dress, whether they can vote, whether they are allowed to drive, to leave the house, or to go anywhere without a male family member following her and controlling her behavior (Politics Forum 2013).

The data reveals that Muslim people believe Western society is profoundly misinformed about Islam, holding *ignorant views* (227) of the *authentic* or *true* (2,402) "version" or "teachings" of Islam.

6.4 Ethnocentrism, Orientalism, and the "Clash of Civilizations"

These negative representations of Islam and Muslim people are often a result of Western ethnocentrism, which perceives Western culture as superior and judges Middle Eastern cultures to be inferior. Edward Said developed the idea of "Orientalism" to define the Western world's patronizing representations of the "East", including Middle Eastern, Asian, and African societies (Said 1978). According to this dichotomy, the West is described positively by such words as civilized, sophisticated, democratic, rational, modern, progressive, developed, enlightened, and promoting freedom and humanity (Kassimeris & Jackson 2011; Mamdani 2005; Runnymede 2018; Said 1978). In contrast, the Middle East is negatively portrayed as uncivilized, unsophisticated, undemocratic, and undeveloped (Said 1978; Akbarzadeh & Smith 2005; Silva 2017). These negative perceptions of the Middle East are revealed in the data by the collocates of Islam: *archaic*, *backward*, *oppressed*, *irrational*, and *inhumane*. This apparent conflict of cultural and religious identities has been termed the "clash of civilizations" (Huntington 1996). In Western societies, the prevailing narrative is that Islam is engaged in a *conflict*, *fight*, *battle*, or *war* against the West, in which the so-called "Muslim world" is the aggressor.

The Muslim world is not an actual place although the name appears frequently in the data

(13,435 times). The term is used in political discourse to mark civilizational and racial difference, and implies a place that is distant, faraway, and foreign (Saeed 2007; Baker et al. 2013b). As we have seen, collocations such as *Islam religion*, *Muslim community*, *Muslim countries*, *Muslim region*, *Muslim population*, *Muslim groups*, *Muslim youth*, *Muslim societies*, and *Muslim world* appear to have neutral connotations on the surface, but they are not neutral within context. The following example demonstrates that abstract collectivism can be othering.

> The Muslim world is behind as a whole, and until their poorest people have access to quality education, they're still going to stick to their traditions, no matter how much those traditions continue to oppress them (Greene 2011).

Muslim people are often judged by their apparent similarity or dissimilarity to non-Muslims. As mentioned above, Muslim people labeled as "good" or "moderates" are those who are perceived as more culturally assimilated. However, unassimilated Muslim people living in the West are often viewed as "bad" for their perceived difference and foreignness. Unacculturated Muslims are frequently accused of being unwilling, if not incapable, of assimilating or integrating with Western society (Bowen 2012; Haddad 2013). They are faulted for living separately in cultural *enclaves* (154), and of being culturally *different*, *foreign*, *alien*, and even *deviant* in their lifestyle and *values* (Saeed 2007; Malik 2013). In general, it is often believed that Muslim people do not share the same values and ethos of mainstream Western society, and that they are reluctant to adopt Western values. In the concordance data, Islamic values are frequently described as "incompatible" or "not compatible" with Western values.

> A recent poll published by the BBC suggested the majority of Brits don't think Islam is compatible with Western values (Rashid 2016).

In light of their cultural differences and perceived deviance, Islam and Muslim people living in Western countries are often described as "Un-American", "Un-British", "Un-Australian", etc. (Saeed 2007). They are further accused of being in direct opposition to the West, as "Anti-American", "Anti-British", "Anti-Australian", etc. Their religious traditions are also criticized, including Islamic prohibitions (*haram*, meaning "forbidden") against consuming pork or alcohol, and their practices of worship, such as frequent *prayer* (1,383) (the five daily prayers, known as *salat*), and *fasting* (974) during Ramadan. Especially in the post-9/11 world, cultural differences are viewed with suspicion in the West, where it is feared that Muslim people will impose their own norms and behaviors onto others (Sulaiman-Hill 2007). In the data, it is expressed that the presence of Islamic and Muslim culture in Western countries *endangers* and *threatens* the Western "way of life", referring to the beliefs, customs, and habits of Western society. This kind of language features prominently in the anti-Muslim rhetoric used by right-wing populists to win support (Haynes 2019). For example, the following quote collected from the concordance data was tweeted by Donald Trump during the 2016 U.S. presidential campaign.

> Our *way of life* is under threat by Radical *Islam* and Hillary Clinton cannot even bring herself to say the words (Afzal 2016).

"Way of life" also extends to clothing and appearance. In particular, the West is critical of *Muslim attire* (186), especially that of women, who are often reduced to a single item of clothing. The corpus makes frequent reference to the headscarves worn by some Muslim women. In the data, related collocates include *headscarf* (398), *veil* (378), *veils* (266), *headscarves* (238), *veiled* (148), *scarf*

(134), and the three styles of coverings most known to Westerners: the *hijab* (175), *niqab* (184), and *burka* (121). *Hijab* literally means "modest dress" but also refers to a scarf that covers the head and neck. The *niqab* is a veil that leaves the area around the eyes clear, while the one-piece veil that covers the head and body is called a *burqa* or *burka*. This is the namesake of the "burka ban", a prohibition of face-coverings introduced in Quebec (Canada), Austria, Belgium, France, and Denmark, and which is the subject of ongoing debate in the United Kingdom and Australia. In the data, the collocates *ban* and *banning* are frequently used in conjunction with "hijab", "niqab", and "burka". The West has an apparent need to unveil Muslim women, whose adoption of Western attire is symbolic of liberation and modernism (Mishra 2007). Headscarves are worn for modesty, privacy, and as a marker of religious and cultural identity. They may imply rank and status, power, or resistance, although it is argued by critics in the West that they are "sexist" (under the guise of humanism or feminism because Muslim women are said to be oppressed and subservient) or they are "dangerous" because they conceal the identity of would-be terrorists (Perry 2014). Some concordance lines refer to women who *choose* to wear the veil, or position it as a *right*, while other use verbs such as *forced*, *compelled*, or *required*, that imply the veil is imposed on women. Muslim women wearing veils are simultaneously feared and mocked. In August 2018, Boris Johnson (now the British Prime Minister) ostensibly defended Muslim women's rights to wear the burka, but joked that they look like "bank robbers" and "letter boxes".

> It is absolutely ridiculous that people should choose to go around looking like letter boxes (Johnson 2018).

In the West, this kind of anti-Muslim rhetoric has resulted in violence against Muslim women who have had their headscarves pulled off by attackers in public (Perry 2014). Of course, Muslim women are not the only people to wear veils or scarves in the West. Post 9/11, Sikhs who wear turbans, Indian women, and others who wear headscarves in Western countries are often targeted because they are mistakenly identified as Muslim (Awan and Zempi 2017; Bhatia 2018).

6.5 Muslim people and immigration

Western societies often pride themselves on their multiculturalism and claim to embrace diversity, although many people rail against immigration. In particular, Muslim immigrants are singled out as targets of prejudice because of the negative stereotypes with which they are associated. In the data, Muslim immigrants are referred to disparagingly as "the Muslim presence", which is described as a *threat* to society or democracy, or a *problem*.

> The problem of the Muslim presence is increasingly worrying. There are more and more clashes, more and more demands (Reuters 2018).

In general, how governments should interact with Muslim people around issues of integration, religious freedom, identity, and immigration has been posed as "the Muslim question" (cf. "the Jewish question") (Alexander 2013). In the data, references to Muslim resettlement in the West appear with high frequency, including *immigration* (3,102), *immigrants* (2,895), *refugees* (3,042), *asylum* (1,645) seekers, and *migrants* (1,293). In line with Mishra's (2007) study, in the corpus data, Muslim men are often linked to immigration-related collocates indicating illegality, such as *illegal immigration*, *suspect*, *prisoners*, *gangs*, *arrested*, *detained*, and *deported*.

> The Trump administration deported a Muslim man Thursday who was detained by Border Patrol even though he was married to a U.S. citizen, held a valid work authorization and

> had a pending green card application (Planas 2019).

In the data, Muslim immigrants are described as "fleeing" their homes, land, countries or Western occupation, implying that they are migrating to the West in large numbers. There is a distorted perception of the number of Muslim people living in Western countries, with many people believing that the "Muslim population" in the West is far higher than it is in reality (Morgan & Poynting 2016). The data further reveals a fear of the West being inundated by a "surge" of Muslim immigrants, which is expressed as a *threat* or *danger* of Western countries being *flooded* or *swamped* by Muslims.

> We are in danger of being swamped by Muslims who bear a culture and ideology that is incompatible with our own (AAP 2016).

There is not only a fear of being inundated by Muslims, but also a fear of the *spreading* of Islam, which is likened to a *cancer*, *virus*, or *disease*.

> Islam is a cancer that must be eradicated/eliminated from planet Earth (Atheist Republic 2018).

Areas with majority Muslim populations are described as "overwhelmingly Muslim" or "Muslim dominated". There is a moral panic of "Muslim domination" or an "Islamic take over" in which Muslims will supposedly "take over" a certain Western country, or overthrow the West itself. This is related to a fear that Muslim immigrants will attempt to recruit or forcibly "convert" non-Muslims to Islam. The collocates *converted* (6,609), *conversion* (1,631), and *converting* (1,327) appear with high frequency in conjunction with Islam, and often imply force or duress. This is often expressed as the belief that Muslim immigrants plot to covert Western countries into "Islamic nations" where they will institute Sharia law, or that citizens have a civic duty to prevent "Islamization", that is, the shift of a Western country towards Islam.

> The day after Trump's registry comments, a makeshift militia, wearing military-style camo, some of them masked, showed up outside an Islamic center in Irving, Texas, carrying assault rifles and announcing they had come to stop the 'Islamization of America' (Fisher 2015).

In anti-Muslim rhetoric, Muslim immigration supposedly heralds the "end" or "death" of Europe (or Britain, America, Australia, Canada, etc.) and the "changing face" of the country. Muslim immigrants are accused of "replacing" white people. In the Christchurch terrorist's manifesto, which he named "The Great Replacement" (after an anti-immigrant tract by French writer Renaud Camus), he referred to Muslim immigrants in hyperbolic language, as those who "invade our lands, live on our soil and replace our people" (Webb 2019). In the data, *replace* appears as a collocate with "Muslim".

> His book tells us the truth about how muslims will replace whites in europe and implement sharia law and rape and impregnate all of the white woman (reddit 2019).

The data confirms that Muslim immigrants experience *persecution* (488) and are *persecuted* (429) in the West. They are the targets of verbal abuse in their adopted countries. They report being abused with phrases such as "Go home!", "Go back to your own country", and "Go back to where you belong", revealing a strong sense of the illegitimacy of "the Muslim presence" in Anglophone countries (Perry 2014; Sulaiman-Hill 2007). That Muslim immigrants supposedly do not "fit in" or

"belong" in Western countries is a recurring theme in the data. On a systemic level, proposed government policies promote the belief that Muslim immigrants need to be feared and driven out, or refused entry to Western countries in the first place. As we have seen, in the data, the collocates *ban* and *banning* appear in reference to Muslim women wearing headscarves, while they also appear in reference to Muslim tourists, immigrants, and residents.

> Yes, we should ban Muslim immigration to the US, a common sense proposition obvious to most reasonable people. We are not obliged to accept Muslim immigrants whose religion commands them to kill us and destroy our nation (Stanley 2018).

This push to deny Muslim immigration is referred to colloquially as "the Muslim ban" in the data. Proposed bans against Muslim people often draw populist support. In 2015, Donald Trump called for a travel ban on people from "dangerous countries", and later advocated a "total and complete shutdown" of Muslim people attempting to gain entry to the United States (Johnson 2015). In general, Trump called for the surveillance of Muslim people in the United States, including Muslim Americans who are legal residents. Declaring them to be a threat to national security, he proposed a registry or "watch list" to track all Muslims in the country. Following the 2017 attacks in London, Australian right-wing politician Pauline Hanson called for a ban on Muslim immigration to Australia, tweeting, "Stop Islamic immigration before it's too late" (Dziedzic 2017). In August 2018, Australian Senator for Queensland Fraser Anning invoked a Nazi euphemism in his inaugural speech as Senator, when he called for a ban on Muslim immigration, which he recommended as a "final solution to the immigration problem" (Kwai 2018).

Muslim immigrants are often blamed for the marginalization they experience, although critics of their alleged failure to integrate are also often advocates of measures that would further isolate and marginalize them (Yilmaz 2016). Representations of Muslim people often position them as embroiled in conflict, either as aggressors, or victims (Baker et al. 2013b). In a statement on the day of the 2019 terrorist attacks in New Zealand, Fraser Anning issued the following statement:

> The real cause of bloodshed on New Zealand streets today is the immigration program which allowed Muslim fanatics to migrate to New Zealand in the first place" (…) "Muslims may have been the victims today, usually they are they are the perpetrators". (…) "Just because the followers of this savage belief were not the killers in this instance, does not make them blameless (Baker 2019).

As we have seen, associations such as "fanatics", "killers", and "savage" radicalize and stigmatize Muslim people in general, and specifically immigrants in Western countries, and links them to violence, terrorism, and extremism.

6.6 "Extremist" groups

A significant contributor to the demonization of Islam and Muslim people is that extremist groups purport to be "rooted in Islam", and are perceived as such by the West. Notable groups include Al-Qaeda (Arabic for "the Base", founded 1988 in Pakistan), the Taliban (Pashto for "students", founded 1994 in Afghanistan), Boko Haram (usually translated as "western education is forbidden", founded in 2002 in Nigeria), and the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL or IS, founded 1999 in Iraq). In the data, these groups are often said to misrepresent Islam, and not embody the "true teachings" of Islam or the "true version" of Islam. They are described as promoting a "perverted version of Islam" or a "perversion of Islam", as exemplified by the following quote.

> He has repeatedly condemned the 'poisonous' perversion of Islam used to justify terror attacks (Craw 2017).

As we have seen, Islam and Muslim are associated with collocates denoting extremism, including *extremist*, *radical*, *militant*, *hardline*, *fundamentalists*, *fighters*, and *fanatics*. Further showing evidence for overlexicalization, Islam and Muslim are strongly associated with terms referring to deviant movements, including *group*, *rebels*, *insurgents*, *regime*, *militia*, *armies*, *resistance*, *Islamist*, *Salafist*, and *jihadist*. Many Muslim people are offended by the Western appropriation of "jihad", which links a noble religious concept with violence.

> Jihadists have cells all over the world; they blow up trains in London, nightclubs in Bali and airplanes over Detroit (if they can); and are openly pledged to war on America (Krauthammer 2010).

The data shows that ISIL has gained notoriety in the West post 9/11. The group has been responsible for human rights abuses and war crimes worldwide, including killing civilians, forcing captured women into sexual slavery, and beheading foreigners in Iraq and Syria (Byman 2016). The media initially reported the group by the acronym *ISIS* ("Islamic State of Iraq and Syria"). "Isis" is also the name of an ancient Egyptian goddess, the name borrowed from ancient Greek *Ἶσις* (Lewis and Short 1879). Despite this etymology, the name has pejorated because it has now become synonymous with ISIL. This has been to the detriment of the many people and businesses that share this moniker, who have become the targets of harassment in the mistaken belief they were associated with a terrorist group (Schaub 2015).

> A Denver area store called Isis Books & Gifts wants the world to know its name comes from the Egyptian goddess of healing and motherhood, and it isn't a retail store run by terrorists (AP 2015).

ISIS appears in the data (426) as a collocate of Islam, while *state* (6,609) is one of the top collocates. Today, most officials refer to the group as IS or ISIL instead. However, IS, ISIS, and ISIL are offensive to many Muslims who disapprove of "Islam" and "State" appearing in the acronyms because the group is neither Islamic nor a state. There is a campaign to instead call the group *Daesh*, which is an acronym of their full Arabic name *al-Dawla al-Islamiya fi al-Iraq wa al-Sham* ("Islamic State in Iraq and Syria"). The name is also an insult to the group. Depending on how it is conjugated in Arabic, Daesh means "to trample down and crush", or "a bigot who imposes his views on others" (Khan 2014). ISIL's attacks have reinvigorated the anti-Muslim prejudice ignited by 9/11, and also reinforced the stereotype that Islam is a violent religion, turning Muslim people into scapegoats and providing some Westerners with an excuse to malign the community as a whole. Although they claim to carry out their attacks in the name of Islam, the actions of extremist groups are not representative of Islam and the worldwide Muslim community. In fact, multiple Muslim leaders have denounced their actions as *haram* (forbidden or proscribed by Islamic law), while Sheikh Abdullah bin Bayyah issued a *fatwa* (an authoritative legal pronouncement) against the group (Temple-Raston 2014). In the data, the collocates *condemns* (227) *violence* or *terrorism* appear frequently with Muslim to censure acts committed by extremist groups.

> I know for sure that Islam does not condone these horrific acts, and that the Muslim community condemns them, as they are among the victims (Cleveland 2016).

6.7 Linguicism

The corpus data also highlights another form of anti-Muslim prejudice that is more covert: linguicism. Linguicism is language-related discrimination, which is prejudice against people based on their use of language, dialect, or accent (Skutnabb-Kangas 2015). Post-9/11, anti-Muslim prejudice has led to a spate of linguicism in Western countries and, in particular, a fear of the spoken and written Arabic language. "Arabic" frequently appears in the data (355), although it must be noted that not all Muslim people speak or write Arabic. Similarly, not all Muslim people are Arabs. Classical Arabic is the language of Islam's scripture the Qur'an and also classical literature. Modern Standard Arabic is the universal language of the Arabic speaking world, while there are many colloquial varieties. There are approximately 420 million (native and non-native) speakers of the language worldwide, making it the sixth most spoken language (El Gayar and Suen 2018). However, the concordance data for "Arabic" reveals that for some people in the West, Arabic is inextricably associated with Islam and Muslim people.

> Last year Optus was forced to withdraw advertisements in Arabic from some of its stores because of a similar backlash and threats to staff, from people who ignorantly conflated the Arabic language with Islam and Muslims (Stephens 2017).

In Western society, some members of the general public react negatively towards spoken Arabic because of this association with Islam and Muslim people. In the wake of 9/11, Middle Eastern immigrants and tourists in the West often avoid speaking Arabic in public so they do not invite suspicion and harassment from strangers. As shown in the data, the fear of spoken Arabic is particularly evident at airports where there have been several incidents of airport security racially *profiling* (132) Arabic speakers. In 2016, Iraqi student Khairuldeen Makhzoomi was removed from a Southwest flight for speaking Arabic on the phone with his uncle. When ending his conversation he had code-switched from English to Arabic by uttering the word *Inshallah* ("If God is willing") (Antoon 2016). A fellow passenger overheard the conversation and reported Makhzoomi to airline staff who escorted him off the plane, where he was interrogated by police and FBI agents. There have been several similar cases of Muslim people being removed from flights for merely speaking Arabic (Khan 2016). The data reveals that for many Westerners their main exposure to the Arabic language is through media stories connected to war, extremist groups, and terrorism.

> Americans are used to hearing *Arabic* associated with war or *terrorism*. They need to *hear* it in more natural settings to stop being afraid (Kindervatter-Clark 2016).

The data shows that *Arabic words* overheard in Anglophone countries are a source of suspicion, such as *inshallah*, which is an innocuous expression of religious identity and culture that is used commonly by all native speakers of Arabic, regardless of religious affiliation. Similarly, *Allahu Akbar* ("God is great") is another Arabic phrase that upholds religious culture, and functions as a short prayer or an everyday interjection that can express joy and happiness. However, it has been misappropriated. *Allahu Akbar* appears frequently in the data (4,327), the examples showing that in Western countries the phrase is perceived as a slogan or battle cry that is equated with terrorism and extremism.

> Allahu Akbar literally means 'God is great' in Arabic. Nice thought, however...what is said by people beheading hogtied victims 'in the name of God' or what is said by someone in a carbomb seconds before he fires it off in a crowded marketplace (Urban Dictionary 2009).

The Arabic writing system also provokes fear among members of the general public and government agencies in the West. Seen on the flags, murals, banners, and bandanas of terrorist organizations, the Arabic script has become synonymous with extremist groups and terrorism for some people. Referred to in the concordance data as "terrorist writing", the mere sight of the Arabic language in Western countries, or writing resembling the Arabic script, has occasionally resulted in panic and false alarms. For example, in 2016, a gas station was temporarily closed, a nearby daycare center was evacuated, and a bomb squad was called in when a box of cookies, which had Arabic script on the packaging, was discovered near a gas pump in Marshalls Creek, Pennsylvania. A customer discovered that the *maamoul* cookies (a kind of shortbread filled with dates, walnuts or pistachios) had Arabic writing on the box and immediately called the police to report it (Kunzmann 2016). The data shows that this fear of Arabic writing (and similar-looking symbols) arises from its negative associations, and not knowing what it says. The following report of suspicious activity landed an Ivy League professor on an American Airlines flight in questioning under suspicion of being a terrorist.

> Guido Menzio, an economist at the University of Pennsylvania, was working on a differential equation while waiting for the Syracuse-bound plane to take off from Philadelphia. (…) But a passenger somehow mistook the equation for Arabic or some sort of Islamic code for a terrorist attack (Solis 2016).

These incidents of linguicism reveal not only the current moral panic surrounding Islam and Muslim people, but also the prevalence and normalization of anti-Muslim prejudice in Western societies.

7. Conclusions

Since the end of the Cold War, prejudice against Muslim people has been on the rise in Western countries (Awan 2014; Esposito and Kalin 2011; Mondon and Winter 2017; Pew 2012; Yilmaz 2016; Zaal 2016). Anti-Muslim prejudice is often enacted linguistically, in both overt and covert ways. This paper has provided linguistic evidence to support these observations through a corpus data analysis of representations of "Islam" and "Muslim". Using the NOW corpus as the basis for this analysis, this study shows that stereotypes and negative attitudes towards Islam and Muslim people are frequently attested in collocates and concordance data appearing in language between 2010 to present day.

Taking a corpus linguistics approach using frequency data, collocation analysis, and concordance analysis, the nodes "Islam" and "Muslim" were searched in order to identify frequency and co-occurring words, and to analyze the contexts in which they are used. In examining frequency, evidence was found for overlexicalization, indicating an intense ideological preoccupation with Islam and Muslim. The top collocates were presented in a table, which showed a high incidence of collocations that present Islam and Muslim people as a collective entity or homogenous group, e.g. *Muslim community* and *Muslim world*. In usage, these phrases often did not represent balanced or neutral discussions, but were framed negatively. The total amount of collocates were then examined and categorized through manual concordance analysis. This exercise revealed that the most salient collocates of Islam and Muslim could be sorted into a small number of thematic categories, e.g. conflict, culture, and language.

The discussion of these categories provided an analysis of the relevant collocates and the concordance data, which were supported by text examples found in the corpus. These themes were also discussed in reference to current events. The data elicited many anti-Islam and anti-Muslim expressions, stereotypes, and associations that were strongly associated with the nodes, thereby revealing negative attitudes towards Muslims. Evidence was found to support the theory that "Islam" and "Muslim" are overlexicalized, e.g., *violent Islam*, *Islam violence*, *Muslim violence*, and *violent*

Muslim. In terms of characterization, Islam and Muslim people are radicalized in that they are frequently linked to violence, terrorism, and extremism. It was shown that Muslim people are often categorized according to a simplistic binary of moderate/good or extremist/bad, and portrayed as engaged in conflict, either as aggressors or victims. Representations of Muslims were often gendered, with women depicted as "oppressed", and men depicted as "violent". The data further uncovered stigmatizing and marginalizing attitudes towards Muslim culture and identity, and a moral panic in Western societies regarding Muslim immigration and assimilation. Furthermore, the data exposed linguicism as a common expression of anti-Muslim prejudice, involving discrimination against the spoken Arabic language and the Arabic writing system.

In conclusion, the data revealed numerous stereotypes of and negative attitudes towards Islam and Muslim people, and highlighted the prevalence of anti-Muslim sentiment in contemporary Anglophone countries. In addition, it was shown that anti-Muslim discourse is often vilifying, in that it has the intention of inciting others to also fear and hate Muslim people, and even inspires others to commit hate crimes against them. Given the discussion of linguicism, this paper has offered new insights into anti-Muslim prejudice in language, and makes a valuable contribution to the wider debate on the issue of racism, hatred, and violence against Muslim people.

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Functional complementarity of different types of English texts: University teachers' voices and experiences

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Abstract: The Faculty of Education under Tribhuvan University, Nepal, has recently shifted to a diversified approach to the selection of texts for its Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) and Master of Education (M.Ed.) English reading courses. Apart from the conventionally prioritized native English texts, the courses incorporate texts in nativized varieties of English from international target cultures as well as texts in the emerging variety of English from students' home culture. However, in Nepal, there is a lack of research on the potential pedagogical contribution and cultural significance of texts originating from different cultures. In this respect, the present paper aims to explore university teachers' voices with regard to different types of texts and their experiences of dealing with such texts in the classroom. The qualitative data collected from six reading teachers through a semi-structured interview were analyzed thematically. Findings reveal the teachers' awareness of functional complementarity of texts stemming from target culture, international target cultures and students' culture. As reported, different types of English texts are assumed to have complementary functions to inscribe and express local and global experiences. However, despite valuing each type of text, reading teachers tend to ascribe greater linguistic value to native English texts than nonnative texts, with the implication that the weight of native English texts continues to dominate ESL/EFL reading courses.

Keywords: Source culture, target culture, international target cultures, native English texts, nativized English texts, Nepalese English.

1. Introduction

The unprecedented global diffusion of English and its subsequent cultural contact with other languages have resulted in the emergence of syncretic and nativized varieties often referred to as "world Englishes" (Kachru & Nelson 2009: 71). The existing literature suggests that the emergence of such varieties of English has impacted almost all aspects of English language pedagogy from policy to classroom practice (McKay 2002; Block 2002; Graddol 2006). In this respect, the types of texts to be used with English as a second or a foreign language (ESL/EFL) students have emerged as one of the debatable issues, others being "purposes of learning English, learner motives, learning environment, and nature of assessment" (Graddol 2006: 90). This issue has become particularly acute in EFL contexts like Nepal for certain reasons. First, given the EFL context, Nepal is supposed to turn to external norms, preferably British or American as the target variety (Kachru 1992; Graddol 2006), and native English texts as ideal teaching learning resources. Second, studies have also indicated that Nepal is experiencing a "transition from EFL to L2 status" (Graddol 1997: 11). Consequently, English used in Nepal, referred to as Nepali or Nepalese English[1], is conceived as an emerging variety on the grounds that it is undergoing a transition from its traditional status as a foreign language to a second language or additional language (Graddol 1997; Karn 2006; Sharma 2006; Rai, 2006; Giri 2015). This gradual shift implies that Nepalese English is one of several varieties of English that needs to be recognized in educational institutions, and accordingly texts in this variety deserve equal recognition in English courses in Nepal.

Aware of the changing status of English in Nepal, and of the growing number of locally produced English texts, English and Other Foreign Languages Education Subject Committee, under

[1] The adjectival forms 'Nepali' and 'Nepalese' are often used interchangeably disregarding the nuance between them. In this paper, 'Nepalese' is used in relation to Nepal as a whole. It designates all the people speaking different national languages of Nepal. On the other hand, 'Nepali' is reserved only for the Nepali language or Nepali-speaking people.

the Faculty of Education[2], Tribhuvan University[3] (TU), has recently incorporated some of the creative and academic English texts produced by Nepalese writers into Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) and Master of Education (M.Ed.) reading courses. This tendency is also evident in B.Ed. and M.Ed. reading courses in two other universities of Nepal, including Mid-Western and Far-Western Universities. Driven by the primary aim of producing trained human resources in English, including school teachers and material developers, the Faculty of Education in its four-year B.Ed. program offers ten English specialization courses, each carrying 6 credits, out of which five are reading courses (Bachelor of Education Program). With the overall object of producing higher level academic human resources in English, including teacher educators, ESL/EFL researchers, and educational planners, the two-year M.Ed. program likewise offers twelve English specialization courses, each carrying 3 credits. Three of the courses contribute to the development of students' reading skills (Master of Education Program).

These reading courses in both programs share common features in terms of sources of texts, organization of texts, pedagogy, and varieties of English. Each reading course draws on diverse sources such as literature, philosophy, education, democracy, and globalization, and these multiple readings are organized thematically. Genre-wise, these are literature-oriented reading courses, as literary/expressive texts conspicuously outnumber nonliterary ones. Pedagogically, these courses have adopted a content-based approach to developing reading and writing skills of university students. Sociolinguistically, the selected texts represent different varieties of English, including both native and nonnative Englishes from diverse "geographical locations such as the UK, the USA, South Africa, India, and Nepal" (Awasthi et al. 2015: 1). The space for literary/expressive and nonliterary texts by Nepalese writers is a notable feature of these courses. However, the number of the texts representing local ethos and concerns is not significantly high in that they occupy only 17 % of the total texts (Adhikari 2017a). This curricular initiative, nevertheless, marks a shift from the long-existing monolithic practice of privileging native English texts to the diversified practice of respecting and giving space to locally produced English texts as well as nativized texts from different geographic regions of the world, which inscribe variegated cultural experiences in varieties of English.

The present curricular initiative to recognize locally produced English texts as reading materials for prospective English teachers, however, has been met with mixed responses from teachers dealing with reading courses. In this respect, the type of English text to be included and prioritized in university reading courses has been one of the persisting dilemmas faced by university course designers in Nepal. As a contributor to most of the reading courses and coursebooks for B.Ed. and M.Ed. programs, I am somehow aware of the reality that the text selection process in Tribhuvan University is characteristically guided by the top-down approach, and the reading courses "are based on some arbitrarily chosen literature focused materials" (Bista 2011: 7), belittling teachers' voices and experiences in the text selection process. Thus, exploring teachers' voices on different types of texts incorporated into reading courses and their experiences of dealing with such texts is imperative in order to make informed decision and adopt the bottom-up approach to course design. In this respect, the study poses the following questions:

1. How do reading teachers view different types of English texts incorporated into B.Ed. and M.Ed. reading courses they are teaching?
2. What type of text do reading teachers consider more relevant to their students: native English texts, nativized English texts, or locally produced English texts?

[2] The Faculty of Education is the largest institution of teacher education in Nepal. It runs teacher education programs in its 26 constituent campuses and 560 affiliated campuses throughout the country.

[3] The first national institution of higher education in Nepal, Tribhuvan University (TU), established in 1959, is the 12th largest university in the world in terms of enrollment.

3. Why do they prioritize one type of text over other types?

In my attempt to answer these questions, I briefly shed light on the transitional status of English in Nepal, review the literature on the theoretical framework that situates English texts in different cultural contexts, and discuss the potential pedagogical contributions as well as limitations of each type of text. Then, I outline the methodology adopted to conduct the study before presenting and discussing the findings under four broad themes. Finally, I conclude with the summary of key findings.

2. English in Nepal: an emerging variety in the EFL/ESL blurred zone

Historically, English as a foreign language entered into the multilingual land of Nepal in the 19th century. Its contact with the Nepalese can be traced back "to Prime Minister Junga Bahadur Rana's visit to England in 1850, and establishment of Durbar High School, the first Western mode school where English was introduced in 1854" (Adhikari 2017b:1). For long, English remained a distinguished language to be studied only by a privileged elite minority. The common mass did not have the privilege of learning this language until the establishment of Tri-Chandra College in 1918, and Tribhuvan University in 1959. With the implementation of National Education System Plan in 1971, English as a subject entered into all levels of school curricula in Nepal (Bhattarai 2006; Sharma 2006). In the last five decades, English in Nepal has morphed into the predominant medium of instruction in both school education and higher education (Bhattarai 2006) and the primary language of technology-mediated communication such as email and text-messaging. Such changes in the uses of English have blurred the conventional dichotomy between ESL and EFL in the Nepalese context. These days, it is widely used for both "external purposes" (as a foreign language) and "internal purposes" (as a second language) (Kachru 1991:5).

There is a growing tendency amongst the new generation of Nepali-English bilinguals to use English as a means of creative and ideological expressions. In this regard, Giri (2015: 102) notes that "the innovative use of English in Nepal is evident in the 'New English Literature'". Nepalese literature in English which comprises both original writing and Nepalese literature in English translation is rooted in the Nepalese socio-cultural matrix, embodying authors' personal as well as communal experiences. In the survey of the diachronic development of Nepalese English writing pioneered by Laxmi Prasad Devkota in the 1950s, Pun (2017) argues that Nepalese writing in English has achieved its canonical status with the works by internationally recognized writers like Devkota, Manjushree Thapa and Samrat Upadyaya. Likewise, Shrestha (2020: para 1) notes that "the number of Nepali books written in English is slowly growing in the past two to three decades". There are more than 100 regular online and print publications in English, including dallies, weeklies and magazines. Some of the online literary magazines publish Nepali texts along with their English translations. Moreover, the record of Nepal Journals Online shows the list of 177 journals published from Nepal (Nepal Journal Online), and English is the de facto medium of all these journals. The number of these publications is the clear indicative of the gradual appropriation of English by Nepali-English bilinguals to communicate information (in the case of academic/journalistic texts) and aesthetic experiences (in the case of literary texts) to English readers at home and abroad. This marks Nepalese writers' tendency of using appropriation as a writing strategy to take control of English and employ it to express their own personal and cultural experiences.

In terms of content, Nepali-English bilinguals' creative works embody local cultural experiences "transcoded" in and "transmigrated" (Cutter 2005: 9) into English. These bilingual writers participate in the process of writing across languages and cultures to communicate in English the content inherently coded in their first language. Take for example "Letter from foreign grave", a poem by D.B. Gurung, an acclaimed Nepali poet writing in English. It is one of the literary texts included in the reading coursebook *English for The New Millennium* (Awasthi et al. 2015) offered to

the first year B.Ed. students. The poem is written as a form of letter from a British Gurkha who dies an insignificant death while fighting the cause of others. The dead speaker regretfully recounts the predicament of Nepalese soldiers known as Gurkhas serving the British Crown. This poem is the typical case of transcoding source cultural experiences in English as a second language. Moreover, the dead soldier and his mother are Nepalese characters who are made to speak English, and are transmigrated into the English language and a different cultural context. Linguistically, this literary text blends Nepali and English languages by mixing the codes. English readers, for example, are confronted with Nepali cultural expressions such as *abir-daubed brow* (the brow daubed with vermilion powder), *khukuri* (Gurkha knife) and *Ayo Gorkhali* (a war cry, meaning *Here comes the Gurkha*). Code mixing registers the traces of the Nepali language in English texts. The deliberate selection of Nepali characters, settings and events, transfer of Nepali kinship terms, parallel use of Nepali cultural expressions and their English translations, mixing of Nepali and English codes (Karn 2012), glossing, leaving certain cultural words untranslated and footnoting have emerged as the defining features of English texts by Nepalese writers. These features signal the nativization of English in Nepal by means of creative writing. Such creative texts expect English readers to possess a minimum familiarity with the source cultural content and context, and even with language.

3. Categorizing English texts for ESL/EFL students

Cortazzi & Jin (1999) have proposed a tripartite framework that categorizes materials or texts for ESL/EFL students into three broad types: source culture materials, target culture materials and international target culture materials. A survey of the theoretical and empirical literature on ESL/EFL materials reveals that researchers have almost unanimously adopted or adapted this framework to situate ESL/EFL materials in three broad cultural contexts (e.g. McKay 2002; Royani 2013; Rodliyah et al. 2014; Ashrafi & Ajideh 2018). To follow Cortazzi & Jin (1999), source culture texts are embedded in students' home culture. These are locally produced English texts that inscribe, reflect and strengthen ESL/EFL students' communal and/or national cultural identity. In reference to Nepal, English texts by Nepalese writers serve as source or local culture texts for Nepalese students. A typical example of this type of text could be "*Is Nepal small?*", an essay by Laxmi Prasad Devkota, included in *Interdisciplinary Readings* (Bhattarai et al. 2014) prescribed for the first year M.Ed. students. On the other hand, English texts emanating from "the culture of a country where English is spoken as a first language" (McKay 2002: 88) fall into target culture texts. Rooted in the English as a native language (ENL) context, these texts are termed native English texts in the present study. "The aims of education" by the British writer Bertrand Russell, included in the same coursebook, i.e. *Interdisciplinary Readings* (Bhattarai et al. 2014), typifies native English texts. Finally, there is the category of international target culture texts in which we find texts that represent a variety of cultures in non-English-speaking countries where English is used as an international (Cortazzi & Jin 1999) or second language. Written in nativized varieties of English, such texts emanate from diverse cultures around the world. An example of a nativized text is "Teachers" by Burmese Nobel laureate Aung San Suu Kyi incorporated into *Readings for The New Horizons* (Awasthi et al. 2016) offered to the second year B.Ed. students. In terms of proximity to Nepalese ESL/EFL students, both target (i.e. native) and international target (i.e. nativized) English texts lie outside their local/national cultural experiences.

From the point of view of ESL/EFL students' familiarity with cultural components ingrained in English texts, we can further discern two subcategories within the broader rubric of international target culture texts or nativized English texts. The first category concerns the ESL texts embedded in cultures that have some commonalities with students' culture. Texts such as " New millennium, new human being" by Indian spiritual master Osho, and "Face to face with Bismillah Khan" , a great Indian maestro, both from *Interdisciplinary Readings* (Bhattarai et al. 2014), are the paradigmatic examples of the texts with cultural proximity to Nepalese students. The reason is that there is a considerable overlap between these two countries in terms of mythology, history, religion and geo-

political experiences. The second category has to do with the ESL texts from a culturally distant territory. African writers' English texts such as "Mugamo" (Ngugi Wa Thiong'o) and "The face of hunger" (Oswald Mbuiseni Mtshali) prescribed for Nepalese students exemplify texts in this category.

The categorization of English texts in terms of their cultural locations should be considered functional and ad hoc rather than theoretically foolproof for certain reasons. First, within each category of cultural site there exist a wide variety of cultures. Any culture is characteristically diverse and plural in terms of history, race, geographical region, religion and language. Likewise, "the sites of contemporary cultural production and reception", as Barker aptly points out, "are no longer confined within the borders of nation-state culture" (2004: 45). In the present era of globalization, we must therefore acknowledge the fact that there is a considerable overlap amongst locally produced English texts, native English texts and nativized English texts in terms of linguistic features and cultural experiences. The reason is that culture "is becoming less a matter of locations than of hybrid and creolized cultural meanings and practices that span global space" (Barker 2004: 45). Notwithstanding these limitations, the tripartite framework proposed by Cortazzi & Jin (1999) and extended by McKay (2002) is adopted for this study because the framework is predicated on the notion that "even in this increasingly globalized planet, writers do write in particular contexts, which are always culture-bound" (Perteghella 2013: 198). One can thus argue that English texts inscribe, represent and perpetuate different English-speaking and non-English-speaking cultures one way or the other.

4. Different types of texts in ESL/EFL courses

As far as Nepal is concerned, there is a dearth of literature that informs why certain types of texts are preferred in ESL/EFL reading courses. I therefore draw on the global literature for the purpose of this study.

The use of texts embedded in the target culture seems to be underpinned by the notion that language and culture interweave and interact with each other in a subtle way. The inseparability of language and culture has been accentuated by many scholars. Brown (2000: 177), for instance, maintains that language and culture "are intricately interwoven so that one cannot separate the two without losing the significance of either language or culture". Peterson & Coltrane (2003 make a similar observation that cultural concepts are inherently tied to linguistic forms and they defy separation. If we accept this notion of language-culture inseparability, then the incorporation of native English texts into EFL/ESL courses/books seems both valid and logical. Assuming the inseparable connection between language, and its culture and people, Quirk (1990) made a pronouncement that nonnative teachers, obviously, as well as students must be in constant touch with the native language. Native English texts arguably serve as the most accessible bridge connecting nonnative teachers and students with ENL, particularly in the nonnative contexts like Nepal where the direct contact with native English speakers is minimum. Quirk's assertion is entrenched in the ideological impulse which feeds native speaker supremacy, relegating nonnative users' meaning-making potential to a secondary role. Quirk's deficit linguistic approach has been criticized for its failure to take on board linguistic, sociolinguistic and pragmatic realities, and educational needs of ESL/EFL contexts (Kachru 1991; Phillipson 2007).

McKay (2000) recognizes motivation and interculturality as possible reasons for incorporating target culture texts into ESL/EFL courses. Such texts have the potential to serve as good resources that can introduce ESL/EFL students to cultural content, and sociolinguistic norms that shape the use of ENL. McKay (2000: 8) further posits that the use of target texts is of paramount significance in "establishing a sphere of interculturality". It means that learning about target culture norms and values helps students reflect on their own culture as well as the target culture. Despite this, the use of English texts from the target culture in ESL/EFL courses has been under critical surveillance (McKay 2000, 2002) with the growing realization that native English texts alone are not adequate to meet the

changing language needs of ESL/EFL students from diverse socio-cultural contexts.

With respect to the rationale for using texts from students' home culture, Cortazzi & Jin (1999) postulate that such texts provide students with content to talk about their culture with other English-speaking people, and establish as well as strengthen their ethnic/national and linguistic identity. In the case of advanced students, we can assume that such identity is established up to a point, and thus they are in need of extending and consolidating their cultural identity by means of English, the global means of communication. The use of local English texts as teaching learning materials is not without its problems though. The undue emphasis on texts concerning local issues, aspirations and imaginations might lead to unhealthy ethnocentrism, minimizing the opportunity for ESL/EFL students to acquire culturally diverse content communicated through different varieties of English. Likewise, the paucity of local English texts in the emerging variety of English like Nepalese English is another pertinent issue. Yet another issue is ESL/EFL learners' need for reading the texts concerning the content and context already familiar to them. Course designers and book writers should justify the rationale for (re)exposing learners to the texts from their own culture and context in relation to their present and future language and content needs.

Finally, texts in nativized varieties of English from diverse cultural contexts are supposed to expose students to "English in its multicultural incarnations" and foster their "international understanding" (Kachru & Nelson 2009: 95). Following Kachru and Nelson (2009), privileging new literatures in English, i.e. creative writing in nativized varieties of English plays an important role in opening ESL/EFL students' awareness to contemporary world realities. Also termed "local literatures in English" (Maley 2001: 184), the new literatures particularly from post-colonial societies are characterized by "the newly ascendant spirit" (Boehmer 1995:4) as well as freshness in subject matter and outlooks, and by difference in linguistic features and rhetorical strategies (Ashcroft et al. 2002, 2004). These literary texts constitute one out of several ways of equipping both students and teachers with "an immense resource of cross-cultural perspectives and strategies of multilinguals' creativity" (Kachru & Nelson 2009: 97). Arguably, the significance of English texts in nativized varieties lies in their potential to awaken EFL/ESL students to linguistic features of varieties of English and variegated world realities. On the ideological level, the selection of literary texts in nativized Englishes is driven by the motive to counterbalance the hegemonic presence of Western literary texts in the Non-Western education system and deconstruct the center-periphery relationship between Western and Non-Western English literatures.

Turning now to the empirical literature, some of the studies on the use of native and nonnative English texts as teaching learning resources have reported mixed results (e.g. Adaskou et al. 1990; McKay 2009; Rodliyah et al. 2014). Adaskou et al. (1990), for instance, reported that target culture content was kept to a minimum in the English secondary course in Morocco owing to Moroccan English teachers' ethnocentricity and their corresponding reluctance to appreciate foreign cultures. Likewise, Liu & Laohawiriyanon's (2013) study of non-English major students in a Chinese university revealed students' preference to English texts stemming from their own culture, followed by texts from target and international target cultures. However, the study conducted by Rodliyah et al. (2014) showed Indonesian tertiary students' heavy inclination towards texts from English-speaking countries even though they acknowledged the importance of texts from local and international cultures. A similar finding has been reported in Ashrafi & Ajideh (2018), namely that Iranian textbook writers attached more importance to target English texts than the texts that mirror students' culture, the latter being eclipsed by the former.

This brief review of theoretical and empirical literature suggests that key stakeholders of English language teaching (ELT), including teachers, students and textbook writers, perceive English texts embedded in different cultures differently, and they ascribe importance to these texts accordingly. The review also signals that each type of English text has potential pedagogical benefits, socio-cultural implications as well as limitations. There is probably no single factor that determines

the type of text to be prioritized in ESL/EFL courses. It seems that the preference for a particular type is motivated by a complex interplay of several factors, which, amongst others, could be the centripetal ideological pull towards native English or the centrifugal pull towards nativized Englishes, stakeholders' attitudes towards Englishes and new English literatures, and student motivation and their language needs.

5. Methodology

The present study followed a qualitative design to investigate reading teachers' voices on different types of English texts incorporated into B.Ed. and M.Ed. reading courses, and their experiences of using the texts with their students. Guided by the constructivist worldview and interpretive approach that privilege "multiple participant meanings" (Creswell 2009: 6) and "subjectivity, individual perspective, personal constructs" (Cohen et al. 2007:.23), the study adopted the interpretative phenomenological analysis (Riazi 2016) to understand teachers' perceptions and reflections of teaching different types of English texts. Interpretative phenomenological analysis focuses on "personal meaning and sense-making in a particular context" (Smith et al. 2009: 35) by the people sharing a particular experience. To this end, I conducted the semi-structured interview with six reading teachers from four different campuses under the Faculty of Education, Tribhuvan University. The selected participants constituted a homogeneous group, i.e. teachers who had the experience of teaching one of the B.Ed. or M.Ed. reading courses for at least two years. I approached the reading teachers working in four different campuses so as to explore some diversity in their perceptions of the phenomena under investigation. At the time of the study, three of the teachers were teaching only the M.Ed. reading courses, whereas the rest were teaching reading at both B.Ed. and M.Ed. levels. The purposive sampling of the participants was motivated by the nature of research questions and practical factors such as availability, accessibility of participants, and their willingness to contribute to the study (Dornyei 2007). The data was collected between November and December 2019.

Upon their consent, I conducted "a one-shot interview" (Dornyei 2007: 134) with each teacher, lasting about 30-40 minutes, and audio-recorded their views. Keeping in mind Polkinghorne's (2005: 142) cautionary note that "one-shot interviews are most often not sufficient to produce the full and rich descriptions necessary for worthwhile findings", I shared with each of the participants the theme of the interview over the phone and mailed the tentative questions to them in advance so that they could contemplate the issues in-depth before the actual interview. I also consulted some of them for further clarification on their views during the data analysis. I de-identified the participating teachers as T1, T2, etc. to ensure their anonymity.

I adopted the priori coding scheme which, according to Riazi (2016: 255), "is usually developed on the basis of theoretical background related to the research problem, as well as the analysis of a small portion of the collected data". The assignment of segments of the data to appropriate codes was followed by annotations and memos, on the basis of which the broader themes were generated.

6. Findings and discussion

In this section, I discuss four major findings that emerged from the analysis of interview data: (a) pedagogical accessibility and search for cultural visibility; (b) growing sense of ownership of English; (c) attitude of subordination to native English texts; and (d) nativized English texts for widening cross-cultural awareness.

6.1 Pedagogical accessibility and search for cultural visibility

Greater accessibility of locally produced English texts, and visibility of students' home culture in English reading courses recurred as the dominant themes throughout interview data. A common view amongst the teachers was that reading courses should give space for the English texts that mirror students' culture. When probed into the reason, they noted that such texts are easy for students to

comprehend, and they also ensure visibility of students' culture in ELT.

Recounting their classroom experiences, each teacher emphasized the pedagogical value of locally written English texts principally because such texts, they opined, are 'more comprehensible' (T1) for both teachers and students, 'contextually relevant to students' lives' (T2), and make it easy for students to 'identify with the writers and characters of texts' (T5). Students' familiarity with the content and context of texts is the principal reason for these teachers to value local texts in English. Commenting on the pedagogical value of texts of this type, T4 said: 'Locally written [English] texts have characters, plots, settings, events, and content familiar to our students. I believe that such texts motivate students, as they understand the context easily'. Likewise, T6 recounted his students' preference as, 'When the session begins, most of my students go through the course of study and request me to teach the texts by Nepalese writers first'. When inquired into the possible reason for this type of preference, he further explained that students have a feeling of closeness to the authors they are familiar with and find culturally familiar texts less 'threatening' than unfamiliar ones.

The common thread running through these teachers' views and experiences is that texts with the culturally familiar content and context are more accessible for students both linguistically and cognitively. Their responses further indicate that familiarity of content and context contributes to motivation, which, in turn, maximizes students' engagement with texts, resulting in better comprehension.

The teachers' inclination towards texts embedded in students' home culture on the grounds of pedagogical accessibility conforms to the results of some of the previous studies (e.g. Cortazzi & Jin 1999; McKay 2002, 2009). These and other studies have found that English texts rooted in and reflective of students' own culture are valued in ESL/EFL contexts, seeing that such texts serve them with pedagogically more accessible content. The teachers' underscoring of the pedagogical contribution of this type of text is also underpinned by the pedagogical precept that "input should be linguistically and cognitively accessible" (Kumaravadivelu 2006:26) to students. The positive attitude towards local English texts also has a cognitive basis, since familiar content, as James (1994: 208) postulates, is "compatible with, and preferably integrated with, the students' prior knowledge". In other words, the content of culturally familiar texts is consistent with what Widdowson (1990:104) calls "students' schematic knowledge", i.e. the knowledge acquired in the social context, and such compatibility is assumed to "minimize perceptual mismatches" (Kamaravadivelu 2006: 201). Pedagogically, texts of this type thus tend to pose low "linguistic, cultural and intellectual barriers" (Povey 1979 as cited in Celce-Murcia & Hilles 1988: 123) for both teachers and students, resulting in a higher degree of text-reader interaction. Content-context familiarity has a crucial role to play in enhancing students' "personal involvement with the text" (Wallace 2010: 21). For want of a certain level of familiarity with the content and context, students as readers obviously experience difficulty in engaging with the text emotionally and intellectually, and in maintaining "intensive contact" (Bush 2006: 27) with its content, language and rhetorical strategies. On this point, Yee et al. (2012:1) rightly note that "passages contextually bound to students' cultural, national and ethnic identities could help them derive more meaning from the text as opposed to one that is not contextually bound". Content-context familiarity facilitates reading not only the lines (co-text), but also between the lines (context of situation) and beyond the lines (context of culture) of the text. Finally, one possible explanation for teachers' preference for the texts rooted in their cultural context might be that such texts demand less time and effort in the preparation of reading lessons.

Concerns regarding the presence and visibility of students' culture in English reading courses/books were articulated as prominently as pedagogical concerns. Privileging locally produced English texts, the teachers unanimously pointed out a broader cultural significance of exposing university students to the texts that reflect their own culture and context. T1, for instance, considered that using these texts acknowledges and values local writers' works. It was also pointed out that such texts serve as a means of bringing indigenous knowledge to the fore. A similar view was echoed by

T6 who noted that 'students at the Master's level are aware of their cultural identity. [Therefore] they value their own culture expressed in English texts'. He reiterated that using locally produced English texts is one of the ways of fighting the hegemony of British and American literature in ELT in Nepal.

These teachers' views suggest that the use of English texts emanating from students' own culture foregrounds local cultural experiences and values, and provides students with an opportunity to explore more about themselves. Furthermore, giving space to such texts in English courses was recognized as one of the ways of asserting one's own cultural identity in the face of the 'rampant encroachment of Western culture' (T1) and resisting hegemony of British and American literary texts (T6) in higher education in Nepal.

The teachers' voice on the presence of students' culture in English reading courses/books adheres to the spirit of pedagogy of global English, which is assumed to maintain and foster ESL/EFL speakers' national/cultural identity through English (Graddol 2006). In this respect, McKay (2002) notes that locally written English texts provide students with space and opportunity to learn more about their own culture, on the one hand, and equip them with the language needed to express content in English, on the other hand. The incorporation of this type of text into reading courses thus serves the Janus-faced purpose of exploration of one's own cultural space and its communication to global English users. This combination of exploration and expression of one's own "local epistemologies and cultural practices" (Prior 2018: 1) might contribute positively to "students' self-respect and cultural identity" (Sridhar 2009: 63). Regarding this, Nault argues that shifting the focus to the texts mirroring local cultures is one of the strategies that can be used to "offset the dominance of US and British culture in English teaching materials" (2006: 323). Arguing from the perspective of post-colonial thinking, the shift to local English writing is instrumental in resisting "the categories of the imperial culture, its aesthetic, its illusory standard of normatic or 'correct' usage" (Ashcroft et al. 2002: 37), and appropriating as well as nativizing English to articulate local cultures and aesthetics. On this matter, Pavlenko and Blackledge (2004: 14) remind us that "ideologies of language and identity guide ways in which individuals use linguistic resources to index their identities". In agreement with this ideological perspective, we can read Nepalese teachers' and students' preference for local English texts as one of the ways of constructing and legitimizing their identity as nonnative English users and negotiating with native as well as other nonnative users of English.

6.2 Growing sense of ownership of English

A sense of ownership of English amongst the teachers was noted as another theme dominating interview data. The teachers almost unanimously asserted that Nepalese English should be recognized institutionally, giving it adequate space in university coursebooks. For these teachers, Nepalese English is one of the emerging varieties that deserves recognition in the educational domain. This advocacy was, however, concomitantly accompanied by their concern for the quality of English texts by Nepalese writers. In this respect, one participant expressed his dissatisfaction with the poor linguistic quality of English texts by Nepalese writers included in university reading courses. To cite his own voice, 'I've seen many wrong structures and words used in the texts. We should not include such texts in the courses only in the name of promoting Nepalese English writers'. Despite their high regard for the Nepalese variety of English, the majority of teachers expressed their concerns about the linguistic quality of locally produced English texts. They suggested that only the texts by 'established and competent Nepalese English writers or translators' should be used as reading materials for university students.

The sense of ownership of English amongst the teachers can be interpreted from the contemporary ontological reality of English, which, in Rajagopalan's (2004: 11) words, "belongs to everyone who speaks it". Echoing Rajagopalan's view, Harmer (2007:18) asserts that "whatever English we speak … we have, and should have, equal rights as English users". It seems the teachers are asserting their right to own the English language as its users. This sense of ownership is also

echoed in the coursebook editors' appeal and aspiration that "if we are spending a huge amount of money and countless years on English, why not stand with our own variety before the world" (Bhattarai et al. 2014: ii). For the Nepalese, English is not an outsider's language anymore. It has permeated all walks of life, gradually fulfilling instrumental, interpersonal, regulative, creative functions (Giri 2015). Educationally the most prioritized language both as the subject of study and the medium of instruction, English has emerged as the most valued "symbolic capital, convertible into economic and social capital" (Pavlenko & Blackage 2004:10) amongst the Nepalese. Its access for Nepalese students, argues Devkota, is often "perceived as the symbol of a better future, better social status and economic soundness of the household" (2018: 118). It is the language that the Nepalese are adopting and appropriating in the local contexts so as to fulfil their local and global communicative needs. The growing entrenchment of English in the Nepalese multilingual landscape, and a corresponding rise in the sense of ownership reflected in the teachers' views substantiate Graddol's (1997) observation that English in Nepal is transitioning from a foreign language into a second language. Furthermore, this transition points out the possible growth of texts in Nepalese English in the future and a corresponding interest in incorporating such texts into English courses.

Despite the growing sense of ownership of English, the teachers' concern about the linguistic quality of locally produced English texts, specifically those incorporated into the reading courses, cannot go unnoticed. Their concern signals at least two aspects of Nepalese writing in English. First, as an emerging variety of new English literatures, Nepalese English writing is yet to "grow in confidence and acceptability" (Maley, 2001: 185). Second, the teachers' suggestion for incorporating English texts only by 'established and competent Nepalese writers/translators' evokes Bourdieu's notion of legitimacy of language and language speakers (Pavlenko & Blackage 2004). The teachers conceive only the Nepalese-English writers with national and international fame and recognition as the 'legitimate writers' of English and their texts as 'legitimate teaching learning materials' for Nepalese ESL/EFL learners.

6.3 Attitude of subordination to native English texts

The teachers emphasized the role of native English texts in the enrichment of students' English. Regarding this, T2 highlighted the significance of native English texts as, '[Such texts] enrich students' vocabulary, demonstrate a wide variety of sentence constructions by native English writers. They also provide rich cultural and contextual information about the use of English'.

Other teachers also maintained that native writers' texts expose ESL/EFL students to 'standard and authentic English' used in the target culture context. A recurrent theme noticed in interviews was a sense amongst teachers that texts by native English writers are 'more authentic and standard' than texts by nonnative English writers. They further noted that English texts, particularly literary ones, by British and American writers read more natural and exhibit deeper connection with the target culture than texts by nonnative English writers. The teachers on the whole were of the opinion that English texts by native writers tend to be lexically rich and syntactically varied. In their view, such linguistically rich texts contribute positively to students' reading and writing proficiency. Because they seemed to associate 'standard English' mainly with native English varieties, the majority of teachers suggested that reading courses give the highest priority to native texts followed by nativized texts and the texts by Nepalese writers.

The belief that exposure to native English texts, preferably by British and American writers, ensures students' better access to 'pure or standard' variety of English runs contradictory up to a point. The teachers, on the one hand, advocate the institutional recognition of nonnative varieties of English, including Nepalese English, and, on the other hand, they tend to believe that native English writers' texts are more standard and authentic than those of nonnative English writers. This assumption not only reflects but also perpetuates Quirk's deficit linguistics approach (Kacru 1991; Phillipson 2007) that nonnative users of English are inferior to their native counterparts in the productive manipulation

of vocabulary and grammar, and organization of discourse and style strategies. Guided by the assumption of native speaker's superiority, the teachers emphasized the necessity of maintaining "the constant touch with the native language" (Quirk 1990: 7) through native English texts. On a linguistic level, these teachers thus accepted "symbolic domination" (Pavlenko & Blackage 2004:12) of native varieties by ascribing greater linguistic worth to native English texts than nonnative English texts. For most of them, the incorporation of native English texts into reading courses is necessary to ensure better contact with 'standardness' and 'authenticity' conventionally and even misconceptionally associated with British/American English. They regarded British and American literary texts in particular somehow superior to literary texts in nonnative varieties. It also suggests the teachers' belief in the hegemonic native/nonnative dichotomy, further revealing their acceptance of nonnative English writers' subordination to native English writers. Additionally, the high regard for native English texts mirrors "the native speaker tenet" (Phillipson, 2007: 196) or "native speaker fallacy" (McKay 2002: 42) that wrongly assumes native speakers as the model who can demonstrate standard grammar, vocabulary, fluent and idiomatically appropriate language, and appreciate the cultural connotations of the language (Phillipson 2007: 194). This (mis)conception, however, runs counter to the existing ontological reality of English at least for two reasons. First, native speakers cannot serve as the model to be emulated in the context of teaching English as an international language, since the language needs of nonnative users of English are different than those of native users of English (McKay 2002). Second, studies have shown that native users of English are outnumbered by nonnative users with an ever-widening margin (Graddol 1997, 2006; McKay 2002). In this respect, we can postulate that contemporary English writing is also dominated by nonnative English users. Consequently, it makes no sense to relegate a secondary position to nonnative English texts in ESL/EFL pedagogy.

Notwithstanding their greater inclination towards native English texts on linguistic grounds, the teachers reported several pedagogical challenges associated with the use of such texts with ESL/EFL students. One of the reported challenges is that students often find it difficult to understand Western myths, cultural practices and norms, history, philosophy, and literary traditions overtly expressed or covertly implied in the texts. The second challenge concerns students' inability to relate culturally different texts to their own contexts. Finally, it is hard for them to associate their experiences with unfamiliar events and places, and identify with the characters. T5 shared his experience of using such literary texts with his undergraduate students as:

> Most of the Western English texts make allusions to biblical myths, history, philosophy with which our students are unfamiliar. And they really don't understand the depth of such allusions. As a result, we teachers have to teach about such allusions rather than English itself. [Interview extract]

This teacher's classroom experience indicates the impact of cultural distance on and a corresponding difficulty in teaching culturally different texts. In order to make such texts more accessible to students, teachers have to devote more time to explaining the content than engaging students in language activities. Furthermore, some of such texts were reported to be demotivating and uninteresting owing to unfamiliar content and complex language.

Pedagogically, texts by native English writers were perceived to pose cultural, linguistic and intellectual barriers, thanks to content unfamiliarity and language complexity. However, these perceived constraints demand an explanation from the cognitive perspective. Echoing the fundamental tenet of Krashen's (1985) input hypothesis, Skehan (1994) posits that, cognitively speaking, the ideal input should not only be comprehensible, but it should also be challenging. In the absence of cognitively and linguistically challenging texts, reading might suffer from the lack of excitement and deeper processing. In this regard, it is worth mentioning the concerns raised by some of the teachers about potential demerits of inordinate inclination towards culturally too familiar texts,

particularly from students' own culture. In their opinion, too familiar content and context might fail to challenge students, which, in turn, might spoil their motivation for exploring the text. One of the teachers, for instance, recounted that some of his students find familiar texts less challenging than unfamiliar ones and tend to take the former type too lightly, resulting in a poor text-reader interaction. Since students are already familiar with the content and context of the text, they might resort to "a hurried, uninterested surface reading" (Wallace, 2010: 21), paying less attention to the message(s) communicated, and rhetorical strategies employed by the author.

Culturally unfamiliar content and complex language thus need not always be interpreted as teaching-learning barriers as some of the teachers perceived. Rather, such texts can be appreciated as the uncharted textual territory to be explored jointly by teachers and students or to be explored by students under teachers' principled support and guidance.

6.4 Nativized English texts for widening cross-cultural awareness

A key theme that emerged from the analysis of responses with respect to texts in nativized varieties of English reflecting international target cultures was that this type of text plays a crucial role in widening students' "cross-cultural awareness" (Kachru & Nelson 2009: 95). The teachers viewed that university students need to be familiar with norms and values of different cultures inscribed in different varieties of English used in diverse international cultural contexts. One teacher noted that English texts from diverse cultures make students globally aware citizens. Another teacher added that university reading courses should value texts particularly from non-Western countries such as India, Pakistan, Singapore, Malaysia, Nigeria and South Africa. In his opinion, non-Western English texts embody the spirits of cultural representation, e.g. "The love story with the city of joy" by Dominique Lapierre, gender empowerment and justice, e.g. "Women's empowerment and identity" by Taslima Nasreen, and feudalism and call for revolution, e.g. "The passer-by" by Lu Shun (Awasthi et al. 2016) which are equally relevant to the Nepalese context. Likewise, in other teachers' views, English texts from diverse cultures, 'foster intercultural understanding of our students and help them handle culturally different global situations' (T4), 'promote cultural tolerance and togetherness' (T3), and 'familiarize our students with features of different varieties of English' (T6).

The teachers thus recognized the value of texts in nativized varieties of English from the perspectives of content, culture and language. English texts concerning non-Western issues were referred to as the reading resources of higher relevance to the Nepalese students. This suggests the teachers' belief that the non-Western World, as opposed to the Western World, shares similar socio-cultural and geo-political experiences. Consequently, the Nepalese students can relate to these experiences more readily than Western experiences. Culturally, exposure to diverse cultural experiences inscribed in English texts serves to promote "cultural pluralism", to use Sridhar's (2009) term, and cross-cultural understanding. Following Kachru and Nelson (2009), nativized English texts can be employed as a versatile and expanding vehicle to implement and experience multiculturalism in and through Englishes. Exposure to global varieties of English texts is also instrumental in bringing ESL/EFL students out of a narrow loyalty to their own culture on the one hand and counterbalancing their inordinate inclination towards dominant English-speaking cultures on the other. The former might prevent students from "falling into ethnocentric traps" (Saler 1993:8), while the latter might help them resist and mitigate the "symbolic domination" (Pavlenko & Blackage 2004: 12) of native varieties of English on nonnative varieties. Moreover, the incorporation of nativized English texts and, particularly, new English literatures into reading courses, introduces students to the creative potential of nativized Englishes and allows them to experience bilinguals'/multilinguals' creativity (Kachru & Nelson 2009) at work in the production of English texts. Kachru & Nelson (2009: 97) thus succinctly conclude that to deprive ESL/EFL students of new English literatures is to deprive them of "an immense resource of cross-cultural perspectives and strategies of multilinguals' creativity" manifested in and through nativized Englishes. The reading teachers' underscoring of texts

in nativized Englishes also finds its justification in the linguistic realities of English used in global cultural contexts. Linguistically, as McKay (2002: 93) observes, such texts have the potential to illustrate "examples of lexical, grammatical, and phonological variation in context" as well as "cross-cultural pragmatics in which bilingual users of English draw on their own rules of appropriateness". Culturally diverse English texts open up a pedagogical avenue for acquainting ESL/EFL students with diverse linguistic and cultural features of world Englishes. This enables them to grow linguistically through the acquisition of distinct vocabularies, grammatical structures and rhetorical strategies of Englishes while, at the same time, "becoming more knowledgeable citizens of the world" (Stoller 2002:107).

Regarding the two types of texts from nonnative English-speaking countries, namely English texts from culturally proximate countries such as those from South Asia, and English texts from culturally distant countries such as those from Africa, almost all teachers interviewed for this study showed specific preference for the former type of text. This result is not counterintuitive though, since one would expect that teachers/students prefer culturally proximate texts to culturally distant ones. Regarding the regional preference, one teacher noted that non-Western texts especially from culturally similar countries are more comprehensible for students than those from culturally distant ones. Thus, culturally proximate nativized texts, for example, from South Asian countries are likely to be pedagogically more accessible for Nepali ESL/EFL students than culturally distant texts such as those from African and Latin American countries.

7. Conclusion

The present study adopts Cortazzi & Jin's (1999) theoretical framework to characterize English texts into the categories of native English texts, nativized English texts and texts in Nepalese English and investigates reading teachers' voices on these different categories of texts emanating from diverse cultural contexts. The teachers recognized the functional complementarity of texts emanating from students' culture (i.e. texts in Nepalese English), target culture (i.e. native English texts) and international target cultures (i.e. nativized English texts), and ascribed different functional roles to these types of texts. Source culture texts are assumed to serve ESL/EFL students with relatively more accessible content, contributing to better text-reader interaction. Culturally, English texts of this type simultaneously serve reflective and refractive functions. They reflect students' cultural epistemologies and practices, which in turn ensures their cultural visibility in English. Refractively, such texts transcode culturally different values and experiences, 'forcing' English to undergo certain changes and acquire transcultural characteristics. Incorporating source culture texts into reading courses is also a way of acknowledging the legitimacy of the emerging variety of English (i.e. Nepalese English) and promoting local English writers' creative effort to appropriate English for local needs. The value of nativized English texts, on the other hand, lies in their potential to open up opportunities for ESL/EFL students to experience linguistic variation reflected and cultural diversity inscribed in the global varieties of English. Nativized English texts and, particularly, new English literatures also expose students to English bilinguals'/multilinguals' creative potential at work. Despite this, the teachers held significant sway in regard to native English texts with the assumption that these texts serve as the vital linguistic input for ESL/EFL students. Their attitude towards native and nonnative English writings mirrors both resistance and subordination to the dominance of native English. Nepalese ESL/EFL university teachers are caught between the act of appropriating English for self-exploration, self-expression and cultural visibility, and a desire to be in touch with the symbolic power conventionally associated with native English or inner-circle English varieties. They are thus simultaneously gravitated towards the divergent force of nonnative varieties of English and the convergent force of native English. This seemingly conflictual pull experienced by these university teachers communicates ESL/EFL teachers' awareness of diverse functions that English as a global language has to serve in the ESL/EFL context. This local-global functional awareness of

English should be addressed during course design, and particularly while making decisions about the types of English texts to be selected and prioritized in reading courses.

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The learning curve.
Can the results of the grammar exam be predicted?

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Abstract: This paper exploits the potentials of inferential statistics in its quest to answer two related questions, whether the exercises performed by students during their course in theoretical grammar really prepare them for the exam, and whether the students' exam results can be predicted from their achievements in said exercises. This study is in the context of English Business Communication at Aalborg University, Denmark. Several statistical methods, various forms of regression analysis, are pursued in order to discover which one – if any – of them is best suited to make predictions as to future exam results. It is found that the exercises investigated do indeed contribute significantly to the students' learning process, and that the exam results are predictable within a reasonable margin of error from the results of the exercises. Somewhat surprisingly, the simplest forms of linear regression and 1st degree polynomial regression are found to be the best predictors of the exam results, not any of the elaborate methods also tested. As a side effect, the study also reveals that the students' level of knowledge of theoretical grammar prior to their entering the university has no appreciable influence on their exam results.

Keywords: Learning of grammar, inferential statistics, language acquisition.

1. Introduction

It is a common and reasonable expectation that the exercises that the students in a course are required to do prepare the students for their exam. It is no less the case with a course on theoretical grammar. The purpose of this paper is to investigate to what extent this expectation is fulfilled in the case of the English Grammar course which first-semester students of English Business Communication at Aalborg University have to absolve. A related issue that is investigated is how predictable the exam results are from the performance of students during the course as documented through the exercises they do during the course. The purpose of investigating the predictability of the result of the grammar exam is to give the course teacher a tool to detect students who may be at risk of failing the exam.

The course investigated in this paper is a course on theoretical or descriptive grammar, in which the students have to learn concepts of grammar such as clause and phrase constituents, affixes and parts of speech, etc. This course has thus its focus on theoretical concepts applicable to English grammar. A separate course called Production of Written Texts focuses on the use of English, in which the students learn to employ grammar properly in practice. These two courses are of course tightly knit; so much so that they have a common portfolio exam at the end of the second semester. Also, the study regulation stipulates that learning theoretical grammar will improve the students' mastery of English and their grammatical precision in using English (Study Board of Language and International Business Communication 2017). However, this paper concerns itself only with how well the students are prepared for their exam in theoretical grammar. It does not address the issue of how much of that knowledge is eventually converted into a practical command of English. For that question, see Madsen (2014).

2. Inferential statistics

This paper relies on the theory of inferential statistics to answer the two related research questions "how well the home assignments that the students do during the course prepare them for the course-final exam" and "how predictable the result of the grammar exam is". The study uses correlation analysis to answer the first question, and multiple linear regression and polynomial regression to answer the second question (Urdan 2012; Hartshorn 2017). The pursuit of the second question has been inspired by Elbro and Scarborough (2003). This section explains why these technics have been

selected, Section Data describes the data used in detail, and Section Method explains how the data were manipulated in the analysis. A good understanding of the nature of the data is necessary for the understanding of the data manipulation employed.

2.1 Correlation analysis

The correlation analysis is used to determine the level of correspondence between the results of the home assignments during the course and the exam results, with a high level of correlation suggesting that the assignments prepare the students well for the exam. The hypothesis is the following: If the students become prepared for the exam during the grammar course, then the level of correlation is low at the beginning of the course, is increasing towards the end of the course and reaches a high level for the exam. Low correlation at the beginning corresponds to the relatively low level of knowledge the students enter the university with. Increasing correlation indicates the rising level of knowledge of the students, and a high final level of correlation indicates that the course has prepared the students well for the exam. Should the correlation show a decreasing tendency during the course, it would indicate that the course is detrimental for the students' development. Low final correlation and/or non-increasing level of correlation would suggest that the students do not gain much from doing the exercises with respect to the exam.

Note that the level of correlation and its tendency during the course are not indicative of the students' level of knowledge, only of how well the assignments' results tally with the exam's results. The level of knowledge at any stage is only indicated by the results of the exam and the home assignments, respectively. Thus, in principle, the students can attain a high level of knowledge even without a significant level of correlation between the home assignments and the exam, and, similarly, a high level of correlation may be accompanied by a low level of knowledge.

2.2 Regression analysis

The purpose of the regression analyses is to devise an equation, a mathematical formula, that can be used to compute the expected score at the exam of a future student. This formula takes a student's scores in the home assignments and the course-initial test as input and outputs the score that the student is likely to achieve at the exam. The result of this calculation can then reveal whether the student is in danger of failing, in which case evasive actions can be taken in time, before attempting the exam. Since this study attempts to predict only one value, the aggregate score of the exam, regression analysis suffices. Were the purpose to predict several values, for example subscores of the exam (cf. Section Data), multivariate analysis would be called for (Hair et al. 2010).

Of the several different ways of building such an equation, two kinds of regression analyses have been performed, multiple linear and polynomial (Boundless 2014). Since they both have advantages and disadvantages, one of the purposes of this study is to evaluate which one merits future use or further study.

The multiple linear regression analysis takes a sample group of students' scores in the home assignments and the course-initial test as the independent variables and the scores in the exam of the same group of students as the dependent variable and builds an equation that relates the dependent variable to the independent ones. This equation can then be used to predict the expected score at the exam of a student who is not a member of the sample group.

This is the cornerstone of this kind of analysis; the equation is deployed on students whose data were not used in the development of the equation. Hence, the success of the equation in predicting a student's exam scores depends heavily on how similar the student behaves compared to the sample group. The more dissimilar they are, the more imprecise the prediction becomes. In fact, the reliability of the equation also depends on the homogeneity of the sample group. The more heterogeneous the sample is, the less reliable the equation becomes. This dependence on similarity is a disadvantage of this method. However, it can be countered by the possibility that the input data can

be readily modified in a multitude of ways in order to fine-tune the equation. In fact, the multiple linear regression analysis has been performed on the same set of initial data modified in six different ways in order to find the data manipulation best suited.

The polynomial regression analysis has the advantage that it does not require a sample group of students. Hence, the equation is developed on the data of the very same student whose future exam score it is supposed to predict. In this way, a unique equation is developed for every student whose exam score is to be predicted – as opposed to the one-size-fits-all approach of the multiple linear regression analysis. The disadvantage of this method is that it depends on the consistent performance of the student for whom the equation is developed. If he or she does not perform in a mathematically detectable consistent pattern during the course, the equation gained is likely to mispredict the exam result of the student.

3. Data

As mentioned in Section Inferential statistics, the data for the analyses are the students' scores from the course-final exam, from the three compulsory home assignments during the course and from an extracurricular course-initial test that was used to gauge the students' knowledge of grammar upon entering the university.

The exam the students have to take in grammar at the end of their first semester consists of 95 questions on 12 topics within theoretical grammar[1]. An additional five questions concern the use of comma in certain sentences; however, these five questions were taken out of the dataset. The students are given 120 minutes to answer the 100 questions and are not allowed to use any means of aid. Consequently, they have to memorize all the relevant technical terms and their applicability.

The three compulsory home assignments during the course also contain 100 questions each and have to be done within one week with intervals of two weeks. The students are allowed to use any means of aid except human help. Possible plagiarism is actively checked and punished when proven beyond reasonable doubt. The course-initial test, containing 24 questions, has to be completed within 20 minutes without any aid. All the questions in the home assignments and the course-initial test are from previous exams with occasional minor modifications.

Table 1 gives an overview of the topics of grammar discussed during the first semester and how they are weighted in the course-initial test, the home assignments and the exam[2].

Table 1: Overview of the grammar topics taught and examined

Number of questions in Topics	Course-initial test	Home assignment 1	Home assignment 2	Home assignment 3	Exam
A. Parts of speech	9	40		10	10
B. Semantic relations			8	3	5
D. Clause constituents	15	10	25	20	18
E. Phrase vs. subordinate clause			15	10	8
F. Phrase types			15	10	10
G. Phrase constituents			12	10	9

[1] This description applies only to the grammar exam in English. The German and Spanish groups of International Business Communication in Aalborg follow a different approach.

[2] The reason for the gaps in the alphabetical codes of the topics is that the topics which are coded with the letters C, M, N, O, U, V, W, X and Y had either been deprecated before this investigation was performed or are only discussed and evaluated in the second semester and are thus out of the scope of this paper. L and Z were removed from the analysis (see Section 4 for explanation).

Number of questions in Topics	Course-initial test	Home assignment 1	Home assignment 2	Home assignment 3	Exam
H. Pronoun types		10		10	10
I. Subordinate clause types				7	7
J. Verb finiteness		15	7	7	7
K. Number of matrix clauses in a paragraph				5	5
L. Comma with relative clauses				(5)	
P. Number of affixes in a word		10			
Q. Part of speech of a word's root		10			
R. Function of a morpheme		5	8		3
S. Number of constituents in a phrase			10		
T. Dictionary form of a word's root				3	3
Z. Comma					(5)

As can be seen in Table 1, only home assignment 3 is almost like the exam; the other assignments and especially the course-initial test deviate from the exam's structure considerably. However, all the assignments and the test consist of questions from exams in previous years. The reason for the structural variation is many-fold and explained below.

The course-initial test contains questions only on parts of speech (A) and clause constituents (D) because these are the only topics that can be expected to be known by all students emerging from secondary education in Denmark. Some students might have been introduced to more sophisticated grammar in high school; however, since such students make up a small minority, it would not have made sense to waste precious time on questions that most students would not have had a chance to answer.

Since most of the grammar topics are hence completely new to the students, and since according to the study regulation, all the home assignments must be submitted during the course, it is not possible to train all the topics in all the home assignments. Some topics (for example I) must wait until the end of the course to be discussed and can thus be included only in the final home assignment.

The reason for the high proportion of questions in home assignment 1 on parts of speech (A & Q) is partly that it is one of the topics that students are already familiar with and that this topic was found to be one of the most essential topics in theoretical grammar (Madsen 2015). A similar argument applies to the large number of questions in home assignment 2 on clause constituents (D). The reason for the relatively many questions on finiteness (J) in home assignment 1 is that this topic had been believed to be particularly difficult for the students. However, a later examination found it to be a topic in which the students consistently performed above the overall average (Madsen 2017). Despite their not appearing in further home assignments or in the exam, topics *P, Q* and *S* were used to give the students another perspective on morphological and phrase analysis, which are two realms of grammar completely new to the students. Apart from these pedagogical considerations, it was attempted to allot the various topics roughly equal representation in the home assignments and the

exam.

Table 2 provides some examples of the questions posed within the different topics.

Table 2: Examples of questions in the exam, home assignments and course-initial test

***A*. Determine which part of speech the underlined words belong to.**

- If you want to drink a healthy alcoholic beverage, cider is a very good choice.

***B*. Determine the semantic relation between the expressions below.**

- *-er* as in *happier* vs *-er* as in *Londoner*

***D*. Determine what clause constituents the underlined sequences of words are.**

- True cider is made from fermented apple juice.

***E*. Decide whether the underlined sequences of words are phrases or clauses.**

- The wide availability of apples makes it easy to produce cider almost anywhere.

***G*. Determine what phrase constituent the underlined sequences of words are.**

- the alcoholic content of cider

***H*. Determine what kind of pronoun the underlined words are.**

- Whoever invented cider was a genius.

***I*&*J*. Determine the type and finiteness of the underlined subclauses.**

- It seems that some drinks marketed as cider are not true ciders.

***T*. Specify the dictionary form of the roots of the words below.**

- Unhealthily

With the exception of question type *T*, the students have to select the correct answer from fixed sets of valid answers. For instance, in the case of *D*, the set of valid answers is the set of clause constituents, containing nine elements in this grammar course (Hjulmand & Schwartz 2012). Should a student give a true but invalid response, say calling *from fermented apple juice* a preposition phrase instead of adverbial constituent, the response counts as incorrect. The sets of valid responses are not listed in the exam; the students are expected to remember them. It does happen, however, that some students provide invalid responses. In question type *T*, there is no fixed set of valid responses, and the students are not given any hints as to what the root might be except for the word itself.

Each correct and valid response yields one point for the student. Incorrect and non-existent responses yield zero points. The students have to answer 60% of the questions correctly in order to pass the exam. The course-initial test and the home assignments are not graded. Nevertheless, the students have to make all the home assignments to be allowed to attempt the exam although the results of the home assignments do not matter.

4. Method

This section gives a detailed description of the setup of the regression analyses. The correlation analysis was done in a straightforward manner, not requiring a lengthy elaboration, and is summarized in the last subsection. All the calculations were performed in MS Excel (Bovey et al. 2009; Falls

2011; Carlberg 2014; Harmon 2014).

As mentioned in Section Inferential statistics, the students' scores at the course-final exam serve as the dependent variable, and their scores in the course-initial test and in the three home assignments serve as the independent variables in the multiple linear regression analysis. The scores of freshmen in 2014 (60 students) and 2015 (79 students) were used in this study.

The years 2014 and 2015 were used because the students in these years were given exactly the same course-initial test and home assignments. The exam questions were of course different token-wise in the two years, but the same type-wise. This setup ascertains the best possible way to test the equations' predictive power. However, the equations gained in this way require for maximum dependability that they be used on the scores of the same home assignments in the future that they have been developed on.

The five questions on comma in the exam were disregarded in the analysis because, due to a human error, they were rendered unusable in the 2015 exam. Thus, that exam featured only 95 questions. For the sake of comparability, the results of the 2014 exam were adjusted so as to ignore the questions on comma. Similarly, question type *L* was taken out from the results of the third home assignments in both years. This has to be taken into account when attempting to predict a student's exam result. The equations developed will not make a prediction with regard to questions on comma use. However, since this paper focuses on the learning of theoretical grammar, it is arguably not a major loss that comma use has been ignored.

4.1 Multiple linear regression

The multiple linear regression analysis, i.e. the development of the equation to predict the exam score, was done separately for the two years, and then the equations were checked against each other's samples in order to test their predictive power. In other words, the equation developed for the students in 2014 was checked against the exam scores of the students in 2015, and the equation developed for the students in 2015 was checked against the exam scores of the students in 2014.

As mentioned in Section Inferential statistics, different manipulations of the raw data were performed before doing the regression analysis. Thus, two times four pairs of predictive equations were developed, four pairs for either year because four different sets of input data were used. One member of each pair takes into account the course-initial test, and the other member of the pair does not. The reason for this was that the course-initial test was extracurricular, so it cannot be expected that future courses – possibly taught by other teachers – will employ it. On the other hand, the three home assignments were compulsory and can be expected to remain so. Having one equation that considers the course-initial test and another equation that does not also makes it possible to estimate how much the students' initial level of knowledge means for their achievement in the grammar course.

In the following, the four different input data sets are described. The simplest of the multiple linear regression calculations is based on the aggregated scores of the home assignments and the course-initial test, *i.e.* on the number of correct answers in each. Thus, these calculations take three or four factors into account (without and with the course-initial test, respectively). In the other three types of multiple linear regression calculation, the scores of the individual topics are taken separately as factors. Hence, these calculations operate on 27 and 25 factors depending on whether the course-initial test is or is not taken into consideration.

The reason for trying this more complex approach is that the aggregate scores do not reveal anything about the composition of the students' knowledge. Two students can have the same aggregate score, but they have likely answered different questions correctly, and their knowledge may thus have different compositions. Different knowledge compositions may have different bearings on the exam scores.

Table 3 summarizes the datasets for the multiple linear regression analysis.

Table 3: Datasets used in the study

aggregate scores of home assignments and course-initial test	scores of the individual topics within the home assignments and course-initial test		
	nominal scores	differentiated scores	
		ordinal	proportional

The simplest one of the three more detailed calculations (called nominal scores) takes the scores for the individual grammar topics at their face value, i.e. simply the number of correct answers. The other two approaches attempt to differentiate between the responses depending on the difficulty of the questions. The idea behind this is that the questions within the same topic are inevitably at different levels of difficulty, be it accidentally or purposefully. Hence, even if two students have answered the same number of questions correctly, they may have knowledge of different levels or of different composition within the grammar topic concerned. This difference may in turn have a bearing on the final score at the exam.

The level of difficulty of the questions is estimated from the number of correct responses given to the individual questions by the members of the sample group (Hatch and Farhady 1982). Thus, the measure of difficulty is dependent on the composition of the sample group on whose scores the equation is being built and may differ from group to group. However, since the difficulty of questions can be validly measured only by the performance of those who have actually answered the questions, there is no reliable independent external measure of difficulty. The only way to mitigate the effect of the possible difference between sample groups is to measure the questions' difficulty on the performance of one very large group of informants and use this measurement in all subsequent calculations. However, since this study is the first of its kind – at least for the students of English Business Communication – this pre-assessment of question difficulty was not possible.

Another beneficial effect of this differentiation is that the granularity of the scores increases, i.e. the same number of questions can differentiate between more students. Without the differentiation, the undifferentiated aggregate score of say five questions can only differentiate between six students because there are only six different scores: 0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. With a differentiating algorithm, this number can be increased to 20. The algorithm is explained in detail in Madsen 2019 and therefore only summarized here briefly.

Two methods of differentiation are used in this study as well. In one of them, an integer value from 1 through the number of questions within the topic (n) is assigned to each question depending on the detected level of difficulty. 1 indicates the lowest level of difficulty, and n the highest, the level of difficulty being inversely proportional to the number of informants having answered that question correctly. If two questions appear to have the same level of difficulty, then they are assigned the same value. This method is referred to as 'ordinal' in Table 3.

The other method of differentiating is called 'proportional' in Table 3 and works in the same way except for the fact that the level of difficulty is not expressed by integer, but by rational numbers. In this way, the calculation takes into account not only the rank order of the questions on the scale of difficulty, but also the proportion of how difficult they are compared to one another within the same topic. The rationale is that the difficulty of the questions is not necessarily equally distributed. For instance, the second easiest question may be as many as five times more difficult than the easiest question while the third easiest question only slightly more difficult than the second easiest one. Also

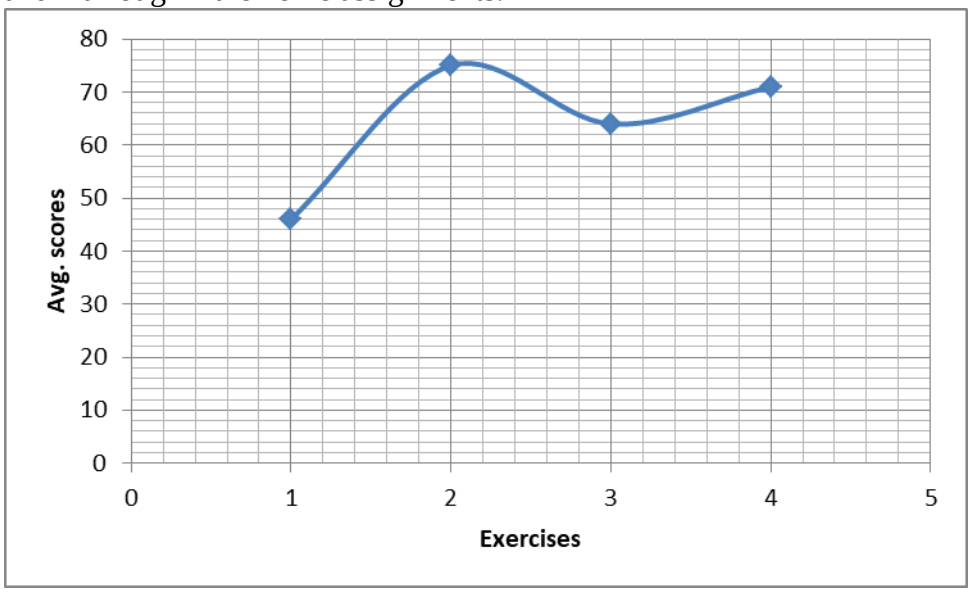
in the proportional method, the easiest question is assigned the value of 1, and the most difficult question the value *n*. All the other questions are assigned values between 1 and *n* in proportion to their measured difficulty.

For the sake of comparability with the aggregate and nominal scores (Table 3), the differentiated scores are scaled to the same ranges as those of the nominal scores. That is, if a topic is probed by 10 questions, then the maximum number of points attainable is 10 regardless of the calculation method. The differentiated scores just have a higher resolution of the same range than the nominal scores.

4.2 Polynomial regression

The idea of attempting a polynomial regression analysis comes from the observation (Figure 1) that when plotting in a coordinate system the sample means for the course-initial test and the home assignments in chronological order, the points resemble the curve of a 3rd degree polynomial (the curve is continuous for illustrative purposes only). Hence, this idea takes the title of this paper literally and attempts to fit a curve onto the data points. The equation that describes the curve can then be used to predict the score at the exam, which is the next data point in the curve.

Figure 1: 3rd degree polynomial of average scores. 1 on the *x* axis represents the course-initial test, and 2 through 4 the home assignments.



Admittedly, this is a rather dubious approach. Even though four points technically define a 3rd degree polynomial, it is not at all clear what the independent variable on the *x*-axis represents. The best bet is probably time; however, even so, it is not given what values it should assume. If the course-initial test and the home assignments are assigned the *x*-values of 1 through 4, should the exam be represented by 5? It was in the test calculations because given the nature of the cubic polynomial, any higher value would likely overshoot the target with a very large margin. However, it was an arbitrary choice, which in fact does not resonate well with the assumption that the independent variable should be time. For assuming the values of 1 through 5 suggests that the measurement points are equidistant in time. It does apply to the home assignments because they were spaced two weeks from the course-initial test and each other. However, the exam took place about one month after the last home assignment, which suggests that the *x*-value for the exam ought to be 6. A similar doubt concerns the dependent variable on the *y*-axis. Its values are seemingly given – the above mentioned scores; however, these values derive from different sources and only vaguely measure the same thing, the

student's level of knowledge.

Despite all these grave reservations, a 3rd degree polynomial was considered worth pursuing, possibly even as a better choice than 1st degree polynomial, *i.e.* a linear approximation. The reason why a 1st degree polynomial was considered possibly inferior is that most students showed a generally increasing tendency from the course-initial test to the third home assignment, and a linear approximation would necessarily carry this tendency further. However, not all students' exam results warrant this assumption. Therefore, it was expected that a 1st degree polynomial would have a strong tendency to overestimate the exam result, which is clearly undesirable.

In any case, both 1st and 3rd degree polynomials were tried, and both in two different ways. In one of the approaches, the starting point (the first data point) for the polynomial was the score of the course-initial test. In the other approach, the starting point was set at the origin, in a way modelling the absolute starting point of the students having zero knowledge of grammar. As opposed to the multiple linear regressions, the 3rd degree polynomials do not have different versions according to whether the course-initial test is included or not. Since a 3rd degree polynomial needs at least four data points, it would make no sense to disregard the course-initial test. Adding the origin as an extra starting point is only an artificial data point.

The polynomials' average performance was evaluated against the combined sample of the two years. Since each informant individually serves as the basis for a set of four polynomials, there is no point in comparing the years against each other. However, a larger sample can give a more reliable picture of the average performance of the polynomials.

4.3 Correlation analysis

The aggregate exam scores of the students were correlated with the aggregate scores in the home assignments and the course-initial test, one pair of datasets at a time. The two years were combined in the correlation analysis to increase the sample size. The significance of the correlations was calculated by using the two-tailed pairwise *t*-test. The correlation analysis is augmented by a calculation of the difference between the average of the exam scores and the averages of the exercise scores.

5. Analysis

The first two sections report the results of the multiple linear regression analysis and the results of the polynomial regression analysis, respectively. These results are evaluated according to the following metrics. The results of the correlation analysis are presented separately.

- $\bar{x}_E$ = mean of the expected scores. It is the arithmetic mean of the exam scores that are predicted by the equation developed by the regression analysis. It should be as close to the mean of the observed scores as possible.
- r_{EO} = correlation coefficient between the observed (or target) scores and the expected (or calculated) scores. It goes from -1 through +1. The closer it is to +1, the better it is from the perspective of this study. Values closer to 0 indicate weaker correlation. Negative values would indicate inverse correlation between the observed and expected scores, which would be catastrophic for the purpose of this study.
- p = probability of equality as calculated by the two-tailed pairwise *t*-test. It can assume values between 0 and 1, and higher values indicate higher probability that the observed scores and the expected scores represent the same population. Note that this study tests whether two samples are the same. Therefore, a higher value of p is preferred since p indicates how likely it is that the two sets of scores are equivalent. Hence, this approach differs from the one used

in many studies that test whether two samples are different from each other in order to determine, for instance, whether two different teaching methods or medications yield different results. Such studies, therefore, seek a low value of *p*, typically one below 0.05 (Hartshorn 2015).

- $\bar{x}_D$ = mean of the differences between the observed and calculated scores. For each student, the difference between their observed exam score and predicted exam score is calculated, and $\bar{x}_D$ is the average of these differences. Consequently, it is also the difference between the average of the observed exam scores and the average of the expected exam scores. The closer it is to zero, the better. Positive values indicate that the equation generally overestimates the expected scores, and negative values indicate underestimation. Negative values are preferred to positive ones because it is probably better to urge a student who is not in danger of failing the exam to do even better than to miss a student who is in danger of failing.
- s_D = standard deviation of the differences between the observed and expected scores. The lower it is, the better it is because that indicates lower variability in the predictions.
- min_D = the lowest value of the differences between the observed and expected scores. It is the longest distance between an underestimated score and the actual score. The closer it is to zero, the better.
- max_D = the highest value of the differences between the observed and expected scores. It is the longest distance between an overestimated score and the actual score. The closer it is to zero, the better.
- mad_D = the mean absolute deviation of the differences between the observed and expected scores. It is measured from $\bar{x}_D$. The lower it is, the better it is for the same reason as with the standard deviation.
- $<s_D$ = the number of expected scores that are within a distance of one standard deviation from $\bar{x}_D$. If the distribution of the difference is normal, it should amount to about 68% of the number of informants. In any case, the higher it is, the better it is because it indicates that more predictions are closer to their target.
- $>2s_D$ = the number of expected scores that are further from $\bar{x}_D$ than two standard deviations. If the distribution of the difference is normal, it should amount to about 5% of the number of informants. In any case, the lower it is, the better it is because missing the target by more than two standard deviations indicates an all too low predictive power of the equations.
- $<\pm 3$ = the number of expected scores that are within 3 percent points of their targets. 3 percent points has been chosen as the limit because the average interval of the grades is 6 percent points. Hence, 3 percent points is the largest deviation which, at the same time, is the least likely one to cause a target miss which amounts to a change in grade. The higher, the better.

For the datasets, the following abbreviations are used.

- *Aggr*. is the dataset consisting of the aggregate scores of the course-initial test and the home assignments.
- *Plain* is the dataset that consists of the plain scores of the individual grammar topics.
- *Ord*. is the dataset that consists of the scores of the individual grammar topics which are differentiated on an ordinal scale.

Prop. is the dataset that consists of the scores of the individual grammar topics which are differentiated on a proportional or interval scale, cf.

- Table 3.

5.1 Multiple linear regression

The tables below summarize the results of the multiple linear regression analysis. First, the equations were checked against their own samples in order to see how they perform under the most optimal circumstances (Table 4 and Table 5). Then, their performance was checked against the other sample, which was the very purpose of this study (Table 6 and Table 7). The most favorable value of a given metric is highlighted in each column. The favorable values do not necessarily coincide. Hence, selecting the best performing equation is not a trivial matter. The *<±3* values are of course weighted high because they express how many predictions come within the preferred range around the target. However, the spread of the predictions is also very important since it is desirable that the predictions do not miss their target by too large a margin.

Table 4: Equations for Year 2014 checked against Year 2014

mean of observed scores = 70.39, number of informants = 60												
dataset	initial test	$\bar{x}_E$	r_{EO}	*p*	$\bar{x}_D$	s_D	min_D	max_D	mad_D	$<s_D$	$>2s_D$	<±3
aggr.	incl.	70.47	0.76	0.94	0.08	8.58	-16.56	23.16	6.66	73%	5%	33%
	excl.	70.52	0.75	0.91	0.13	8.75	-16.08	24.20	6.72	72%	7%	30%
plain	incl.	70.44	**0.89**	0.95	0.05	**6.02**	-11.81	18.48	**4.81**	68%	**3%**	40%
	excl.	70.43	**0.89**	0.95	0.05	6.07	**-11.16**	18.77	4.83	70%	**3%**	38%
ord.	incl.	70.40	0.88	**0.99**	0.01	6.32	-13.25	17.25	4.91	72%	7%	37%
	excl.	70.40	0.87	0.98	0.02	6.54	-12.38	18.32	5.02	**75%**	5%	37%
prop.	incl.	70.36	0.88	0.98	-0.03	6.38	-12.92	**16.91**	4.87	65%	7%	42%
	excl.	**70.38**	0.87	**0.99**	**-0.01**	6.60	-12.76	17.81	4.94	72%	5%	**43%**

Table 5: Equations for Year 2015 checked against Year 2015

mean of observed scores = 64.50, number of informants = 79												
dataset	initial test	$\bar{x}_E$	r_{EO}	*p*	$\bar{x}_D$	s_D	min_D	max_D	mad_D	$<s_D$	$>2s_D$	<±3
aggr.	incl.	64.59	0.85	0.93	0.08	8.77	-23.25	23.06	6.55	73%	8%	**34%**
	excl.	64.55	0.81	**0.96**	0.05	9.72	-28.11	22.85	7.71	**78%**	9%	24%
plain	incl.	**64.45**	**0.92**	0.95	**-0.05**	**6.61**	**-15.60**	15.23	**5.33**	66%	5%	32%
	excl.	64.45	0.91	0.95	-0.06	7.08	-16.97	**13.87**	5.83	66%	**3%**	27%
ord.	incl.	64.37	0.91	0.86	-0.14	6.91	-17.59	17.87	5.49	71%	4%	**34%**
	excl.	64.36	0.90	0.86	-0.15	7.34	-21.97	17.33	5.75	68%	4%	33%
prop.	incl.	64.30	0.90	0.80	-0.21	7.28	-16.99	16.24	5.80	72%	8%	33%
	excl.	64.27	0.89	0.79	-0.23	7.76	-20.96	16.55	6.08	67%	5%	33%

Looking at the results of the "self-test" of the equations, it is evident that the equations gained from the regressions based on the individual grammar topics are superior to the ones which are gained from

the regression based on the aggregate scores. It is also clear that the equations that also take the course-initial test into account tend to perform better than the corresponding ones without the course-initial test. On the other hand, it does not seem to pay off to invest the extra computational effort into the differentiation of the questions within the grammar topics, although it is not detrimental either.

The distribution of the differences is close to normal distribution. The $<s_D$ values are around 68%, and the $>2s_D$ values do not typically exceed 5%. The $<\pm 3$ values are around 33%, which is somewhat mediocre.

Table 6: Equations for Year 2015 checked against Year 2014

mean of observed scores = 70.39, number of informants = 60												
dataset	initial test	$\bar{x}_E$	r_{EO}	p	$\bar{x}_D$	s_D	min_D	max_D	mad_D	$<s_D$	$>2s_D$	$<\pm 3$
aggr.	incl.	67.67	**0.72**	0.03	-2.72	**9.36**	**-24.74**	**21.79**	**7.03**	72%	7%	**28%**
	excl.	67.45	0.70	0.02	-2.94	9.48	-24.93	27.22	7.06	67%	8%	23%
plain	incl.	67.81	0.61	0.10	-2.57	11.67	-33.54	28.24	9.29	67%	5%	20%
	excl.	67.85	0.57	0.12	-2.54	12.24	-35.13	28.19	9.45	**73%**	7%	17%
ord.	incl.	69.27	0.57	0.51	-1.11	12.88	-35.97	29.98	10.08	67%	5%	22%
	excl.	69.48	0.51	0.62	-0.90	14.03	-39.78	36.23	10.91	68%	5%	18%
prop.	incl.	69.57	0.59	0.63	-0.82	12.95	-36.06	32.90	10.44	67%	**3%**	12%
	excl.	69.81	0.52	**0.76**	**-0.57**	14.28	-40.03	41.50	11.18	72%	**3%**	15%

Table 7: Equations for Year 2014 checked against Year 2015

mean of observed scores = 64.50, number of informants = 79												
dataset	initial test	$\bar{x}_E$	r_{EO}	p	$\bar{x}_D$	s_D	min_D	max_D	mad_D	$<s_D$	$>2s_D$	$<\pm 3$
aggr.	incl.	67.71	**0.82**	0.01	3.21	**9.62**	**-18.55**	31.74	**7.45**	**76%**	8%	**32%**
	excl.	67.79	0.79	0.01	3.28	10.30	-20.20	31.46	8.11	71%	6%	29%
plain	incl.	65.05	0.70	**0.69**	**0.54**	12.12	-43.27	**30.27**	9.01	75%	5%	24%
	excl.	65.27	0.72	0.57	0.77	11.77	-41.52	30.35	8.77	72%	5%	**32%**
ord.	incl.	65.34	0.65	0.58	0.84	13.21	-37.35	36.93	9.93	68%	5%	24%
	excl.	65.96	0.72	0.28	1.45	11.87	-35.75	33.93	8.86	68%	**4%**	29%
prop.	incl.	67.31	0.66	0.07	2.81	13.36	-36.52	38.82	9.97	71%	6%	30%
	excl.	67.92	0.72	0.01	3.42	12.11	-34.96	35.69	9.04	70%	5%	23%

Several differences emerge from Table 6 and Table 7. First, the correlations in the case of controlling the equations against the group of informants from the other year are much lower than the ones gained when checking the equations against the year for which they were developed. This is also reflected in the much lower level of statistical significance and the higher values of the difference between the

expected and observed scores. Nevertheless, in most cases the correlations still reach an acceptable level of around 0.7.

Second, excluding the course-initial test does not make so large a difference between the members of the equation pairs as when evaluating the equations against their own year. In several cases, the equations without the course-initial test are in fact more precise than the ones incorporating it.

Last, the equations based on the individual grammar topics are not in any obvious way superior to the equations based on the aggregate scores as they are when being checked against their own years. Also, the patterns of the equations from the two years are quite different from each other. The equations from 2014 seem to agree better with the informants from 2015 than vice versa. However, the distribution of the differences is still close to normal.

As it turns out, the two samples are indeed different from each other. The *p* value from a *t*-test comparing the exam scores from the two years equals 0.0228, which suggests that the two samples are statistically significantly different from each other. It explains why the results in Table 6 and Table 7 are so different. Since the 2014 equations do better on their own sample than the 2015 equation on theirs, it is probably not surprising that this difference also emerges in a cross-sample comparison. It has likely to do with the fact the sample from 2014 is more homogenous than the sample from 2015 as their standard deviations are consistently lower (Table 8).

Table 8: Standard deviations of the samples

	course-initial test	home assignment 1	home assignment 2	home assignment 3	exam
2014	18.10	9.06	12.96	12.37	13.35
2015	18.82	11.24	14.04	15.16	16.76

It is, however, not a disadvantage that the two samples have proved to be so different because it hints at what can be expected when an equation based on one sample is used on another sample that is rather different from the former sample. If the results in Table 6 and Table 7 can be deemed satisfactory enough, then there is a good chance that the equations developed in this project can be used on further samples with some confidence.

As for the satisfactoriness of the predictions, it must be noted that even though $\bar{x}_D$ is a magnitude larger in the cross-checking than when the equations are compared against their own sample, it can still be as low as 0.54. Even a value of -2.57 (Table 6) is an acceptable prediction. Despite the significant increase in $\bar{x}_D$, the number of predictions within the ±3-percent-point margin is still in the range of 20 to 30%. Thus, the equations seem to be reasonable tools to detect students that may be lagging behind.

5.2 Polynomial regression

Table 9 shows the results of the polynomial regression analysis.

Table 9: Results of the polynomial regressions

mean of observed scores = 67.05, number of informants = 139													
polyn-omial		forced through origin	$\bar{x}_E$	r_{EO}	*P*	$\bar{x}_D$	s_D	min_D	max_D	mad_D	$<s_D$	$>2s_D$	$<\pm3$
3rd degree		yes	91.34	0.51	0.00	24.29	45.67	-106.64	154.46	36.38	62%	**7%**	6%
		no	149.22	0.01	0.00	82.17	58.38	-75.20	254.70	44.80	35%	24%	0%
1st degree	with test	yes	96.38	**0.75**	0.00	29.33	**11.56**	**-7.14**	68.74	**8.87**	6%	71%	1%
		no	76.58	0.57	0.00	9.54	15.06	-29.50	61.60	11.98	62%	9%	15%
	w/o test	no	**63.75**	0.67	0.00	**-3.30**	14.22	-42.07	**45.93**	10.40	**77%**	**6%**	**20%**

Somewhat disappointingly, though not entirely unexpectedly, the 3rd degree polynomials did not fulfill the expectations, performing rather poorly. Many predictions missed the target by a very large margin even exceeding the absolute limits of 0 and 100. The polynomials could possibly perform better if there were more data points, i.e. the scores from more exercises during the course, to build on; however, that is not possible for the time being.

On second thought, it is not so surprising that the first degree polynomials did better than the 3rd degree ones despite the agreeable curve in Figure 1. When having so few data points, it is likely that a linear approximation does a better job than a higher order one. This might, however, change if there were more data points, as alluded to above. The 1st degree polynomial (last row in Table 9) which was not pegged to the origin and which did not take the course-initial test into account did in fact quite well, almost on par with the equations from the multiple linear regression analyses. When considering that the 1st degree polynomial has the advantage that it does not need a sample base and has minimal computational requirements, it is not an unattractive alternative to multiple linear regression despite its somewhat lower precision.

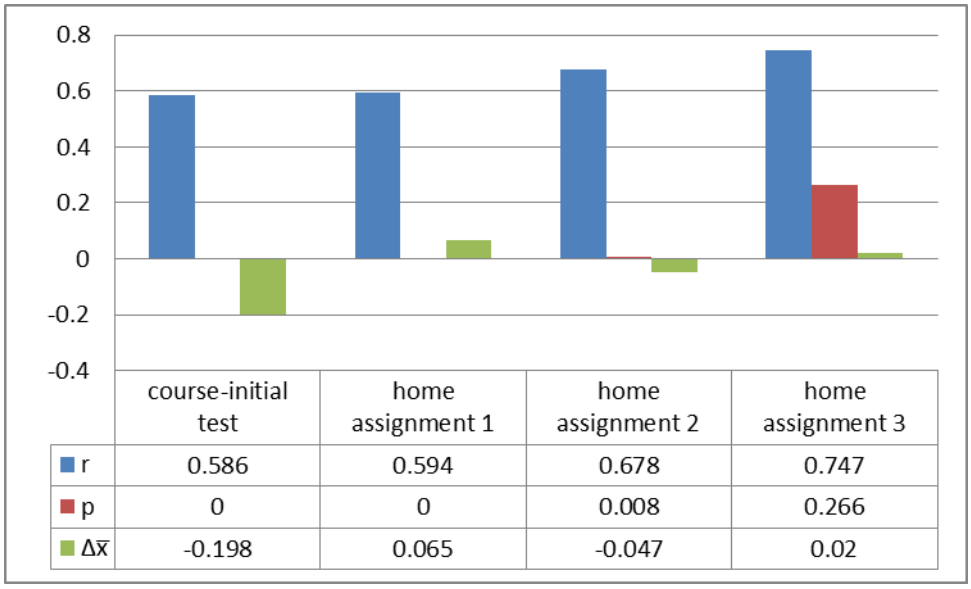
5.3 Correlation analysis

Figure 2 shows the results of the correlation analysis.

- *r* stands for the correlation coefficient between the exam scores and the respective exercise.
- *p* is the statistical significance of the correlations.
- $\Delta\bar{x}$ is the difference between the average of the exam scores and the average of the scores of the respective exercise. The former is subtracted from the latter. It has been scaled down by 100 so that it can be shown on the same scale as *r* and *p*.

The calculations are based on the combined sample of 2014 and 2015, which comprises 139 informants. The average exam score of the combined sample is 67.05.

Figure 2: Results of the correlation analysis



	course-initial test	home assignment 1	home assignment 2	home assignment 3
r	0.586	0.594	0.678	0.747
p	0	0	0.008	0.266
$\Delta\bar{x}$	-0.198	0.065	-0.047	0.02

As can be seen, the correlation with the exam increases steadily during the course. So does the probability of equality (*p*) between the exam scores and the scores of the respective exercises although it does not reach high. On the other hand, the gap between the exam scores and the scores of the exercises shows a steady decrease, though with fluctuation in its sign.

All these metrics suggest that the students are being prepared for the exam during the course, at least partly by the exercises they do. The calculations also suggest that the initial level of knowledge is not decisive for the exam score, and students with a low initial level can improve their knowledge sufficiently. This observation is also corroborated by the results of regression analyses. When the equations from the multiple linear regression analysis are cross-checked against the other sample, the equations incorporating the course-initial test do not perform noticeably better. It suggests that the results of the course-initial test are not good predictors of the exam scores. This suggestion is further strengthened by the 1st degree polynomials performing best when the course-initial test is not taken into account.

However, it does not mean that the course-initial test was taken in vain. It may have given a hint to the students about their standing and may have given them some motivation to make more effort, especially those who did not do well at the test.

6. Conclusion

The paper sought to answer two research questions. As for the question how well the home assignments prepare the students for the course-final exam, the study clearly shows that there is an increasing convergence between the students' exercise results and their exam results. It suggests that the exercises during the course have a beneficial effect for preparing the students for the exam. Of course, it does not guarantee that the existing exercises are the best possible ones; however, they certainly serve their purpose.

For the question how predictable the outcome of the grammar exam is, the results are promising. In 20 to 30% of the cases, the predictions are spot on, and within ±2 grades in 60 to 70% of the cases. It means that the teacher can confidently identify and – most importantly – notify those students who are in danger of failing the exam in advance. Even though this identification is possible only after the final home assignment has been evaluated, there is still some time until the exam so that the students notified can make extra effort to prepare for the exam.

The comparison of the prediction methods indicates that it is not necessary to differentiate between the questions of the individual grammar topics for the sake of the prediction, nor does it pay

off to increase the granularity of the scores. The basic aggregate scores are sufficient. There is furthermore close competition between the predictive equations developed through multiple linear regression analysis and the 1st degree polynomial regression, suggesting that the simplest prediction methods work just fine. All this means that putting the findings of this paper to practical use is no more complicated than setting up a simple Excel spreadsheet in which the teacher inserts a student's home-assignment scores and obtains the student's expected exam score immediately. The teacher and the student can then take action accordingly.

Finally, the study has also given an answer to an unasked, yet important question. Both the correlation and regression analyses suggest that the students' initial level of knowledge is not decisive for their exam score. In other words, also students with a limited understanding of grammar at the beginning of the course can learn it during the course; good exam grades are not reserved for the few who enter the university with substantial preunderstanding of grammar. This corresponds well with the conclusion that the home assignments support the students' learning adequately.

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The role of conversation analysis-informed instruction to enhance students' conversational skills in the Ethiopian context

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Abstract: This study was aimed at developing conversational skills of first year students in the Department of English Language and Literature at Bahir Dar University using conversation analysis-informed intervention. A qualitative-conversation analysis (CA) approach was employed for the study in which a case study was used. Ten students were selected as participants in the study. The participants were provided with oral tasks before the intervention took place. The oral productions of the participants were recorded and analysed to identify their difficulties in terms of conversational skills. Based on the difficulties the participants had, they were taught conversational features to develop their knowledge and skills of conversational skills in the English language. The intervention took four months. In the post-intervention phase of the study, oral productions of the participants were also recorded using audio/video devices and analysed from the conversation analysis perspective to see the developments observed as a result of the CA based treatment. The findings showed that there were encouraging results with regard to the improvements of conversational skills of the study participants; their productions of successive and related expressions were observed to have improved. An increased use of conversational strategies and repairs in the post-intervention phase of the study is an evidence of the development of their conversational skills. The participants also developed their knowledge with regard to the use of spoken grammar in their conversations. Therefore, a CA based intervention has a great impact on the teaching of oral skills in English for it helps to identify students' learning difficulties and take pertinent actions.

Keywords: Conversation, conversation analysis, adjacency pairs, conversational strategies.

1. Introduction

Oral communication ability in English is a burning issue for many people (Saeed 2013), and communicative competence in the target language (English in this regard) is more required now than ever before due to increased opportunities for its speakers. The global demand for English has brought a huge demand for appropriate language teaching and language teaching resources (Richards 2006). Thus, the global and local demand for good communication in the English language has increased the responsibility of the English language teacher considerably, as a positive relationship between real life communicative purposes and language learning approaches has been reported (Saeed 2013).

Ansarey (2012) explicates that speakers having less than average oral skills may have difficulties in a variety of communicative events such as personal, social or business-related situations which is not an exception to the use of the English language in a variety of oral communication situations. A speaker is required to have good command of oral language skills and enough confidence to speak in the presence of other people which will lead him to effective communication. In this regard, Donato (2000) argues that the ability to communicate orally enables a person to express his thoughts and ideas. Therefore, learners should be explicitly taught the machineries of conversation to help them develop their oral skills.

These days, new developments have been observed in the areas of language pedagogy in order to promote the oral interactional competence of second language learners using conversation analysis (CA)-informed instructions (Barraja-Rohan 2011). Barraja-Rohan, in her empirical finding of the CA approach as a tool, emphasized that CA is a helpful instrument for addressing problems of language teaching and learning. Conversation analysis is one of the key methodological approaches to the study of verbal interaction (Wooffitt 2005: 1). Similarly, Wong and Waring (2010) emphasize the incorporation of CA in the language pedagogy because it is a foundation to all language learning. Applying conversation analysis findings in the classroom addresses the issue of

oversimplification in speech act instructional materials (Nicholas 2015). Lee and Hellermann (2014) claim that, currently, CA researchers have addressed the developmental agenda by investigating related data over time in the process of teaching. Lee and Hellermann further argue that CA has taken a different analytic method, and CA's extensive body of findings as regards L2 English has mostly been descriptive in nature, primarily focusing on the practices of L2 use in the sequential production of turns and associated actions. Moreover, Wooffitt (2005) believes that conversation analysis offers the most sophisticated and robust account of language in action. Since second language teaching and learning requires interaction or language in action, CA is believed to promote the EFL classroom interaction. CA, as an approach, is rigorously empirical in that it works on real interactions (Walsh 2006). Global experiences call for a need to use evidence-based instruction for the effective teaching of oral skills such as conversational skills. CA for second language acquisition asserts to seek the relevance of learning through the actions of parties in each context of use because the learning processes are constructed through the talk of the participants; that is, learning takes place through interaction (Lee & Hellermann 2014).

Having introduced the contribution of CA for language acquisition, the present study, therefore, aimed to investigate the role of CA-informed instruction to enhance students' conversational skills as most EFL students, in the present context, were observed as being unable to interact effectively in English classes due to the fact that there is little focus on conversational features in spoken English classes. The English language teaching, especially the teaching of oral skills, seems to be marginalized due to several factors such as the linguistic incompetence of students and teachers, the teachers' knowledge and application of teaching methodologies and the curriculum. Generally speaking, the teaching of English is suffering in Ethiopia as teachers are unaware of and unfamiliar with appropriate English language teaching methods, and the absence of effective methods in their teaching (Kumar Jha 2013). Kumar Jha also points out that the practice of a learner-centered approach is lacking; the teachers do not encourage the learners in a quest for self-learning activities and the course components do not favour cooperative learning. Thus, English is learnt, not mastered in Ethiopia as confirmed by Kumar Jha's study. Although Ethiopia's need for the English language is more intensified in the era of globalization, the discouraging picture of English language teaching never improved (Eshetie 2010). Emphasizing the global trends, Dornyie and Thurrell (1994) argue that learners face problems of oral communication because they are not taught conversational features which enable them to be competent communicators. Similarly, in a preliminary study conducted by the present researcher, the study participants were struggling while they were performing oral tasks in English classes. Although some of them were staggering and struggling to interact, they took a long time to communicate orally. They lacked the necessary knowledge and skills of being engaged in oral interactions. They did not use repairs and conversational strategies to fill gaps or overcome communication breakdowns. Such being the case, the current study tried to investigate whether or not CA-informed intervention would enhance students' oral interactions or conversational skills.

Research questions

Based on the problem statement of the study, the following research questions were framed.

1. Does CA-informed intervention develop students' use of conversational moves?

2. Does CA-informed intervention enable students to use appropriate language forms in various oral communication situations?

3. Does CA-informed intervention promote students' conversational skills?

2. Theoretical framework

Primarily, CA is a methodology for the analysis of naturally-occurring spoken interaction (Seedhouse, 2005; Masats 2017). Later, it was expanded to include other areas of study such as applied linguistics. Teng and Sinwongsuwat (2015) explain that CA greatly focuses on human actions accomplished by means of talk. Sidnell (2010) argues that CA attempts to show how participants analyze and interpret one another's talk in an interaction and generates a shared understanding of the interaction. Wong and Waring (2010) maintain that conversation analysts step inside the shoes of interactants to make sense of their talk and actions. The aim is to unearth how participants co-construct in their turns at talk, with a central focus on how sequences of actions are generated (Hutchby & Wooffitt 1998; Masats 2017). This also applies for classroom communication. Gordon (2004) elucidates that CA is one of the several approaches to the study of spoken language in which talk-in-interaction has become an object of CA research. CA studies the organization and order of social action in interaction. According to Psathas (1995), this organization and order is the one produced by the participants in talk-in-interaction and oriented to by them; it can thus only be understood from the participants' perspective. Schegloff (1986) states that it is understood as an incident when people perform their social interactions. Therefore, talk is a multifaceted task, where linguistic and other non-verbal features and visual semiotic systems, thinking, and sociality work together (Gordon 2004).

According to Wong and Waring (2010) turn-taking which is the building block of CA refers to a participant's contribution to a talk-in-interaction. Turn-taking is one of the key structural units of conversation and having knowledge of it and its constituents is indispensable for successful oral interaction (Dornyie & Thurrell 1994). Ten Have (2007) further explains that the idea of turn-taking, as an organized activity, is one of the pillars in CA research. Bakeman and Gnisci (2005) elucidate that turn-taking is one of the essential machineries in conversation. In every interaction there exist rules and practices that structure turn-taking, that is, who can speak when, how long they can speak for and what they can say (Gorgian & Habibi 2015). Psasha (1995) explicates that participants in interactions have been shown to orient to these rules in interactions and in a variety of contexts. Speakers contribute mainly one at a time, speaker change occurs quite smoothly, overlapped speech is short, and transitions occur from one turn to the next with very little gap and no overlapped speech (Seedhouse 2004; Psathas 1995; Sacks, Schegloff & Jefferson 1974).

Turn-taking is an important component without which conversation is unthinkable. Gorjian and Habibi (2015) argue that rich turn-taking is an available feature of human interaction and a turn is the vital factor within conversation strategies, which is associated with a speaker and each speaker takes turns within a conversation. A speaker is someone who produces some sort of utterance or speech act directed towards an audience of one or more people, that is, turn acquisition determines the kind of action(s) the next speaker(s) can or should take when it is his/her turn (Elbers & Prengers 2006).

Taken in the pedagogical context, in every situation, the interaction involves participants analyzing pedagogical focus and performing turns in the L2 which display their analysis of and socio-cultural orientations to this focus in relation to the interaction (Thornbury 2006; Seedhouse 2009; Barraja-Rohan 2011). Other participants in the interaction analyze these turns in relation to the pedagogical focus and produce further turns in the L2, which show this analysis. Therefore, participants continually display to each other their analyses of the evolving relationship between pedagogy and turns in interaction.

Turn design, which is a building block of a turn, has also been the contemporary focus of CA; particularly the features of grammar or how a turn constructional unit is put together (Gardner 2004). The unit of talk (the turn constructional unit) is considered to be a word, a phrase, a clause, or a sentence (Sacks, Schegloff, & Jefferson 1974). According to Gordon (2004), the issue is to demonstrate how certain constructions are chosen to achieve particular actions, and how these choices are motivated by local interactional situations. Gardner (2004) clarifies that the complex relationship between the form of a turn, and the action it is designed to do is vitally important. A study of grammar

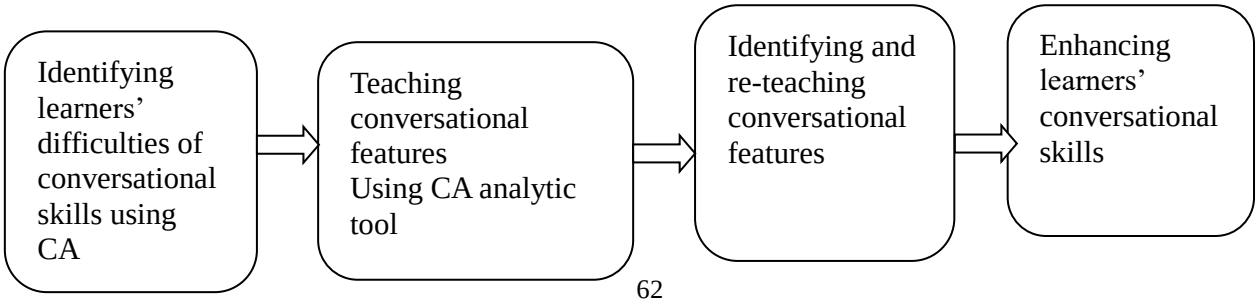
in talk can help to understand the relationship between the grammatical resources available in a language, for instance the many options or ways to ask a question, and the sequential position of an action, for instance whether this is a single question, the first in a series of questions, or a later one in a series of questions (Gordon, 2004).

As turn constructional units are the building blocks of turns, adjacency pairs or pair of sequential utterances in interaction which are made up of two or more turns are the most important components of conversation. The interactional sequences are context dependent and context renewing (Masats 2017) where the second utterance depends on the first. Interactional sequences should be interrelated to create coherence in a conversation (Wong & Waring, 2010).

The sequence of turns forms a structure (Shegloff 2007) and some turns belong more together than others. The ways conversationalists link turns to each other as a coherent series of interrelated communicative actions is called sequence organization (Mazeland 2006). A sequence is an ordered series of turns through which participants accomplish and coordinate an interactional activity (Schegloff 2007). A question followed by an answer is an example of a sequence. Other examples are a request and the decision that is made about it, information and its receipt, and a criticism and the reply to it. All these different types of two-part sequences are instances of a very tight type of sequence organization: the adjacency pair (Schegloff & Sacks 1973; Barrajan-Rohan 2011). When a recipient of a turn in conversation hears the speaker's utterance as the first part of a particular type of adjacency pair, the appropriate thing to do next is to deliver an utterance that may count as the second part of the same pair. As an illustration, the appropriate reaction to a question is to answer it. The question is treated as the first pair part of a question/answer pair; the answer is its second part. A question tends to be followed by an answer, a greeting by a greeting, an offer by an acceptance or a rejection, and this basic pairing of actions in conversation has led to the notion of adjacency pairs. There are, however, constraints on these pairings; thus, questions take answers, greetings take return greetings, and requests take acceptances or rejects. A way of expressing these constraints is to say that a first pair part is sequentially implicative of a second pair part. In order to equip learners with this machinery or tool of oral communication, a CA-informed instruction is important.

The basic rules for the production of adjacency pairs were formulated early in the history of CA (Gordon 2004). Given the recognizable production of a first pair part, at its first possible completion its speaker should stop, a next speaker should start, and produce a second pair part of the same pair type (Gordon 2004; Barrajan-Rohan 2011); thus, adjacency pairs are composed of two turns by different speakers, and speakers orient to them being placed adjacently. Hence, based on the literature reviewed above, CA-informed intervention plays a significant role in promoting conversational skills of English as Foreign Language (EFL) learners thereby facilitating the acquisition of target language (Markee 2000). The issue of producing successive utterances is important in order for students to master the target language in their effort to hold successful oral interaction to achieve a certain communicative purpose. Thus, this study focuses on the development of these skills in which being good at conversation presupposes the engagement of learners in oral interactions of different types in various situations. The framework for CA-based treatment can be formulated as shown in the following figure.

Figure 1. The conceptual framework for the enhancement of learners' conversational skills



3. Methodology

3.1 Design of the study

A qualitative CA approach was employed for the study in which a case study was used. CA, in the study, was used as a methodology, data collection tool, and method of data analysis. This design enabled the researcher to obtain baseline information, identify the kind of teaching materials necessary to tackle learners' difficulties and carry out a pertinent intervention to fill out gaps being informed by CA. CA as qualitative approach helps to unearth problems of oral interactions as confirmed by a body of research (Sidnell 2010).

3.2 The research site

The research site of the study was Bahir Dar University. There were reasons for conducting it here. The first was that the preliminary study conducted by the present researcher indicated that the study participants faced difficulties in oral interaction and it was confirmed that there existed a real problem of oral interactions among the learners. Second, it was convenient for the researcher to follow up the developments the study participants were exhibiting as they were in the institution he has been working at as an English teacher.

3.3 The research participants

The objective of this study is to enhance the conversational skills of the study participants using CA as an analytic tool. Hence, the participants of the study are English majoring students in the Department of English Language and Literature at Bahir Dar University. The rationale for choosing these students was that they were expected to carry out conversational activities in their field. Since English language graduates are expected to be orally proficient in English, the researcher believes that an intervention was required to develop the conversational skills of the study participants to help them be competent in different work environments. English graduates are employed in different offices such as in the airlines companies or corporations, media institutions, public relations firms, communication affairs offices, tourism industries and so forth. To this end, they are required to be competent in all forms of oral tasks in general and conversational tasks in particular.

3.4 Sampling technique

With regard to the sampling technique, all first year students of the English Language and Literature Department were included. The total number of the study participants was twenty-five, out of which fifteen students completed the training during four months in the year 2019. The reasons for the drop-outs of the trainees differ. One of reasons is that some of them joined the English Language Improvement Center (ELIC) and were excluded for the sake of avoiding data contamination. Another reason is that a few of them attended the training infrequently.

3.5 Data collection tools

3.5.1 Audio-video recordings

Oral productions of the study participants were recorded using audio/video devices in the pre-and post-intervention phases of the study. The pre-intervention conversation analyses were used to indicate the real gaps before the intervention took place, and post-intervention conversation analyses were used to show the outcome as a result of the CA-based treatment. The recorded conversations were examined using the CA perspective. In other words, while the pre-intervention conversational analyses were made to identify the problems participants faced, the post-conversational analyses were employed to see the effect of the CA-informed intervention. Generally, oral task analyses were made before and after the intervention. A description of each task performance together with the actual verbal outputs was presented. Based on the CA model, an analysis and interpretation of the oral interaction performances of each pair was made.

3.6 The intervention procedures

Since the present study aimed at enhancing interactional skills of students, different procedures, which are assumed to be crucial for enabling students to be competent English oral language users, were employed. Students are expected to understand and know how a range of oral language texts will operate in different contexts (PDST 2014), and therefore language teachers need to establish classroom structures and procedures that allow students to develop their understandings of the different forms that oral language texts take, as well as providing opportunities for students to purposefully practice these forms in a variety of settings. Therefore, below is a description of procedures that were employed in the study is available below.

First, in the pre-intervention phase of the study, students were provided with different scenarios in which they performed tasks without the intervention of the researcher. The oral practices students performed were believed to enable the researcher to get opportunities to observe and understand the students' difficulties. This in turn provided him with information about the gaps students had in relation to features of oral communication in English which is considered to be an important step in CA-informed pedagogy or language teaching (Barraja-Rohan 2011). During this intervention phase, the students' practice of conversations allowed the researcher to examine in detail how students interact without his intervention. As students were performing the oral tasks, the researcher recorded students having a conversation in dyads or triads. The conversations were then analyzed from a CA perspective. These conversations are referred to as pre-instruction conversations or pre-intervention instructions. In doing so, oral tasks of different types were used. Thus, before the intervention took place, conversation analysis was done to see the gaps because the main tool to show the gaps in the use of conversation features (Markee 2008) and awareness of the language form and function is conversation analysis or a conversation analytic tool.

Second, the study participants were exposed to 4 audio and 30 video recordings of native and native-like conversations. The native speakers' conversations are authentic and natural (Seedhouse 2005), and thus, help the students to be exposed to authentic or real life conversations (Barraja-Rohan 2011). More than 50 audio-video samples were collected of which 4 audio and 30 video recordings were selected as they would help the students focus on the conversational features in English Language. The audio-video teaching materials were appropriate to the standards of the study participants for the following reasons. First, they were prepared for English language learners. Second, these audio-video materials were taken from the Cambridge English, the British English for Language Assessment and YouTube. Third, two English language professors participated in the selection of the audio-video recordings. Fourth, the materials were piloted before they were used for teaching the participants of the present study.

Third, having watched the native speaker's audio-video conversation, students were provided with scenarios. The oral tasks were used to see to what extent the students had understood the language use and conversational features. The students listened to the audio-video recordings as many times as possible to fill out the gaps in the exercises. Then videos containing the conversations were played to help the students verify their answers to the missing structures. Following this, students were provided with different scenarios to practice conversations. Their engagement in conversational practice helped the researcher to identify the gaps they had in the conversations, and to take further actions.

Fourth, following the students' exposure to the audio-video conversations, the study participants practiced different conversational activities, and the researcher recorded, transcribed, described and analyzed their conversations. The participants conversed freely about their experiences and anything

they are familiar with. Their experience, here, is used for making the talk-in interaction (talk aimed at establishing social relationship) and the transactional talk (information seeking talk or information sharing) real, and this was thought to allow them to produce more conversations. In doing so, they were asking questions and responding to questions so that they started analyzing their own conversations.

Fifth, a follow up was done in order to ensure the progress of the students in their oral competence. This was done through conversation analysis of recorded speech of students which was purposively recorded. An attempt was made to check students' progress and their responses to the CA approach. This was achieved by recording students having conversations with their peers during the intervention (which were conducted in pairs and triads).

Sixth, again, the students were asked to perform scenarios using authentic conversations that involve question and answer. At this step of the intervention, the CA-based pedagogical approach for the target group was refined before it was applied. To improve the CA-based conversation activities, the researcher initially recorded the conversation classes and used, as mentioned above, the classroom observations to reflect on the lessons taught. This stage of the intervention called for further involvement of the students in different activities, analysis of their oral productions and interventions based on the CA-analytic tool.

Seventh, after different tasks had been performed by the students, the researcher still clearly identified gaps that the students had in their oral interactions using conversation analysis. Conversation analysis has become an analytic tool commonly used in the attempt to gather such evidence (Huth 2011). Following the identification of the gaps, additional materials that were thought to be useful for conversation skills development were prepared and used to bridge the gaps identified. The interactional features that needed to be taught were identified and incorporated in the material prepared for this purpose based on the information gained from conversation analytic tools. Because teaching materials using a CA-based approach are inadequate, other materials need to be considered based on the identified learning difficulties that learners are facing (Barraj-Rohan 2011).

Eighth, once the study participants had continued practicing the different activities prepared for the intervention purpose, they received feedback from the teacher and their peers. This was helpful in that when the students were engaged in the feedback giving activities, they started analyzing their own and others' conversations. CA is helpful to understanding how conversation is organized and how interactants understand and display understanding of each other as their talk unfolds (Psathas 1995).

Ninth, after feedback was given to the participants, many task-based activities were used to enhance the students' conversational skills or conversational features to the level of effective oral communication in English language and their knowledge of the language forms and functions used for questions and answers in requests, asking and giving directions, and invitations. In line with this, PDST (2014) has recommended what is to be taught and incorporated in the main intervention step(s) as presented below. Based on PDST's (2014) recommendation on teaching effective oral skills, the following teaching strategies were applied:

- The students were explicitly taught to model effective speaking in a formal and informal manner
- They were taught the conversational structures/moves and linguistic features

- They were provided with opportunities to engage in conversational-style speaking, e.g., using scenarios of invitation, telephoning, asking and giving direction, talking about the weather, shopping, etc.
- They were given tasks that involve observing and recording effective speaking
- Role-playing was used to teach and reinforce good conversational skills
- The rules that govern social interaction were taught
- Features such as non-verbal behaviors were considered.

Finally, in the post-intervention stage of the study, students performed conversations by their own choice. During these conversations, the students were given the freedom to select their own conversational partners and topics, as no instructions were given in order to create a friendlier atmosphere. The recorded conversations were then examined using the CA approach. At this stage, the researcher analyzed and evaluated the effects of CA-informed instruction in order to see the effect of the intervention. The conversations which were conducted at the end of the intervention are referred as post-instruction/intervention conversations (Barraja-Rohan 2011).

3.7 Data analysis

The data collected through audio-video devices were analyzed on the basis of conversation analysis. Wong and Waring's (2010) CA framework was employed to see the students' enhanced use of conversational resources (Markee 2008). The focus of Wong and Waring with regard to CA is on turn-taking and related language production or utterance called turn-design, sequential production of related pair of utterances in a conversation and repairs which are used as conversational strategies. The thoughts of several CA specialists such as ten Have (2007), Sidnell (2009), and Seedhouse (2005) have also been used to analyze the data collected through audio-video recording. These prolific scholars have shown how CA machineries are employed in applied linguistics in general and language teaching in particular. Generally, CA framework was used for analyzing the audio-video data as it helps to uncover the gaps in conversational skills and take a pertinent intervention to promote oral interactions of language learners.

Therefore, oral task analyses were conducted in the present study. Here, purposively recorded and transcribed oral productions of students were analyzed to examine the quality changes (if any) in the oral communication task performances of the study participants as a result of the CA-based intervention. The oral task analyses consist of recorded oral productions of students which were analyzed from the CA perspective. The purpose of using the oral task analyses was to explore the progress of the study participants as a result of applying CA-informed instruction. The focus of the analyses was on the study participants' conversational skills (conversational structure, turn-taking, using an appropriate pair of utterances, conversational strategies/repairs and using appropriate spoken grammar). The CA showed how the study participants produced successive utterances in their oral interaction, and their sensitivity and conscious effort to use appropriate language in the contexts they were provided with. During the intervention phase of the study, analyses of audio/video recordings were also done to see the progress of the participants, and the process of the intervention. This phase of the analyses helped the researcher identify gaps, intervene and give feedback according to the difficulties students were facing. Using this procedure is recommended by (Barraja-Rohan 2011) and was effective in a study conducted elsewhere.

3.8 Data transcriptions conventions

The data were transcribed using CA conventions developed by different scholars such as ten Have (2007). However, for the present study, only those transcription notations which are considered to be useful for the present study have been used. Abbreviations are used instead of names of the

conversation participants to keep the anonymity of the names of the study participants, which has to do with ethical considerations. According to ten Have (2007), the list of transcript symbols given below is meant to make clear the major conventions for rendering details of the vocal production of utterances in talk-in interaction as these are used in most current CA publications.

Table 1: CA audio/video data transcription conventions

	Symbol	**Name**	**Use/function**
Sequencing	**[**	A *single left bracket*	Indicates the point of overlap onset.
	]	A *single right bracket*	Indicates the point at which an utterance or utterance part terminates vis-à-vis another one
	=	*Equal signs*	One at the end of one line and one at the beginning of the next indicate no 'gap' between the two lines. This is often called latching
Timed intervals	**(0)**	*Numbers in parentheses*	Indicate elapsed time in silence, so (8) is a pause of 8 seconds
	(.)	*A dot in parentheses*	Indicates a tiny 'gap' within or between Utterances
	(( ))	*Double parentheses*	Indicate doubts, transcriber's comment and inaudible parts of utterances and non-verbal language used
Characteristics of speech production	**::**	*Colons/multiple colons*	Indicate prolongation or length of the immediately prior sound. Multiple colons indicate a more prolonged sound
	-	A *dash*	Indicates a cut-off…
	?	*Punctuation marks*	Are used to indicate characteristics of speech production, especially intonation; it is not referring to grammatical units; an alternative is an italicized question mark:*?*
	.	A *period*	Indicates a stopping fall in tone.

4. The results

This part of the study deals with the presentation and analysis of the audio/video recorded data collected in the pre-and post-intervention phases of the study. Following the analysis of the audio/video transcript, the summary of the results has been presented in Table 2. This section also provides the discussions of the results of the study.

4.1 The pre-intervention conversation analysis

Before the intervention took place, pre-intervention activities were given to students and the oral productions of the study participants were recorded and analyzed in order to make the intervention evidence-based. This helped to identify conversational skills related gaps that the study participants had and to intervene accordingly. Thus, the presentation, and the analyses of the pre-intervention results are presented with sample audio-video recording transcripts of the participants. The following

sample excerpts were taken from different types of scenarios. The participants held the conversations based on their choice of the scenarios and the topics of the conversations were on question and answer, and telephoning.

Excerpt I: Question and answer

1. Edf: How are you ((shaking hand))
2. LsA: How are you. where where are you gone?
3. Edf: I'm going to (( ))
4. LsA: How how going: to: there?
5. Edf: (( ))
6. LsA: How long is it: take?
7. Edf: I planned to stay for (( ))
8. LsA: Ok:: have you-have you-okk another have you another (2 s) la:rning program?
9. Edf: Yes. I planned to go to Dubai this summer ((to use my language))
10. LsA: For peace bye.
11. Edf: I've program ((shaking hands)) ((noisy))

The participants of the conversation in this scenario opened their conversation using '*How are you-How are you'* adjacency pair parts accompanied by hand shaking. The second pair part uttered by *LsA* was used to develop the conversation although the utterance she produced was not grammatically correct. She also repeated the word '*where*' in the same utterance. Actually, *LsA* did this in the different turn constructional units of the conversation as vividly seen in the excerpt, whereas Edf's turn constructional units have inaudible portions in different utterances. Moreover, *LsA* used stretched words which show her lack of linguistic competence. She used the stretched words to gain time to think what to say next. Although this is understood as a conversation strategy to fill gaps, its repeated use makes the conversation awkward and affects her fluency.

When the conversation was brought to an end, the conversants did not use both pre-closing and terminal closing utterances. This closing of the conversation does not go with the norms of the target language. It was an abrupt closing and was made only by handshaking.

Excerpt II: Telephoning

One of the sample excerpts of the pre-intervention phase of the study was on telephoning with the objective to see the participants' English conversational skills. In sample excerpt II below, Um and TgA conducted their telephone conversation, and based on their conversation, analysis was made. This sample excerpt is used for illustrative purpose.

1. Ringing
2. Um: Listening
3. TgA: How are you? This is TgA.
4. Um: (12s) ((bending her face with a sign of shyness and signaling her partner to restart
5. the call)). Hello TgA. This is Um.
6. TgA: How are you this is TgA.
7. Um: How are you:
8. TgA: I'm fine:
9. Um: A'm-I-I forget you-I forget you I-forget you-I forget you:r-you-you: homework:: tell
10. me to page.
11. TgA: Yes: it is page on ((lege, stuttering)) ((general))
12. Um: Thank you:

13. TgA: No matter. Goodbye.
14. Um: Goodbye ((quieter than the surroundings))

This conversation was opened by a telephone ringing (summons) followed by the response given by Um using the expression '*listening'* which is unusual in English. Then came the '*How are you'* greeting and the self-identification: *I'm TgA'* turn constructional unit (expression). Pausing for 12 seconds and turning her face to the other side of hers (as a sign of shyness), Um signaled her partner to restart the conversation and said 'Hello TgA this is Um'. At the identification and recognition stage, TgA greeted Um with '*How are you this is TgA',* repeating what she said before they restarted the conversation (line 3). As part of the opening the *'How are you- I'm fine'* continued.

Um asked a direct question using a repeated utterance in an awkward manner as indicated in lines 9 and 10 of the conversation. Although the response (the adjacency pair) seems to be appropriate to the question asked, the expression used to respond to the question lacks clarity because it was not done using clear language and appropriate language use. Even the page number she was referring to was not clearly indicated.

Lastly, '*thank-no matter'* adjacency pair parts were used as a pre-closing expression followed by the terminal closing adjacency pair parts of '*Goodbye-Goodbye'*.

The pre-intervention analyses of the oral productions of the study participants have shown that the participants of the study had problems in their conversational skills. They used undesired repetitions, produced inaudible utterances, failed to use appropriate conversational strategies or repairs, failed to use spoken grammar and vocabularies which they needed to express their thoughts. The fluency of their conversation was also highly affected.

4.2 The post-intervention conversation analysis

After the intervention was conducted, the study participants were provided with oral tasks and asked to perform the tasks. The post-intervention conversations were used to show the qualitative changes achieved as a result of the CA-based treatment. While these kinds of tasks were chosen and performed by the study participants themselves, it allowed the researcher to observe the changes the participants exhibited. The analyses of the sample excerpts of their conversations are presented below.

Excerpt III: Likes and dislikes

The excerpt of the topic here is on likes and dislikes concerning music, so in excerpt III, LwA and Edf talked about the music they like. Based on their conversation, the conversation moves and their language performances are analyzed from the CA perspective.

Talking about music

1. LsA: Hi. How are you.
2. Edf: I'm fine thanks to God. What are you doing?
3. LsA: I'm listening to Jiregna Shiferw's music.
4. Edf: Oh:: my goodness! I'm trying to…. get you.
5. LsA: You love him?
6. Edf: What: k I'm crazy about him.
7. LsA: What about others?
8. Edf: Well I don hate any musicians especially I appreciate Ali Birra, Nuhoo Gobena anda
9. Abebie Kefenie.
10. LsA: Abie Kefene? Who is he? Is he fama:s?
11. Edf: Yes. He made his new music last year with Jirenya Shiferaw.
12. LsA: You remember that music?
13. Edf: Ok you have heard Jinina

14. LsA: Oh Jinina I remember it.
15. Edf: Ok what about you? You appreciate?
16. LsA: Immm Hachalu, Ebisa Adugna especially Ali Birra.
17. Edf: No way he is our top artist long live for him and im: I like also all our singers.
18. LsA: ((Nodded her head as a sign of confirmation and back channeling))
19. Edf: Thank you. See you some other time.
20. LsA: Bye.
21. Edf: Bye.

The conversation began with the '*Hi-How are you-Fine thank you'* adjacency pairs in which Edf developed the topic of the conversation by asking what LwA was doing. Her utterance was fully heard following LwA's response to her question. Edf's expression of '*Oh: my goodness'* is an indication of the development of authentic conversation. LwA's question also showed similar development because she used spoken grammar to ask her question: '*you love him?'* instead of 'Do you love him' which has the feature of written grammar. Edf responded here again using spoken grammar (line 6): '*what: k I'm crazy about him'* and with the word '*what*:' stretched. Perhaps, she was searching for words that could help her express her admiration to the artist.

Edf produced an appropriate utterance and the part of her utterance was also audible. The questions and answers in their conversation expanded their conversation. Their conversation was characterized by the use of non-verbal signs such as nodding your head as a sign of confirmation and a back channel which are features of oral interaction.

The '*thank you'* and '*see you some other time'* were used as pre-closing signals followed by the closing adjacency pairs of *'bye-bye'*. The closing part of their conversation is good but it seemed to be done in a bit of a hurried manner in the pre-closing part of it. In the pre-closing part, one of them should have provided a reason for leaving which could be used as an initiation for closing their conversation.

Excerpt IV: Talking about food

As can be seen from the following transcript (excerpt IV), the participants (Um & TgA) shared the food culture in their respective vicinity.

1. Um: Hi TgA:
2. TgA: Hi Um. I'm fine. How are you?
3. Um: I'm fine. What-way where you came from?
4. TgA: I came from West Wellega specific spsss place eh: Ginbi what about you?
5. Um: I come from Jimma.
6. TgA: Ok: what kinds of food are common in Jimma?
7. Um: in Jimma::food isi: in porridge, maize and so on. What kind of: food in
8. Wellega?
9. TgA: Ok: some kinds of food in Wellega: just like eh:: maizi, teff and coffee, sorghum.
10. Um: Imm: what: do you like: food?
11. TgA: Yes: I like food imm cake. Ok do you like coffee?
12. Um: Yea.
13. TgA: Ok thank you.
14. Um: Yea.

As most of the preceding conversations indicated, the talk between Um and Grm was opened by informal greeting adjacency pair parts: 'Hi-Hi', the second being followed by '*I'm fine-How you are*' after mentioning each other's name. The second greeting adjacency pair part was followed by *'I'm*

fine'. After the opening was made, Um established the topic by asking a question about where TgA came from. Um stuttered a bit (line 3), and used an ungrammatically correct, but intelligible utterance. After TgA responded to the question, she reciprocated and asked about where Um was from. Her response was appropriate and grammatically correct, except for a few prepositional errors and use of longer stuttering (eh*:)*. The question and answer between the conversants was continuous as they were discussing the food culture; and their use of English was better than their language in the pre-intervention phase of the study. They commonly employed longer words and fillers, stuttered and extended utterances for the organization of ideas; their utterances were characterized by the feature of spoken grammar all through their discussion, however.

The closing of their conversation was conventional. For example, TgA tried to thank and the '*thank you'* utterance followed the acceptance of the invitation for coffee. Thus, from the perspective of conversation analysis, the conversants showed better performances as compared to their performances in the pre-intervention phase of the study.

Generally, participants used conversational structures very well, and this was observed, for instance, in the participants' greetings and closings in the above scenarios. They also used better English in the post-intervention phase of the study; however, minor linguistic difficulties were observed in their attempt to talk. The comparison of the pre-intervention and post-intervention oral performances of the participants has been presented in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Comparison of the pre-intervention and post-intervention oral performances of participants

No.	**Pre-intervention**	**Post-intervention**
	Problems identified	***Improvements made***
1	Violation of socio-cultural norms	Better performance of socio-cultural issues
2	Productions of incomplete utterances	Language use improved
3	Unnecessary and awkward repetitions	Awkward repetitions minimized
4	Awkward pauses (longer pauses)	Using fillers and empty forms or conversation continuers to maintain the conversations
5	Production of undesired and long stretched sounds	Production of undesired and long stretched sounds minimized
6	Severe grammatical inaccuracy	The use of spoken grammar improved
7	Fluency problems	Using desirable fillers and empty forms
8	Production of inaudible utterances	Using linguistic and conversational features
9	Lack of confidence	Confidence built
10	Linguistic difficulties	Using linguistic and conversational features
11	Stuttering	Stuttering minimized
12	Difficulties in closing a conversation	Closing of conversation improved
13	Incorrect use of language	The use of correct language

The above table illustrates the comparison between the conversation features observed in the pre-

intervention and the post-intervention phases of the study. Prior to the intervention, the participants of the study had difficulties producing audible and clear language with appropriate socio-cultural norms of the target language. Here, the inaudibility of their utterances, the production of unclear language and inappropriate use of some language elements marked their lack of confidence (uncertainty) when using certain utterances. Awkward repetitions and longer pauses as well as undesired and longer stretches of words were also the major problems observed among the participants of the study in their attempt to contribute to the different conversations. The use of inappropriate pauses and unnecessarily stretched words, moreover, confirmed the learners' difficulties in oral interaction. They had also such difficulties as too much use of empty fillers which influenced the fluency of their speeches. Severe grammatical errors, the production of incomplete utterances, stuttering, linguistic difficulties, inappropriate closing of conversations, and incorrect use of linguistic elements were also part of the difficulties that the learners experienced in their effort to engage in conversations of various types.

However, in the post-intervention phase of the study, the learners' difficulties were minimized. The participants were able to improve their language use; they minimized the use of awkward repetitions and longer stretching of words. The participants could also use empty fillers or conversation continuers to maintain their conversations. The appropriate use of fillers in a conversation is one of the conversational strategies used by conversants (Thornbury 2006). Since practices of conversation are done in real time, the use of fillers and empty forms is inevitable to maintain a conversation and avoid communication failure (Hilliard 2014); however, excessive use of fillers and empty forms is an indicator of difficulties in oral communication. Regardless of minor difficulties, the learners were able to use spoken grammar, correct expressions and minimized stuttering in their contributions to the oral interactions they were engaged in. The participants used better grammatical structures in the post-intervention phase as compared to the pre-intervention phase of the study. In this regard, Hilliard (2014) explains that in spoken grammar, the use of fillers and ellipsis or simple and incomplete forms is common as compared to the written variety. They also built their confidence while they were engaged in conversations. They employed conversational features and linguistic forms in their conversations.

5. Discussions

Scholars, such as Seedhouse (2005), Sidnell (2010) and Barraja-Rohan (2011) argue that CA has a significant contribution when it comes to second or foreign language acquisition. Similarly, the contribution of CA has been substantiated by the present study as discussed below. As the present study was conducted with a view to seeing the contribution of CA in the areas of foreign language teaching and learning, it attempted to answer the following three research questions in relation to the application and contribution of CA in EFL contexts.

The first research question sought to answer the question whether or not CA-informed intervention would help develop students' use of conversational moves/structures in oral interactions. For an effective conversation to take place, interactants engaged in talk-in interaction are expected to have the knowledge of conversational structures or moves such as turn taking, turn design, sequential organization of utterances (pair of utterances), and repair strategies as well as the overall structure of conversation including the opening, the development and the closing (Hoskins & Noel 2011; Wong & Waring, 2010; Dornyie & Thurrell 1994). The participants of the present study managed the turn taking issues better in the post-intervention phase of the study than in the pre-intervention phase. Since they developed their confidence in terms of engaging in conversation, they attempted to significantly contribute to the conversations they were involved in. They also used repair strategies to overcome language difficulties in a better way in the post-intervention phase of the study than in the pre-intervention phase. The sequential organization of their utterances (their production of interrelated pair of utterances) significantly improved. The opening of their conversations also

indicated better performances of the learners in the post intervention. Topic development, extension, and maintenance of a conversation through different strategies such as using conversation continuers and fillers is an indicator of the development in the use of effective conversational moves (Hoskins & Noel 2011). An improvement was also observed in the closing of their conversations which affirms the development of their conversational skills. Conversational structures are one of the most important pillars of oral interaction without which talk-in interaction is impossible. Thus, the participants' management of conversational structures in the conversations they held implies the development of their conversational skills.

The focus of the second research question was whether or not CA-informed intervention would enable students to use appropriate language forms in various oral communication situations. One of the most crucial issues in oral interaction is the use of appropriate language forms in addition to the conversational structures (Dornyie & Thurrell 1994). This also applies to the use of appropriate language forms in a variety of communication situations as different contexts call for different language use. As turn constructional units (utterances) can be language forms such as words, phrases, clauses or sentences, even prosodic features and gap fillers (e.g *ehe*, *uh*, *imm*) produced by conversation partners, the appropriate management of these linguistic and non-linguistic forms is crucial for the effective oral interaction (Gardner 2013). Regardless of minor difficulties, the participants of the present study employed appropriate turn constructional units in their conversations. They demonstrated improved performances in terms of language use in the post-intervention phase of the study. They developed the skills of how people construct utterances in real time, and the way in which they use regular, patterned, grammatical schemas under the constraints of having to talk in interaction. Their employment of spoken grammar and empty fillers implies their language development in oral interactions. Being able to use appropriate linguistic expressions based on a particular context of language use has an implication for the greater contribution of CA in the teaching of foreign language oral skills. The overall oral productions of learners (participants) have also shown better development implying that CA-informed instructions can help promote oral interactions of learners. Using CA analytic tool helps enhance students' interactional skills and their engagement in a variety of oral interaction contexts (Barraja-Rohan 2011; Seedhouse 2005).

Before answering the third research question, it is important to make clear what conversational skill is. Conversational skill blends both the conversational structures/moves and the linguistic resources of oral interaction (Dornyie & Thurrell 1994). The third research question, therefore, focused on whether or not CA-informed intervention would promote students' conversational skills. In response to this question, the study revealed that the participants showed enhanced performances in their conversational skills due to the CA based treatment as the CA-informed instructions were conducted based on the problems identified using the CA analytic tool. As shown in the analysis part, each participant in the study showed improved language productions in the post-intervention phase of the study. They produced utterances with difficulties in their turns before the intervention was conducted; their contribution to the conversation was minimal. Their fluency was highly affected by awkward and unnecessary repetitions, longer pauses and the use of empty fillers. However, their oral productions improved in the post-intervention phase of the study; they performed better after the CA-based treatment. The turn design (linguistic utterances of different types) they employed in various oral performances developed as a result of the intervention. Proper employment of turn design which refers to the use of certain turn constructional units -be it at lexical, phrasal or syntactic level -to perform a certain action, implies that the participants communicate their ideas better by contributing to particular conversations (Markee 2000). As they were taking turns, they tried to use a pair of expressions which go together in which the first pair of utterance was followed by the appropriate second pair of the utterance in the conversations they held. The use of features of spoken English grammar such as turn constructional units of different types e.g words, phrases, clauses or sentences and gap fillers (e.g., ehe, imm); longer turns as well as repairs/conversational strategies developed

among participants, and this has confirmed the positive contribution of CA in the arena of EFL as several scholars confirmed it elsewhere (Barraja-Rohan, 2011 & Seedhouse, 2009). In connection to this, Gordon (2004) states that the issue of grammar in talk can help to understand the relationship between the grammatical resources available in a language, for instance the many options or ways to ask a question, and the sequential position of an action, for instance whether this is an only question, or the first in a series of questions, or a later one in a series of questions.

The development of conversational features is an indicator and evidence of language learning and improvement of conversational skills. In addition, the participants could extend conversation using conversation extending strategies such as using questions as indicated in the transcriptions of the post-intervention analysis. Their contribution to the conversation also showed a significant change in the post-intervention conversation analyses as compared to the pre-intervention oral productions of the participants. Their use of repairs or conversational strategies to sustain the conversation was also one of the indicators of the development of their conversational skills. In their turn to contribute to the conversation they were involved in, they requested clarification, and having understood the request for clarification, they responded accordingly.

Another encouraging result obtained as a result of the CA-informed instruction is that the participants would know how a conversation is held and what language structure is used in a conversation as opposed to the language structure employed in written communication. As the experience of the researcher shows, the difficulty of students in a foreign language context is the learners' adherence to grammatical accuracy and their tendency to use written grammar in conversations. This trend has led them to confusion and it is one of the factors when it comes to the deterioration of their oral skills in English. However, in the present study, the knowledge of how the spoken variety of the language works developed among participants of the study through the intervention, and minimized the confusion or difficulty that they had prior to the intervention. CA is a helpful analytical tool for identifying and examining language related difficulties in conversation (Masats 2017). Hence, the contribution of CA to language learning and teaching is of vital importance. In similar line of argument Barraja-Rohan (2011) emphasized that the CA approach as a tool is a helpful instrument for addressing problems of language teaching and learning. Wong and Waring (2010) also echoed that CA is important, for it is a foundation of all language learning. The present study also complies with the works of these scholars.

6. Conclusions

Based on the findings of the present study, CA has helped to develop learners' conversational skills. The participants of the study were able to manage both the conversational moves/structures such as turn-taking, sequential (related) production of utterances and repair strategies, and the linguistic features used to achieve a particular purpose in a particular context. Their use of conversational moves and linguistic features after the intervention has corroborated the development of their conversational skills. The turn constructional units (various types of utterances), which are the building blocks of turn-takings, constitute the basics of a conversation and are managed using either linguistic units or any other conversational features. In this regard, the participants also used improved interactional sequences in their conversations which showed their enhanced performances in the production of the interrelated sequence of utterances. Adjacency pairs or interactional sequences (made up of two or more turns) are the most important components of conversation. The interactional sequences which are context dependent and context renewing are important for carrying out effective oral interactions (Seedhouse 2005). Interactional sequences should be interrelated to create coherence in a conversation. Thus, it can be concluded that the present study complies with the research work of several scholars such as Barraja-Rohan (2011) in that the CA-based treatment contributes to the development of learners' conversational skills.

It can also be concluded that regardless of some minor difficulties, the interactional practices

of participants (learners) developed after the intervention, that is, an improvement was observed in their oral interactions. The CA-based instruction contributed to the development of their conversational skills and conversational skills related language awareness. Developing learners' knowledge and skills about conversation and conversational features is of paramount importance to ensure effective oral communication (Masats 2017). In the present study, the CA-informed intervention, moreover, helped to identify the conversational difficulties EFL learners faced and intervene accordingly. This implies that CA is an interactional machinery which helps facilitate the development and acquisition of a second or foreign language. It also has an implication that the CA-based treatment can assist teachers to identify students' learning difficulties, and develop their learners' confidence in engaging in oral interactions of various types. In sum, the quality developments of learners' conversational skills would help to understand that the CA-based treatment can help language teachers to improve the conversational skills of their learners.

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Appendix: Transcripts of recorded oral productions of participants

Excerpt: Seeking information

1. Ringing
2. Buz: Hello
3. Clt: (5s) hello
4. Buz: Hello: (( )) this is Ethiopian Airlines information office hello this is Ethiopian
5. Airlines information Office what can I help you?
6. Clt: (( ))
7. Buz: Ok what kind of flight ((can can)) local or international flight type?
8. Clt: Both the local type-I want local time
9. Buz: What is the local time:: this afternoon?
10. Clt: (.) Ok: a ok Bahir Dar Dire Dewa.
11. Buz: Ok: the record the flight had is Bahir Dar goes Saturday: morning and afternoon?
12. Clt: Ok: ok: ok thank you.
13. Buz: Ok thanks for the ((con))

Excerpt: Persuasion

1. Tr: Hi how are you.
2. Zn: I'm fine.
3. Tr: Imm: oh your mobile phone is: very good and expensive
4. Zn: I bought before one month
5. Tr: Imm:eh: (6s) oh it is very beautiful I like it.
6. Zn: Immm: you like it.
7. Tr: Immm: yea: immm: can give me: your mobile:?
8. Zn: Sorry-sorry I can-I can't give you.
9. Tr: Why?
10. Zn: Because I use it from (( ))
11. Tr: Please: on for one day.
12. Zn: ((Giggling)) no: no I can't help you.
13. Tr: Ok. Bye.
14. Zn: Bye. (by hand shaking)

Excerpt: Talking about the future

1. Clt: Hi Buzie.
2. Buz: Hi Zn
3. Clt: How are you
4. Buz: I'm fine. How are you.
5. Clt: I'm fine. Imm: what is that? eh: what is future plan after graduation?
6. Buz: Ow after graduation, ehh:I have so many plans; for example eh I wanttu I wanttu
7. .open primary school, I want to teach preparatory school, and I have so many plans.
8. Clt: Really? That is nice. Ehh:: when d you when d you went do eh: wet marry? (with her
9. head down and the click sound to remember what say)
10. Buz: Oh: no I have no any plan to married because I have some goals. Eh: I will achieve
11. some goals, I think I will married: after some years ago.
12. Clt: How many child d-you:: doing to have?
13. Buz: Oh: I want to haf: at least two child imm: but I-I have to three or four girls and two:

14. Clt: Ok bye.
15. Buz: Ok Zn bye. ((with rising intonation))
16. Zn: Bye- ((with rising intonation))

Excerpt: At a hospital

1. Tr: ((Pointed her hand to let her partner speak))
2. Sph: (( ))
3. Tr: Get in have a seat.
4. Sph: Imm doctor I need help treatment
5. Tr: What I help you?
6. Sph: ((I'm I'm very sick))
7. Tr: ((What do you think?))
8. Sph: I have a pain.
9. Tr: Ok: what is the pain imm: (( )) a pain killer.
10. Sph: Ok: thank you doctor. What is the the medicine have side effect?
11. Tr: (( )) take on time
12. Sph: Ok thank you doctor. [Good time
13. Tr: [Good time. ((with overlapping))

Excerpt: Invitation through telephoning

1. *Ringing*
2. Tr: Hello
3. Sph: Speaking
4. Tr: imm: how are you ((coughing)) oh Sph:
5. Sph: How are you
6. Tr: I'm fine. Can you come to my birthday party?
7. Sph: Oh:: (( )) the holiday?
8. Tr: Saturday at:
9. Sph: Oh I'm sorry I'm::
10. Tr: Imm:: good bye
11. Sph: Good bye

Excerpt: Shopping for clothing

1. Tg: Good morning.
2. Mr: Good morning
3. Tg: You have a beautiful dress how much it costs?
4. Mr: Five hundred birr.
5. Tg: Oh: it is expensive how much is its discount price?
6. Mr: No: it haven't a discount it is fashion.
7. Tg: Please I like such dress color please discount
8. Mr: If I discount for you eh I have not any profit fixed price.
9. Tg: Ok:: any thank you-((quietly))
10. Mr: Ok. Thank you
11. Tg: Bye.

Excerpt: Talking about holiday

1. Mrn: Hi
2. LwA: Hi how was the day?
3. Edf: It was very good thanks to God. Bye the way, are you going to your home for the
4. celebration of holidays? I'm not going anywhere.
5. Mrn: I have plan just to go to Adama
6. Edf: What about you?

7. LwA: Ours of pla to go to Wellega.
8. Edf: Oh: sorry any ways tell me about the cebgration of us in your area; for example,
9. innk a dress you wear (wir) that day, you-yuu a kind of food youw prepare that
10. day and
11. also special ((dress)) for the dre. Let me start from you (turning her face towards
12. Mrn).
13. Mrn: We cellebrates in Sodere (( )) with (( ))
14. Edf: What about you?
15. LwA: We celebrate it by making cultural food such as Anchote especially on Meskel
16. festivity. What about you?
17. Edf: Hey thank you. We do the same things. We wear cultural dress, with we prepare
18. cultural food and also we: there is a cultural music in our area. It is very
19. interesting.
20. Mrn: That is imm that is very goods. Let us e: go to in class
21. Edf: Yes we are too late. We have to go to class.
22. LwA: Oh: we have to go.

Excerpt: At a hotel

1. Customer1: Hi. How are you.
2. Customer2: I'm fine. What about you
3. Customer1: Weita. How was the meeting?
4. Customer2: It was boring-it was boring. I'm not interested.
5. Waitress: Hello. Good morning. Are you to order or shall I give you a few minutes?
6. Customer1: I think I think we we are ready
7. Customer2: Yes: why not?
8. Waitress: Do you need something drink?
9. Customer1: Yes, would you: coffee please.
10. Waitress: What about you?
11. Customer2: eh: f:: coffees.
12. Waitress: Do you something to add?
13. Customer2: No: thing.
14. Waitress: Do you need:
15. Customer1: ((No verbal sign was used to say no)).

Excerpt: (waiter and customers)

1. Waitress: Welcome to the Maron Hotel
2. Customer1: I would like to have…something.
3. Waitress: What do you need…something to drink.
4. Customer2: Coffee...My interest is to drink coffee
5. Customer1: Ok. Yes, coffee please:
6. Waitress: Thank you.

Excerpt: Talking about local culture

1. Mr: Hi Tg
2. Tg: Hi Mr.
3. Mr.: Fine Tg I will ask you something.
4. Tg: What is that?
5. Mr: It is all way about our class end.
6. Tg: I'm not sure but I think it will be around twenty up to fifteen
7. Mr: Really?
8. Tg: I think
9. Mr: It is too late-((simultaneously produced with the preceding utterance))

10. Tg: why:?
11. Mr: Because of I wan go to my home quickly.
12. Tg: I think you: are very eager to go back what is the matter?
13. Mr: Yea: eh because of just I: want to stay in my home only for one month and after that
14. eh I want to go to the rural area
15. Tg: Why you leave your families and go for rural areas
16. Mr: It is because of to celebrate Ashenda culture
17. Tg: Ashenda? what is that?
18. Mr: Have you ever listen have you ever hear about that?
19. Tg: I'm not sure. I think I saw it on the media or:
20. Mr: Ok eh Ashenda is the cultural eh day..eh.. of the ladies of:::Tigray.
21. Tg: It is I hope it will be good.
22. Mr: Ok why don't we celebrate it together?
23. Tg: Oh are you kidin me?
24. Mr: No: no kidin I'm seriously.
25. Tg:Oh: it's my pleasure I think there will be he must be full material but I'm not prepared
26. for that
27. Mr: It is fine: if you decide to come, leave it for me I can prepare it, the material.
28. Tg: Sure?
29. Mr: Yea I'm seriously.
30. Tg: It's my pleasure I hope you there will be good: day
31. Mr: Ok. I agree:?
32. Tg: I immm agree.
33. Mr: Thank you so much.
34. Tg: Oh: have a nice day.
35. Mr: Good bye.

Excerpt: Talking about future plans

1. Zn: Hi Buzie.
2. Bz: Hi Zn
3. Zn: How are you.
4. Bz: I'm fine. How are you.
5. Zn: I'm fine. Imm: what is eh: what is your future plan after graduation?
6. Bz: Ow after graduation, ehh: I have so many plans; for example eh I want to I want to
7. open primary school, I want to teach preparatory school, and I have so many plans.
8. Zn: Really? That is nice. Ehh:: d' you want do eh: want to marry? (with her
9. head down and the click sound to remember what to say next)
10. Bz: Oh: no I have no any plan to married because I have some goals. Eh: I will achieve
11. some goals, I think I will marry: after some years.
12. Zn: How many child d'you:: doing to have?
13. Bz: Oh: I want to haf: at least two children imm: but I-I have to three or four girls and
14. two…
15. Zn: Ok bye.
16. Bz: Ok Zn bye. ((with rising intonation))
17. Zn: Bye- ((with rising intonation))

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Review of *Linguistics and English Literature – an introduction*

by H. D. Adamson, Cambridge University Press, 2019.

Marie Møller Jensen, Aalborg University

This volume forms part of the book series *Cambridge introductions to the English language*, which is a series of textbooks aimed at undergraduate students of English Language. As such, the books in this series function as introductions to their specific areas and assume no prior knowledge of the topics covered. The books in the series aim to be reader-friendly and include chapter summaries, exercises and discussion points. Each book in the series also has an accompanying website with additional materials. The book on linguistics and English literature reviewed here makes up the fifth volume in the series. It consists of nine chapters, which cover a wide range of topics within English language and literature studies with an emphasis on the merger of the two (often non-associated) fields. In other words, what this book is actually about is stylistics, showing how an analysis of language can bring about a deeper understanding of literary texts and vice-versa. In addition to the nine chapters, the book also includes a glossary of terms.

Before jumping into the review of the individual chapters, I should perhaps make clear that I am approaching this book very much as a lecturer teaching in an English programme at a Scandinavian university where the student body consists of non-native English speakers. I foreground this only because (as it will become evident on a few occasions below), the book is written by an American, affiliated with an American university (H. D. Adamson is Emeritus Professor of English at the University of Arizona) and most likely aimed at native English-speaking students enrolled in either an American or British university. In addition, the structure of degree programmes in English are also vastly different in e.g. the UK and Denmark (the two places where I have been employed as a lecturer). In the UK, it is possible to do a degree solely in English language, for instance, or in English Language and Literature. In Denmark, however, English degrees cover literature, media, history, society, culture and language across the English-speaking world. Finally, as a researcher, I am a sociolinguist working with variation in British English, including in dialect literature, and I often employ corpus linguistics methods in my work.

In the preface to the book, Adamson briefly introduces the area of linguistics, which he states covers "everything from the analysis of sound waves to theories of political power" (xiii) and states that the "partnership" between linguistics and literature, which nowadays is called stylistics, indeed is very old. He then looks at two different teaching strategies influential in American education: the instructional approach and the progressive approach. He states that while literary history might lend itself well to being taught using an instructional method (centred on a teacher lecturing the students), Dewey's progressive, student-centred approach to teaching may be more suited to teaching literary analysis. However, when it comes to the teaching of linguistics, Adamson's own experience suggests that the instructional approach is more appropriate (and this also explains why the exercises included in the book are mainly instructional). Hands-on doing is important in both approaches though, and this is why Adamson stresses that the exercises at the end of each chapter are as important as the expository parts.

Chapter 1 features an introduction, which outlines how stylistics can be related to other approaches to literary analysis and criticism. Adamson introduces nine schools of criticism with examples (including New Criticism, structuralism and reader-response theory). Towards the end of the chapter, he introduces two analytical tools central to stylistics: foregrounding and cohesion. The chapter (like the rest of the chapters) also contains a summary at the end, a few exercises, a list of key terms and suggestions for further reading.

Chapter 2 introduces the sounds of English. One thing to note here is that the chapter focuses on American English. This is evident both in the vowel inventory and vowel qualities described but also in the phonetic alphabet used, as Adamson does not use IPA symbols (the phonetic alphabet created by the International Phonetics Association) but rather a system which is perhaps more common in an American context. For instance, he represents the initial voiceless affricate sound in *chip* as [č] (instead of [tʃ]) and the high, front vowel in the name *Pete* as [iy] (rather than [i] or [i:]). While one system is not intrinsically better than the other (and certainly both would be fine in the context of this introductory textbook), it is worth bearing in mind if selecting this as a textbook for students who are already familiar with the IPA symbols as it adds an unnecessary level of complexity. Adamson also includes allophones in this chapter. He then shows how a phonemic transcription can aid in the analysis of poems and enhance students' awareness and understanding of rhyme, alliteration, etc. Indeed, in all of the chapters in this book, the reader is presented with a vast amount of examples from a range of different types of literature, showing how the specific linguistic feature can be employed in a stylistic analysis.

Chapter 3 surrounds the topics of metaphor and metonymy and Adamson includes both the 'traditional approaches' to metaphor as well as cognitive approaches. Metaphors are interesting because they are very prevalent in everyday language but often go unnoticed (unlike the creative use of metaphors we often find in literature). However, both types of metaphor reflect how we think about the world on a profound level – thus they reflect what is called *conceptual metaphors* (e.g. ARGUMENT IS WAR; *Smith won the debate* and LIFE IS A PLAY; *He is always making a scene*). Indeed, both metaphors and instances of metonymy are ways of investigating the connection between language and the mind.

Syntax is introduced in chapter 4 as "the study of how words can be strung together to form grammatical sentences" (91). The book adopts a generative approach to grammar based on the work of Chomsky. Indeed, the generative framework is introduced as "a more systematic and scientific way of describing syntactic patterns than traditional approaches to grammar" (91). And while the aspects of syntax covered here are fairly basic (phrases and clauses), his approach could prove challenging for undergraduate students not familiar with this framework or who have perhaps only ever been exposed to more functional approaches to language. Certainly, there is learning to be found when trying to wrap one's head around transformational rules (forming passives and interrogatives), but it is perhaps an unnecessary level of complexity in the context of a textbook in stylistics. Two important topics, which are also covered in this chapter (towards the end), are those of markedness (also called foregrounding) and the question of whether we can talk about a literary style. I here wish to highlight that this chapter also contains 20 exercises clearly split into topics corresponding to the sections of the chapter – an invaluable resource for teachers.

In chapter 5, Adamson looks at the rhythms of poetry and speech, in particular the effects of rhythm on meaning. This chapter covers traditional topics such as poetic feet (e.g. iambs and dactyls) and metre (e.g. tetrameter and pentameter). However, Adamson also covers aspects more often associated with linguistics and phonetics, namely word stress, sentence stress and phrase stress. Indeed, knowledge of the stress patterns of English is invaluable when scanning a poem (scansion is the analysis of a poem's rhythm), which is also introduced in the chapter and broken down into a pedagogical three-step procedure.

In chapter 6, the reader is introduced to the notion of language variation and the two main varieties of English: American English and British English. In addition to regional variation, Adamson also brings in social variation when he introduces sociolinguistic work on social class, age, gender, and speech situation. Of course, examples of how authors use variation creatively to bring more dimension to their characters are also given. The chapter also features a section on African American English (AAE) and AAE in literature, an important inclusion. The section on British English focuses on the East Anglian variety, which allows Adamson to consider a text example from

Dickens' *David Copperfield* and to bring in Trudgill's work on Norwich English. As Adamson also states, "English has more accents and varieties than any other language in the world" (174) so indeed, one could always argue that examples of more varieties should be included (e.g. Scottish English, Indian English, etc.). However, in a textbook of this nature, simply highlighting to students that the English language is not a monolith is all one can hope for. A topic which I do miss in this chapter, however, is the consideration of spelling conventions and the impact these have on the use of non-standard language. Any consumption of non-standard texts happens from a place where the standard is assumed and this impacts the reader's experience. Work by Hodson (2016) on the use of dialects in literature and Sebba (2009) on spelling conventions would have been welcome additions.

Chapter 7 introduces the readers to the different organizational levels of language (departing in Levelt's (1989) speech production model) and then focuses on the areas which have not yet been covered: morphology, semantics and pragmatics. The chapter has a slightly different structure as the exercises occur throughout the chapter following each main topic. The section on semantics focuses on the relations between the noun phrases in a sentence specified by the verb, the so-called semantic case roles (or thematic roles). The section on pragmatics, not surprisingly, focuses on speech acts.

The topic of chapter 8 is discourse analysis but corpus stylistics is also introduced towards the end of this chapter. The focus of the chapter is how the building blocks introduced so far (phonemes, morphemes, sentences, etc.) can be combined to form larger, coherent texts and indeed how authors can create entire new, fictional worlds through language, the so-called *text worlds.* Adamson here draws on the cognitive model introduced in chapter 3 and expands this to also cover schema theory. He then goes on to look at examples of how authors build worlds in their readers' minds, e.g. through the use of deixis. This chapter also covers important topics such as point of view and unreliable narrators as well as possible and impossible worlds and how text worlds can change schemas. Adamson also highlights that characters in texts do not always share with the reader the same way of understanding the text world they live in. This is called the *mind style* of the characters. As mentioned, the chapter concludes with a brief section on corpus stylistics focusing on the use of computers in literary analysis. It must not be an easy balancing act, deciding on what to include within the finite number of pages of a textbook such as this, however, a full chapter dedicated to corpus stylistics (rather than two-and-a-half pages) would have been a welcome addition in my book.

Finally, chapter 9 looks at what Adamson describes as *alternative texts,* namely visual images and cartoons. As such, the chapter also functions as a summary of some of the many aspects of language covered in the book as Adamson shows how a range of them (e.g. metaphors) can also be analysed through visual images. Adamson also introduces Halliday's Systemic Functional Grammar and shows how looking at the different functions (ideational, interpersonal and textual) can be relevant in the stylistic analysis of images. Halliday's method is also briefly compared to those of Fillmore (the father of *Case Grammar* introduced in chapter 7) and Chomsky (the father of generative grammar introduced in chapter 4). Towards the end of the chapter, Adamson also looks at the expression of conceptual metaphors in images.

Overall, I think Adamson's book is a good starting point for any student interested in stylistics. The amount of exercises in the book is certainly also a help for lecturers and the suggestions for further reading are very welcome. I particularly appreciate that Adamson often suggests original literature within each area (e.g. Lakoff & Jonson (1980) in chapter 3 and Melchers & Shaw (2003) in chapter 6). Each chapter also includes a multitude of examples adeptly showing how and why stylistic analysis can be done and should be done. While the intended recipients of this book may not be my students first and foremost, I can certainly envision using selected chapters in my own teaching and supervision and would happily also direct students to this textbook for self-study.

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Anmeldelse af *Humorsocialisering: hvorfor er danskerne ikke så sjove som de selv tror?*

af Lita Lundquist, Samfundslitteratur, 2020.

Marie Møller Jensen, Aalborg University
Lotte Dam, Aalborg University

Denne bog er en skæg en, både pga. sit omdrejningspunkt – humor i interkulturel kommunikation – og pga. sin form, da den på den ene side er populærvidenskabelig, men på den anden side bygger på et imponerende empirisk arbejde i akademisk topklasse og indeholder referencer til både humorteori, lingvistik, psykologi og samfundsvidenskab. Der er altså om noget tale om en tværfaglig bog, der ikke er bange for at bringe nye perspektiver ind i udredningen af sit emne.

Bogens overordnede hypotese er, at national humor, her med udgangspunkt i den danske humor, er formet gennem et samspil mellem sprog og samfund – dvs. den nationale humor er et produkt af humorsocialisering. Vi bliver således socialiseret ind i en form for national humor, og derfor synes vi ofte selv, at vi er så sjove. Det synes andre (fra andre nationale kulturer) bare ikke nødvendigvis. Dog foreslår bogen også, at det er muligt at blive socialiseret til nye former for humor og aflægge sig sin egen humoradfærd – og at dette faktisk er vigtigt i internationale og interkulturelle sammenhænge.

Bogens empiriske grundlag er kvalitative interviews (indsamlet i perioden 2008-2013), observationer (2012) samt spørgeskemaundersøgelser (2010) med i alt 72 deltagere fra 14 lande, de fleste fra Danmark, Frankrig og Tyskland. Deltagerne har forskellige erfaringer med det kulturelle krydsfelt og sproglige forviklinger, der kan opstå, når man udsættes for en ny form for national humor i en international sammenhæng, og undersøgelserne inkluderer både internationale og danske studerende, danske tolke i Europa-Parlamentet og danske, franske og tyske medlemmer af Europa-Parlamentet (MEP). Med udgangspunkt i sin empiri samt ovennævnte teoretiske felter undersøger Lundquist i sin bog, ”hvad der sker, når danskere bruger humor spontant i arbejdssituationer med ikke-danskere” (15).

Bogen er pædagogisk bygget op og består af en indledning, tre dele (*Humoren*, *Sproget* og *Samfundet*) samt en konklusion. Hver del består af tre kapitler og en overordnet sammenfatning. De enkelte kapitler indledes på en Peter Plys-agtig måde med en lille appetitvækkende sammenfatning af, hvad der venter læseren i kapitlet. Derudover er der redegjort for det empiriske grundlag, og bogen har hele 10 sider med slutnoter (som alle er meget oplysende at læse, men som dog besværliggør læseprocessen noget, da man hele tiden skal bladre frem og tilbage).

Under titlen *Dansk humor på den internationale scene* sætter Lundquist ved brug af Lars von Triers berømte kontroversielle Nazi-udtalelser i indledningen scenen for sin bog, nemlig modsætningen mellem andres og danskernes egen opfattelse af dansk humor. Selv om Lars von Triers holdninger og facon, som Lundquist skriver, ikke er repræsentative for den danske befolkning, ”rummer hans katastrofale anvendelse af humor på filmfestivalen i Cannes træk, der karakteriserer dansk humor generelt” (13). Eksemplet følges op af eksempler på forskellige faldgruber, som Lars von Trier ikke var opmærksom på. I indledningen introducerer Lundquist også sin hypotese, der lyder ”at en persons humor er præget, måske endda formet, af vedkommendes sprog og det omgivende samfund” (17). Denne hypotese er sammenfattet i begrebet humorsocialisering, der har givet navn til bogens hovedtitel. En redegørelse for anvendt metode og empiri er også at finde i indledningen, ligesom opbygningen præsenteres. I del 1, *Humoren*, præsenteres læseren i det første kapitel (kap. 1) først for tre ikke-danskeres møde med såkaldt dansk humor, der for alle tres vedkommende blev oplevet som stødende, grov eller grænseoverskridende, og det beskrives, hvordan virkningen af dansk

humor kan være den helt modsatte af den intenderede. Kapitlet diskuterer også, hvad humor egentlig er, og tager med egne ord "de første teoretiske spadestik" (27), og en idé om, at humor virker som en social mediator, introduceres til slut i kapitlet. Andet kapitel i denne del introducerer tre klassiske humorteorier, der er inddelt efter "hvilket træk der bruges til at indfange humorens væsen" (35): overlegenhedsteorien, inkongruensteorien og ventilteorien, der er vokset frem i forskellige tidsaldre. Der er tale om forskellige filosofiske og psykologiske betragtninger, og kendte skikkelser som Freud og Kirkegaard dukker op i kapitlet. Lundquist når frem til, at de tre teorier trods deres forskelligheder alle kan indfanges i social mediator som samlebegreb. Sidste kapitel i denne del (kap. 3) omhandler danskernes brug af ironi og selvironi, som nærmest kan betegnes som hjørnestenene i den danske humor. I kapitlet fortælles det, at mens der i internationale humorteorier er skrevet meget om ironi, gør det samme sig ikke gældende med hensyn til selvironi. Som en undtagelse herfra beskrives den franske filosof Vladimir Jankélévitchs bog *L´ironie*.

I del 2, *Sproget*, tager bogen en sprogvidenskabelig drejning, og Lundquist behandler i det første kapitel (kap. 4) bl.a. sproglig dobbelttydighed. Hun illustrerer fænomenet med eksempler fra sit korpus og undersøger, hvordan semantiske og pragmatiske sprogteorier kan bidrage til forklaring. Et af de emner, der behandles, er samtaleimplikaturer. Med afsæt i Paul Grices *samarbejdsprincip*, at en samtale mellem mennesker er baseret på "samarbejde", hvor modtager forudsætter, at afsenders ytring giver mening, foreslår hun, at modtager, hvis en samtale i første omgang ikke giver mening, vil tillægge afsenders ytring en ekstra betydning ud over den konventionelle. Der er her tale om en samtalebaseret slutning, en samtaleimplikatur. Dog, skriver hun, viser hendes eksempler, hvordan denne implikatur ikke altid sker med det samme, men først efter flere "kognitive omveje, hvorved humoren naturligvis mistede sin humoristiske effekt og endte med at virke som en negativ social mediator" (84). Fra at behandle sprog generelt zoomer Lundquist i det andet kapitel (kap. 5) ind på det danske sprog og kigger på, hvad det indeholder af specielle udtryksformer, der gør det særligt egnet til at producere bestemte humorformer som ironi og selvironi. Her taler hun om, hvad hun kalder 'humorsignaler' i dansk, nemlig vores mange samtalesmåord, såsom *jo, da* og *nok*, der ikke er så uskyldige, som de måske kan se ud til. Det sidste kapitel i denne del (kap. 6) omhandler humorens kropsliggørelse, og her trækker Lundquist på noget af sin store empiri, nemlig når hun undersøger humor som en social mediator i Europa-Parlamentet, samt hvad der sker, når de mange tolke i Europa-Parlamentet tolker humor på tværs og gennem flere europæiske sprog.

Den tredje og sidste del omhandler som nævnt samfundet. I det første kapitel i denne del (kap. 7) anvender Lundquist historisk sociologi for at finde en forklaring på, hvorfor der findes forskellige former for national humor, og efterfølgende kigger hun særligt på to typer, nemlig den danske "lejrbålshumor" og den franske "hofhumor". Hun forklarer, hvordan humorsocialiseringen generelt – og mere specifikt i Danmark og Frankrig – er præget af den civilisationsproces, som har fundet sted i landene. Hendes argument er nemlig, at vores nationale humor hænger uløseligt sammen med udviklingen af vores civile samfund, og hendes sammenligning mellem Frankrig og Danmark eksemplificerer dette. Andet kapitel i denne del (kap. 8) ser nærmere på den danske humor på den internationale scene, mere specifikt dens rolle i Europa-Parlamentet samt i internationale business-relationer. Understøttet af sociologiske humormodeller forklarer Lundquist, hvordan og hvorfor humor kan fungere som en positiv social mediator i politiske processer og i business. Det fortælles ligeledes, at humor i form af ironi og selvironi i dansk ledelsesteori opfattes som egentlige ledelseskompetencer. Det sidste kapitel i denne del (kap. 9) handler om international humorsocialisering, der er en proces, der består i, at national humor aflæres, og en ny form for humor tillæres. Problemer med at anvende national humor på overnationale og tværkulturelle arbejdspladser kan således afhjælpes. Lundquist fokuserer yderligere på Europa-Parlamentet og spørger, om der mon findes en særlig EP-humor (svaret er 'ja'). To nye teorier dukker op i dette kapitel, nemlig en om demonstrativ "ikke-latter" (*unlaughter*) og en om gelotofobi, frygten for at blive grint af. Disse inddrages i forklaringen af af- og tillæring af humor.

Bogens tre dele om hhv. humor, sprog og samfund leder tilsammen frem til, at Lundquist i konklusionen svarer på bogens titel efter først at have redegjort for de to spørgsmål, som faktisk indgår deri, samt de påstande og præsuppositioner, som titlen bygger på. For det viser sig, at der i bogens titel indgår følgende to spørgsmål: ”Hvorfor tror danskerne, at de er så sjove?” og ”Hvorfor er der nogle, som *ikke* mener, at danskere er så sjove?” (177). Disse to spørgsmål bygger så på tre påstande og en præsupposition, dvs. en skjult forudsætning. Påstandene er (177): ”Danskerne tror, de er sjove”, ”Nogle mener *ikke*, at danskerne har grund til at tro det”, og ”Disse ”nogle” er ikke danskere”. Den skjulte forudsætning sniger sig ind i brugen af verbet ”at tro (noget)”. For indeholdt i dette verbum ligger en antagelse om (altså en forudsætning), at det noget man tror ikke er rigtigt.

Det er netop de to indbyggede spørgsmål, som Lundquist forsøger at besvare i sin bog. Hun fremfører altså, at danskerne selv synes, de er sjove, fordi de er socialiseret ind i en lokal og national humorform, og at humoren, for danskerne, er med til at skabe en ”lejrbålsfølelse”. Særligt brugen af ironi og selvironi, som danskerne bruger i stor stil, er velegnede til dette formål. Grunden til, at andre ikke-danskere ikke altid er enige med danskerne selv, er, at de er socialiseret ind i andre lokale og nationale humorformer. De er måske dermed ikke på samme vis bekendt med danskernes udbredte brug af ironi og selvironi samt små samtalesmåord, der er med til at skabe en følelse af samhørighed og intimitet. Dog viser Lundquist også, at der kan opstå nye lokale humorformer, som går på tværs af nationale særegenheder, på interkulturelle arbejdsplader såsom i Europa-Parlamentet. Humoren er nemlig en ”positiv social mediator [som] også forener” (179). Endelig afsluttes bogen med bilag, hvor Lundquist redegør for sit empiriske grundlag, og hvor man kan se hendes interview- og spørgeskemaspørgsmål.

Bogen giver indblik i mange forskellige teorier og deres relevans eller anvendelse i relation til humor, men som lingvist kan man godt savne nogle egentlige sproglige analyser, bl.a. fordi der flere gange er tale om, at Lundquist *forestiller* sig, hvordan noget måske ville have lydt, hvis det var blevet sagt på dansk. Et andet kritikpunkt er, at de samme eksempler går igen i begyndelsen af bogen og på den måde ser vi altså ikke bredden af det store korpus, som ligger til grund for bogens analyser. Bogens emne er relevant på mange niveauer og for både professionelle og lægfolk: personer, der begår sig i professionelle interkulturelle sammenhænge, studerende med interesse for interkulturalitet (og sprog) og alle andre som led i almindelig dannelse i interkulturel kommunikation, som jo også findes i alle mulige andre sammenhænge end den professionelle. Og så har den underholdningsværdi i sig selv.